

Select Public/Private  
If Private select Ed. Act. Section.



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

## RESPONSE TO DELEGATION REGARDING COMPLETION OF IDENTIFICATION PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC) MEETINGS AND ASSESSMENTS

*"I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6)*

**Created, Draft**

August 10, 2020

**First Tabling**

August 20, 2020

**Review**

[Click here to enter a date.](#)

Linda Maselli-Jackman, Superintendent of Education, Special Services  
Maria Meehan, Superintendent of Education, Special Services

### INFORMATION REPORT

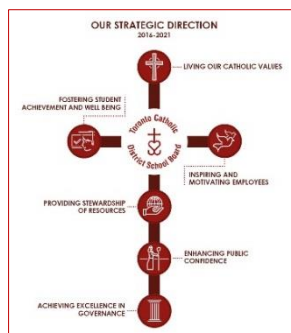
**Vision:**

*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.*



Rory McGuckin  
Director of Education

D. Koenig  
Associate Director  
of Academic Affairs

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

## **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In response to concerns articulated by a delegation to the July 23, 2020 Board meeting, this report provides updates regarding the status of completion of Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) meetings as of the end of June 2020 and the Board's intent to resume efforts to complete summer assessments during the Summer of 2020 in the Covid-19 pandemic environment. Contextual information is provided vis-à-vis the latest update of the *A Faith Community of Believers: Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) Distance Learning Implementation Plan, v.3.0*, updated July 8.

*The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 5 hours*

## **B. PURPOSE**

1. This information report is on the Order Paper for the August 20, 2020 Regular Board meeting. It is provided in response to a delegation by SEAC member Deborah Nightingale which identified the following concerns:
  - A. Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB)'s decision to postpone many IPRC meetings and Special Education assessments until after the start of the new school year;
  - B. Since the IPRC meetings which normally are completed prior to the end of June were not completed, then students will be unable start the first day of the new school year in the appropriate class or school and with appropriate supports; and
  - C. Students who are still seeking IPRCs are students who have not waived these meetings and are seeking placements or supports different from their current situation.
2. Information provided in this report is intended to clarify the understandings articulated by the delegation and provide a reminder regarding the intent of the protocols established for Special Education Programs and Services during both the Distance Learning environment and as they will continue into the new school year, still within the Covid-19 environment.

## C. BACKGROUND

1. Since the Covid-19 closure on March 13, the TCDSB established a protocol document entitled, *A Faith Community of Believers: TCDSB's Distance Learning Implementation Plan*. This plan includes the protocols and priorities for the provision of programs and services for students with Special Education needs.
2. Since the first version of this document, indicated Special Services protocols have prioritized the provision of programs and services for students with the highest priority needs. The protocols also articulate the Board's intent to provide programs and services at the start of the 2020-21 school year with the least amount of disruption and change in the event that the Board were required to continue within the Distance Learning format. Otherwise, if the Board were to resume regular operations with the implementation of a face-to-face learning environment, then it has been the intent of TCDSB Special Services Department to resume Psycho-educational (and other) assessments, initial and central IPRCs, and program placements into Intensive Support Programs (ISPs) and specialty programs within the regular operations context.
3. At the time of the delegation, the Board was still in the process of preparing the suite of return-to-school plans that had been required of school boards by the Ministry of Education. Since the time the July 23 Board meeting, the Ministry of Education has since announced the return-to-school plans for boards.
4. Since the time of the delegation, the TCDSB Special Services Department has more fully implemented the proposed Summer Learning Opportunities – Programs and Services whose plans have been underway since the end-of-June Ministry of Education announcement of the provision of one-time funding for summer Special Education programs/services.
5. During the early weeks of the summer, Toronto Public Health (TPH) announced its intention to clear the TCDSB for the operation of face-to-face programs for our students with Multiple Exceptionalities/Developmental Disabilities (ME/DD). As a result, those programs have been scheduled for for fourteen days between August 4-21.
6. This newly-minted face-to-face learning opportunity has consequently opened up the avenue for Special Services Psychology staff to re-ignite

considerations for the provision of Summer Psycho-educational assessments. Summer assessment opportunities had been previously established in order to address the backlog that has been a long-standing priority. Unfortunately, however, early plans for summer 2020 assessments had been halted with the Covid-19 pandemic closure.

## **D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS**

1. As articulated in the TCDSB Distance Learning Implementation Plan, Psycho-educational and other TCDSB service provider assessments (ex. Speech and Language, etc.) had been postponed until the Board resumes regular school operations. Psychology, Social Work, Speech/Language, and Autism service providers had indicated deep professional concerns about the factors that could influence the virtual assessment environment, which could consequently yield unreliable testing outcomes. Those concerns precipitated the decision of the TCDSB Special Services Department to withhold assessments until the Board's return to regular operations.

However, as indicated above, the ability to provide programs and services in a face-to-face environment with the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) has recently enabled the Special Services Psychology providers to reconsider the implementation of summer assessments. The establishment of a Psychology assessment team for the month of August will facilitate the address of at least some of the priority assessments for the new school year.

2. The delegation expressed concern about potentially inappropriate placements for students at the beginning of the new school year. To address this concern is an important reminder that even during regular Board operations, not all students necessarily start in ISPs or specialized programs at the beginning of a school year. Continuous starts have occasionally been provided in order to address individual needs of students. The program in which a start at the beginning of the school year is critical, however, is Empower, since this program requires the bulk of a school year in order to achieve completion of the required, research-based content provided by Sick Kids hospital.
3. Students served by Special Education programs and services have an IEP and receive supports once the requirement for the IEP has been determined. It is important to note that the ISP is *another* level of support; it is not the *only*

option for support. Through an IEP and with the assistance of a Special Education Teacher, other school-based staff and Special Services providers, ongoing supports are routinely provided for the learning needs in question.

4. The TCDSB Special Services Department concurs with the Ministry of Education's guidance that IPRC annual reviews continue take place during the Covid-19 closure, or they must be waived - on an annual basis. Therefore, it had mandated that all IPRC annual reviews were take place prior to the end of June 2020 or be waived. A review of the Board's Plan provides a reminder about the priority list of IRPCs to be conducted utilizing a centrally-assigned committee during the Covid-19 Board closure.

In recent Board and SEAC committee meetings, the Superintendent of Special Services spoke about initial IPRCs (for the new identification of an exceptionality and placement), and those conducted centrally (to address the need for a change in identification and/or placement). The TCDSB Distance Learning and Implementation Plan articulates a reminder about the priority list established for this purpose.

The Superintendent furthermore reiterated the requirement for the completion or waiver of all IPRC annual reviews by the end-of June 2020. To reinforce understandings about which IPRCs were to have been completed and which could be waived, information about compulsory IPRC annual reviews has also been provided in the Plan.

5. The intent of the IPRC meeting is to review the identification and placement of students with special education needs. In order to facilitate opportunities for more detailed conversations about student needs, Principals may establish post-IPRC meetings utilizing the appropriate school-level committee ex. Case Conference, School Based Support Learning Team.
6. The following chart contains vital statistics regarding the 2019-20 IPRC annual reviews. The chart identifies the total number of Exceptional students who require an annual review. The total number is broken down by: those that were *completed* (conducted with appropriate members of the IPRC); those that were *waived* (parents/guardian permission given to forego the meeting for the current year); and those that are *pending* (neither completed nor waived; but which still need to be addressed as soon as possible in September 2020).

Complete	Pending	Waived	Total (Exceptional)
2542	252	4222	7016
36.23%	3.59%	60.17%	99.99%

Total IPRCd (Identified exceptional) = 7016  
 Total waived (parental permission) = 4222 (60.2%)  
 Total pending = 252 (3.6%)  
 Total complete = 2542 (36.2%)

Pending	Number	%	/7016
Autism	58	0.83	
Behaviour	25	0.36	
BLV	1	0.014	
DHH	1	0.014	
DD	3	0.042	
Giftedness	33	0.43	
LI	28	0.47	
LD	72	1.03	
MID	19	0.27	
ME	10	0.14	
PD	2	0.03	
<b>Total</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>3.63</b>	

7. In response to the request of the delegation to have all outstanding IPRCs and Special Education assessments prioritized to be completed before the first day of school in September, it is important to note that it is not possible to convene IPRCs during the summer months. IPRCs consist of members who are from a variety of employee groups whose regular annual employment takes place between September and June.

However, the above statistics demonstrate that only 3.6% of IPRCs remain incomplete as of June 30<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, they are being prioritized for completion as soon as possible upon return in September.

Noteworthy is the fact that IPRCs happen in tandem with Exchange of Information meetings and Transition Plans between the schools. The planning and execution of these meetings is detailed, and it often involves ongoing discussions and connections between the sending and receiving schools. Therefore, those rich discussions will continue to be an important part of the

transition process for all students, but particularly those with the highest needs.

8. The TCDSB Distance Learning Plan indicates that any considerations for admissions to or demissions from ISP placements and specialty programs will be made upon return to regular school operations.

## **E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. Updates regarding the delivery of Special Education programs and services will be provided in tandem with the ongoing updates provided by the TCDSB for all of its programs and services. Those updates may be provided within the context of future Board and/or Committee meetings and/or periodic briefings to Trustees.

## **F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This report is for the consideration of the Board.