



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

PROPOSED PLAN TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS RECEIVING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

"I took it and drank; and when I had drunk it, my heart poured forth understanding, and wisdom increased in my breast, for my spirit retained its memory...(2 Esdras 14:40)"

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Linda Maselli-Jackman, Superintendent of Education, Special Services

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

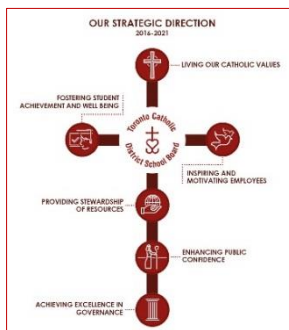
Vision:

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.



Rory McGuckin
Director of Education

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Associate Director
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Associate Director of Facilities,
Business and Community
Development, and
Chief Financial Officer

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report addresses the motion recommended by SEAC and approved at Board concerning the need to increase the number of Administrators (Principals and Vice Principals) with qualifications in Special Education. Furthermore, it summarizes proposed means for Administrators to obtain such qualifications, with potential costs to the Board and timelines for doing so.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 10 hours

B. PURPOSE

1. This recommendation report is on the order paper of the Regular Board in response to a SEAC inquiry about increasing the number of Principals and Vice Principals with additional professional qualifications and/or professional development opportunities in Special Education.
2. The three goals of this plan are to:
 - a. Create opportunities for current Principals and Vice Principals with extended experience in-role to receive additional professional qualifications and/or professional development in Special Education;
 - b. Create opportunities for Principals and Vice Principals new to the role to receive additional professional qualifications and/or professional development in Special Education; and
 - c. Update eligibility requirements of candidates for the role of Principal to have at least one Additional Qualification (AQ) course in Special Education, such as that which is delivered by the Catholic Principals' Council | Ontario (CPCO) entitled, *Special Education for Administrators (SEA)*.

C. BACKGROUND

1. This report is on the Order Paper of the June 13, 2019 Regular Board based on the following SEAC recommended motion that was carried by Board on February 21, 2019:

“Increasing the Number of Principals who are Experienced with Students with Special Needs: that to further promote the inclusion of Special Education

Needs (SEN) students and to support the Toronto Catholic District School Board's (TCDSB) Mission Statement of inclusion, staff prepare a plan to increase the number of Principals and Vice Principals in the system with Special Education and professional development qualifications and successfully implement the inclusion of SEN students in regular classes as an educator."

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

Proposed Professional Development Plan

1. This proposed plan for increasing the number of Principals and Vice Principals receiving professional development in Special Education is the culmination of ideas generated during a series of consultations, since February 2019, to gather feedback from the following sources:
 - a. Current Chairs of the Principal and Vice Principal Associations: Secondary School Principals' Association (SSPA), Toronto Catholic (Elementary) Principals' and Vice Principals' Association (TCPVA), and the Secondary School Vice Principals' Association (SSVPA);
 - b. Program Instructors for the TCDSB *Issues and Succession* professional development series for newly-appointed Principals and Vice Principals;
 - c. Additional Qualifications (AQ) Course Instructors for the Catholic Principals Council | Ontario (CPCO) *Special Education for Administrators* course; and
 - d. Two CPCO Senior Professional Staff Members: the Program and Member Services Co-ordinator and Assistant Co-ordinator.
2. This proposed plan would facilitate the engagement of Administrators at any stage in their leadership journey, so that they can use their additional qualification and/or professional development learnings effectively to promote the inclusion of, and provide supports for, students who require Special Education programs and services.
3. The first category of professional development is for Principals and Vice Principals with extended experience in-role. Special Education learning modules developed by CPCO and/or TCDSB Special Services Staff could be

offered adjacent to scheduled K-12 Principal meetings and Vice Principal meetings.

4. An alternative type of professional development for Administrators with extended experience in-role is optional participation in the additional professional qualifications course entitled, *Special Education for Administrators* that is offered either in the evenings during one-half of the school year, or for a one-month period (July) during the summer. This course is facilitated by certified Catholic Principals Council | Ontario (CPCO) instructors.

Successful completion of the CPCO SEA AQ course will result in accreditation on an Administrator's Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) record card, and might also be accredited as a Master's level course at some universities.

5. Professional development for Administrators new to the role would take the form of learning modules offered during the existing professional learning program entitled: *Issues Series* for Vice Principals and *Succession Series* for Principals. This program occurs during the day throughout the school year, and would be updated with learning materials from CPCO. Completion of those modules could lead to potential formalized certification.

Principals and Vice Principals with extended in-role experience are also able to participate on a voluntary basis in this workshop series.

6. Finally, it is recommended that a minimum requirement for Vice Principals submitting an application for the role of Principal be either the Additional Qualification (AQ) course entitled, *Special Education Part 1*, or preferably, the CPCO *Special Education for Administrators AQ* course. It is recommended that a preference be indicated for obtainment of the CPCO SEA AQ Course for Administrators as the requirement for Vice Principals applying for the role of Principal.
7. There is a variety of options for professional development for Administrators of all ranges of experience, which includes, but is not limited to the following:
 - i) **Foundations Course**: for teachers discerning their engagement with the role of school Administrator;

ii) **Transitions Course:** for teachers who have completed all current requirements for the role of school Administrator and are preparing to submit or have already submitted their application for the role of Vice Principal.

iii) **Head Start Summer Institute:** for teachers who have been shortlisted to the role of Vice Principal and Vice Principals recently placed in role; or Vice Principals short-listed for the role of Principal and Principals recently placed in role.

iv) **Issues and Succession Series:** mandatory for Principals and Vice Principals new to the role and optional for Administrators with extended experience in role. This workshop series focuses on key topics in Administration, including those in Special Education.

v) **Various Professional Development Topics:** available for all Administrators through a number of professional education-related sources including, but not limited to, face-to-face and/or on-line modules offered by TCDSB Special Services staff, Osgoode Professional Development, Miller-Thomson LLP Morning Recess Professional Development series, and Keel Cottrell LLP professional development seminars.

Cost-Benefit Analysis

1. One of the roles of the Principal is to act as Chair of the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) for IPRC meetings that lead to an initial identification of a Ministry Exceptionality or for entry into/demission from Intensive Support Programs (ISPs). These meetings are conducted at a central location, by an arms-length IPRC committee.
2. The Education Act, Ontario Regulation 181/98 stipulates that: [with respect to] *The Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils, IPRC Chairs have a legal responsibility to ensure that due process is followed in the conduct of the initial IPRC or IPRC review meetings.* Therefore, it is incumbent upon the Board to ensure that Principals receive every possible opportunity to engage in professional development in Special Education in order to inform their leadership in this process.
3. Additionally, Principals hold the responsibility of signing off on students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that are generated jointly by the classroom

and Special Education teachers. In order to be as informed as possible about the requirements of these legal documents, Principals would benefit from as much professional development as possible pertaining to Special Education.

4. Baseline data provided to the Board in October 2018 indicate that 67.5% of Principals hold qualifications in Special Education, which leads to the possibility that the balance of Principals could be in a position to need the CPCO SEA AQ course. One cost-mitigation proposal to incentivize for the completion of this additional professional qualification would be for the Board to consider its funding options for a possible 50% subsidy of the course fee upon the Administrator's completion of the course. The cost to the Board would be approximately \$25,000.

The Importance of Cost Incentives for The Completion of Special Education Additional Professional Qualifications

1. Administrators (Principals and Vice Principals) are experiencing work intensification for a variety of reasons including the address of issues in Special Education. Stress and fatigue are frequently reported anecdotally given those intensified responsibilities. Furthermore, the additional time that is required to take AQ courses would likely increase this work intensification. Therefore, a financial cost-savings would help to mitigate the effects of the time-cost to obtain additional professional qualifications such as those in Special Education.
2. Having additional professional qualifications in Special Education would enable current and prospective Administrators to better align their professional learning goals with the TCDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) 2016-2021, particularly goals related to providing equitable learning environments and accommodating students with individual learning needs to close the opportunity gap.

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. The Human Resources Department would monitor the targets set for completion of the Special Education for Administrators course.

F. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the implementation of the following actions to promote an increase in the number of Administrators (Principals and Vice Principals) who have qualifications in Special Education:

1. Create opportunities for existing Principals without additional qualifications in Special Education to engage in professional development. Include the option to take one additional qualification course for which the Board might consider possible funding options to enable the subsidy of half of the fiscal cost of taking this one course in Special Education. The approximate value of this half-cost subsidy would be \$25, 000.
2. Provide the same opportunity for all Vice Principals to obtain a professional qualification in Special Education for which the Board might consider possible funding options to enable the subsidy of half of the fiscal cost of taking this one course in Special Education. This would be at an approximate cost to the Board of \$40, 000 (or less depending upon the number of VPs who currently hold additional qualifications in Special Education).

The maximum total cost to the Board if it were to consider a half-cost subsidy to Administrators for the obtainment of one additional professional qualification in Special Education would be \$65,000.

3. Mandate, as one of the requirements for application to the position of Principal, the completion of either the Special Education (Part 1) Additional Qualification course or equivalent CPCO Special Education Additional Qualification course for School Administrators (SEA AQ).
4. Recommend the completion of the CPCO SEA AQ course as the optimal certification for any Administrators who are taking Special Education qualifications for the first time.