



REPORT TO

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

RESPONSE TO INQUIRY ON PAST PROGRAM IN SECONDARY, FROM THE MAY 17, 2017 SEAC MEETING

*"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"
Psalm 133:1 (NIV)*

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
May 16, 2018	May 16, 2018	Click here to enter a date.

P. Stachiw, Chief of Autism
C. Fernandes, Superintendent of Special Services

INFORMATION REPORT

Vision:

At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

Mission:

*The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.
We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.*



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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a response an inquiry that took place at the Special Education Advisory Meeting that took place on May 17th, 2017 with respect to the possibility of extending the Program to Assist Social Thinking (PAST) in TCDSB secondary schools.

B. PURPOSE

1. The Program to Assist Social Thinking currently takes place in 6 TCDSB elementary schools and has seen success in students learning how to self-regulate and engage in social situations.
2. SEAC requested a report as to whether or not the Program to Assist Social Thinking (PAST) could be expanded to the secondary panel. This report responds to this request.

C. BACKGROUND

1. The Program to Assist Social Thinking (PAST) is a cognitive-behavioural approach that provides intensive support to students with Asperger's or high functioning Autism or Autism level 1. These students do not automatically assimilate the unwritten rules of social interaction. Students must be directly taught how to have successful interactions at home, at school and in their community.
2. The PAST Program focuses on enhancement of the perspective taking abilities of students. Skill areas addressed within this program are: understanding emotions of self and others; communication; cooperative play; development of relationships; understanding of diagnosis and self-advocacy.
3. The PAST Program focuses on students in grades 3-6 who are capable of functioning at grade level and are currently experiencing difficulty with social skills and/or behaviour.
4. The withdrawal program takes place one day per week for 6 students. Bussing is provided. The PAST Program teacher and support staff make scheduled visits to the home school to support the classroom teacher, provide peer training and to monitor the generalization of targeted skills in the regular

classroom. Staff from the home school who work with the student are invited to visit the program.

5. There are currently six PAST Programs running in five schools, D'Arcy McGee; St. Brigid; St. Florence; St. Louis (2); St. Martha. Weekly checklists are provided to the parent and classroom teacher to record student's performance of targeted skills.
6. In keeping with the mission of the TCDSB, time is spent each class helping the student to develop a personal relationship with God.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. The PAST Program is a program designed to teach specific skills to a small group of students in a dedicated space who are supported in the home school to help with generalization.
2. Secondary schools operate differently than their elementary counterparts:
 - Secondary schools do not offer programs that are one day per week withdrawal.
 - Secondary schools offer General Learning Strategies (GLE, GLS) courses. These courses are for students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and have a smaller average class size.
 - There is a mandated curriculum by the Ministry of Education.
 - Students may earn up to four GLE credits in their secondary career.
3. The following are a list of approved courses that a secondary school can offer.

Learning Strategies 1: Skills for Success in Secondary School, Grade 9, Open (GLS10)

This course focuses on learning strategies to help students become better, more independent learners. Students will learn how to develop and apply literacy and numeracy skills, personal management skills, and interpersonal and teamwork skills to improve their learning and achievement in school, the workplace, and the community. The course helps students build confidence and motivation to pursue opportunities for success in secondary school and beyond.

Prerequisite: None or recommendation of principal

Learning Strategies 1: Skills for Success in Secondary School, Grade 9, Open (GLE10)

This course focuses on learning strategies to help students become better, more independent learners. Students will learn how to develop and apply literacy and numeracy skills, personal management skills, and interpersonal and teamwork skills to improve their learning and achievement in school, the workplace, and the community. The course helps students build confidence and motivation to pursue opportunities for success in secondary school and beyond.

Prerequisite: Recommendation of principal

Career Studies, Grade 10, Open (GLC20)

This course teaches students how to develop and achieve personal goals for future learning, work, and community involvement. Students will assess their interests, skills, and characteristics and investigate current economic and workplace trends, work opportunities, and ways to search for work. The course explores postsecondary learning and career options, prepares students for managing work and life transitions, and helps students focus on their goals through the development of a career plan.

Prerequisite: None

Learning Strategies 1: Skills for Success in Secondary School, Grade 10, Open (GLE20)

This course focuses on learning strategies to help students become better, more independent learners. Students will learn how to develop and apply literacy and numeracy skills, personal management skills, and interpersonal and teamwork skills to improve their learning and achievement in school, the workplace, and the community. The course helps students build confidence and motivation to pursue opportunities for success in secondary school and beyond.

Prerequisite: Recommendation of principal

Discovering the Workplace, Grade 10, Open (GLD20)

This course provides students with opportunities to discover and develop the workplace

Essential skills and work habits required to be successfully employed. Students will develop an understanding of work through practical hands-on experiences in the school and in the community, using real workplace materials. They investigate occupations of interest through experiential learning opportunities (such as worksite visits, job shadowing, work

experience, simulations and entrepreneurial projects). This course helps students make plans for continued learning and work.

Prerequisite: None

Designing Your Future, Grade 11, Open (GWL3O)

This course prepares students to make successful transitions to postsecondary destinations as they investigate specific postsecondary options based on their skills, interests, and personal characteristics. Students will explore the realities and opportunities of the workplace and examine factors that affect success, while refining their job-search and employability skills. Students will develop their portfolios with a focus on their targeted destination and develop an action plan for future success.

Prerequisite: None

Leadership and Peer Support, Grade 11, Open (GPP3O)

This course prepares students to act in leadership and peer support roles. They will design and implement a plan for contributing to their school and/or community; develop skills in communication, interpersonal relations, teamwork, and conflict management; and apply those skills in leadership and/or peer support roles – for example, as a student council member or a peer tutor. Students will examine group dynamics and learn the value of diversity within groups and communities.

Prerequisite: None

Advanced Learning Strategies: Skills for Success After Secondary School,

Grade 11, Open (GLE3O)

This course improves students' learning and personal-management skills, preparing them to make successful transitions to work, training, and/or postsecondary education destinations. Students will assess their learning abilities and use literacy, numeracy, and research skills and personal-management techniques to maximize their learning. Students will investigate trends and resources to support their postsecondary employment, training, and/or education choices and develop a plan to help them meet their learning and career goals.

Prerequisite: Recommendation of principal

Advanced Learning Strategies: Skills for Success After Secondary School,

Grade 12, Open (GLS40)

This course improves students' learning and personal-management skills, preparing them to make successful transitions to work, training, and/or postsecondary education destinations. Students will assess their learning abilities and use literacy, numeracy, and research skills and personal-management techniques to maximize their learning. Students will investigate trends and resources to support their postsecondary employment, training, and/or education choices and develop a plan to help them meet their learning and career goals.

Prerequisite: None

Advanced Learning Strategies: Skills for Success After Secondary School,

Grade 12, Open (GLE40)

This course improves students' learning and personal-management skills, preparing them to make successful transitions to work, training, and/or postsecondary education destinations. Students will assess their learning abilities and use literacy, numeracy, and research skills and personal-management techniques to maximize their learning. Students will investigate trends and resources to support their postsecondary employment, training, and/or education choices and develop a plan to help them meet their learning and career goals.

Prerequisite: Recommendation of principal

Navigating the Workplace, Grade 12, Open (GLN40)

This course provides students with opportunities to develop the workplace essential skills and work habits required for success in all types of workplaces. Students will explore occupations and careers of interest through participation in real workplace experiences. They will make plans for continued learning and work, work with others to design learning experiences, and investigate the resources and support required to make a smooth transition to their postsecondary destination.

Prerequisite: None

4. A secondary social thinking curriculum has been developed and could be embedded within the learning strategies courses that are offered. Based on the needs at the individual schools, each secondary school would have the flexibility to determine which skills need to be taught. For students going to

post-secondary, a GWL course focusing on social thinking with a look towards transitions could be considered.

5. In order to support students in this manner, a dedicated space designed around the students' needs where students could access the room throughout the day as needed and before and after school would be required.

E. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Considering the way secondary schools are structured, it is not possible to run a one-day per week withdrawal program. Staff does not recommend that the elementary PAST program be duplicated in secondary as elementary and secondary schools operate differently.

The recommendation for secondary schools would be to embed social thinking curriculum into the courses already offered.