

2019-20 Special Education Budget

Area of Focus	Explanation	Recommendation
Programs	A large majority of SEN students are particularly interested in computer skill based activities and are pathways planning towards the same but due to the many challenges that each exceptionality presents – they are often excluded from STEM/STEAM programs.	RECOMMENDATION: provide more opportunities for SEN students to participate in STEM/STEAM special programs and extra-curriculars with a focus on providing equity based skill learning based on their particular needs.
	There is a moderate to large achievement gap in Literacy and Numeracy for SEN students. Both of these fundamental skills are essential to succeed in post K-21, live safely and independently and to pursue post-secondary education, apprenticeship or a stable and ongoing career.	RECOMMENDATION: consider expanding the EMPOWER program both in number of locations and the entry criteria. The EMPOWER program has a proven track record for improving literacy skills but excludes many SEN students based on their exceptionality. RECOMMENDATION: that the board create and staff a remedial program model in each quadrant of the city that provides extra help and tutoring to SEN students in the areas of literacy, numeracy and study skills.
Services	Research shows that without the proper supports and structure during the K-12 education of a student with special education needs; the necessary skills and direction needed to provide equitable access to the same post secondary opportunities as typical students are reduced. Seeing also that the TCDSBs parent involvement committee and local school CSPCs do not have any focus on supporting the needs of special education students.	RECOMMENDATION: automatically provide each student with an IEP's parents with a comprehensive special education needs directed toolkit complete with regularly updated contact information, required educational milestones, roles and responsibilities, transition and pathway planning guide and options, etc.. Further to the toolkit, that each school host regular information nights to engage, inform and educate parents of students with special education needs on how to support the achievement of their child with special needs.
	Parents are concerned with the transition to post- secondary life for their children. It is daunting so knowledge is essential to reduce anxiety and improve	RECOMMENDATION: provide for parents information and visitations to the widest list of possible options (community programs, college courses, university) for their child given the exceptionality. They need first hand to see the program in action and discuss with the provider or educational institution to ensure the correct fit.
MOTION:		
Staffing	In anticipation of the influx of students with ASD with less to no community support; the current level of qualified school support is not adequately prepared and insufficient to ensure student success or student/staff safety.	RECOMMENDATION: Allocate funding to hire more registered Board Certified Behaviour Analysts (BCBA) to provide consultative services to schools and train and supervise the existing ASD consultants/ASD resource staff in data collection as part of the current services offered to classrooms to assist teachers with the development and implementation of IEPs for students with ASD.
	Educational Assistants are critical for the support of students in their learning. They implement the programming related to the IEP under the teacher's supervision are critical. They ensure that toileting is	RECOMMENDATION: At the very least Maintain the current level of educational assistants.

	facilitated and social skills are practiced.	RECOMMENDATION: At the very least maintain the current number of educational assistants and provide funding for EAs to obtain Registered Behaviour Training (RBT) certification on at least a voluntary basis, including the 40 hours of training and the examinations. These EAs are to be supervised by the BCBAs.
MOTION:		
System	Students with special education needs and their families are often not very well connected within the community or in their local parish due to the many barriers faced by their families. Educating the “whole child” in the case of SEN students would involve a multi-disciplinary approach in order to close the gap in their achieving their highest potential post K-21.	RECOMMENDATION: the board research and explore community based agencies that provide programs and services that support success and inclusivity for a nominal fee (payable by the board) or for free to SEN students. Programs and services to range from and not be limited to social groups, self care and life skill building, resume writing and searching for a job, financial literacy and self-advocacy.
		RECOMMENDATION: provide funding to in service school staff with new technology so it can be fully utilized.
	SEN students often require more support in pathways planning for post K-21. Their time spent at the TCDSB is the foundation for building on necessary skills and developing community connections in order to feel confident in their unique abilities and succeed to their fullest potential.	<p>RECOMMENDATION: the board review (in consultation with SEAC) and expand on the availability of options in co-op placements, skills development and pathways planning for SEN students.</p> <p>That monies be earmarked for the development of community partnerships and expansion of programs such as (and not limited to) college and university post-secondary transition programs, OYAP, and job placements/internships.</p> <p>That professional development be provided to staff and guidance councillors, at the elementary and secondary panel to equip them with the tools and strategies on how to monitor and support pathways planning for SEN students and how to best engage parents of SEN students in doing the same.</p>

Staff	8 Inclusion coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One coach per TCDSB area (superintendent). • Provide training to the regular classroom teacher individually, at the school level and professional development days on best practices to accommodate children with special needs focusing on common areas of need found across multiple groups of special education. Eg. Behaviour, organizational skills, reading, writing, math etc... • Assist the regular class teacher regularly in setting short term realistic goals for special needs students in their class. • Direct observation and coaching of regular class teaching staff in the classroom when needed. • Connect classroom teachers with additional resources as needed. • Be an advocate at all meetings supporting Inclusive practices and decisions regarding students. • Provide feedback to their Superintendent and the Superintendent of Special Services on areas of need and successful practices through an Inclusive lens. <p>Success to be measured by the reduction in the number of students placed in ISP classes, Number of special needs student suspended, the number of special needs students who graduate Secondary School. The number of special needs students accepted into post secondary programs (University, College, Apprenticeships)</p>
-------	---------------------	---

Organizational	Gifted Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide gifted programs to students identified as gifted at their home school using a model similar to what is currently used for withdrawal support students. • 3 to 6 hours a week of gifted programming in the withdrawal support classroom • Train the special education teacher on best practices for gifted students. • Regular classroom teachers include the needs of Gifted students when developing lessons using the principles of Universal Design and Differentiated Learning. • Allows gifted students to socialize with their peers during classroom and non-structured times. • Eliminate dedicated classrooms for gifted that can be used for regular classroom programs.
----------------	----------------	---

Links for more information on Inclusion coaches.

<https://www.wolfcreek.ab.ca/inclusive-learning-services-staff/inclusion-coaches>

<https://us.corwin.com/en-us/nam/inclusion-coaching-for-collaborative-schools/book239767>

<https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/IJMCE-03-2017-0018?fullSc=1&journalCode=ijmce>

https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Professional-Development/COMM-196_Inclusion-Principals-Guide_2016-01.pdf

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290841922_Moving_Toward_Inclusion_Inclusion_Coaches'_Reflections_and_Discussions_in_Supporting_Educators_in_Practice