



# Special Education Superintendent Update

*December 2020*



**November 20, 2020**

## Professional Development (PD) Day

On the November 20 Professional Development day, the Special Services Department offered a variety of synchronous and asynchronous professional learning opportunities for Support Staff (EA, CYW).

Shared with Principals and Support Staff was a compendium of resources intended not only for use on the November 20th PD Day but also beyond (for self-directed learning).

Support Staff participation on this day was welcomed by the following Special Services Teams:

- Assessment and Programming Teachers (APTs)
- Programming and Assessment Teachers (PATs)
- Assistive Technology (AT)
- Autism
- Mental Health and Wellbeing (including Psychology/Social Work)
- Speech and Language

### **Synchronous Learning:**

Morning and afternoon sessions for both elementary and secondary support staff audiences focused on the following topics delivered by various staff:

#### **Assessment and Programming Teachers (APTs):**

- Christian Meditation and Mindfulness
- Supporting behaviours: Self-regulation and de-escalation strategies, Behaviour Support/Safety Plans
- Sharing promising practices
- Supporting students in the virtual school (St. Anne's Academy)
- Sharing web-based resources

**Programming and Assessment Teachers (PATs)** led a workshop entitled, "**Reflection, Recognition and Response**" focusing on guiding questions for reflection relating to our students, staff roles, and goals.





Time was spent recognizing the hard work and dedication of all support staff in their work with students.

Other departmental offerings included a presentation by **Safe Schools** on “The Traumatic Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Students,” with a demonstration/discussion about calming techniques.

### Asynchronous Learning:

The following sessions were made available for afternoon earning opportunities:

## Autism

## Presentations on Autism Programs and Services for:

- Kindergarten
- Primary
- Junior/Intermediate
- Secondary



## Mental Health

- Supporting Students' Mental Health
- How to Support Students' Anxiety
- Fostering staff well-being during Covid-19

## Speech and Language:

## You and Your Voice: Preserving Vocal Health While Wearing a Mask Developing Communication Skills

To complement all of the above learning opportunities made available on the November 20 PD day itself, is the Special Services compendium of resources which provides also a host of topics, resources, and links that remain available for staff's ongoing reference and future use during self-directed learning sessions.



Psychology staff delivered professional development to their local schools on various topics including:

- The ***Trauma Informed Classroom*** presented to Educational Assistants, Child Youth Workers and Secondary Educators
- ***Supporting Student Mental Health: Prevention and Intervention Resources*** for Secondary Educators
- ***Supporting Students with Gaming Addictions*** for Secondary Educators at Chaminade College School





Our Mental Health Team provided the following professional development sessions:

- **START:** 90-minute workshop on suicide prevention was completed by 35 staff members, including a section on TCDSB suicide guidelines.
- **Supporting the Mental Health & Well-Being of Remote Learners:** attended by 90 St. Anne Academy Senior educators.
- **Staff Well-Being: How to Foster Our Own Resiliency During COVID-19:** attended by 110 St. Anne Academy Senior educators.
- **Mental Health Tools for Teachers and Students:** attended by 40 educators at Dante Alighieri Catholic Secondary School.
- **Creating a Mentally-Healthy Classroom During COVID:** attended by 54 educators at Chaminade College.



The Speech and Language Department delivered four simultaneous and synchronous professional development sessions entitled **Conversations In The Classroom** and one asynchronous session called **Vocal Hygiene**.

The target audience for **Conversations In The Classroom** was Education Assistants (EA) and Child Youth Workers (CYW). Approximately 150 EAs and CYWs joined 12 of our Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) for live conversations and presentations around how to support the speech and language needs of young children. The feedback we received was positive with participants stating that ‘they found the presentation informative’ and ‘they were grateful for the in-service’. One video of interest which continues to be offered showed how non-verbal students dialogue.

Additionally, the asynchronous presentation of **Vocal Hygiene** was offered on reprise and was well received given the continuing challenges of CoVid-19 on the learning environment.



The Autism Team provided professional learning specific to elementary staff and secondary staff. The focus was supporting students with Autism by reviewing Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)

strategies and providing instructional strategies and resources. Surrey Place also provided a webinar for staff focusing on using Independent Activity Schedules (IAS) to promote independence. The presentation focused on the understanding and the benefits of using an IAS for their students. An IAS is a tool that promotes independence by using pictures, text or both to depict a series of activities the student completes.







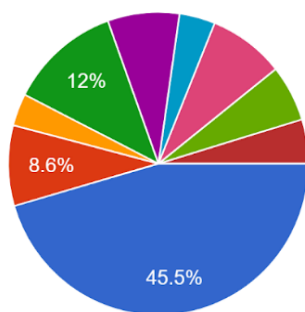
# Assistive technology

The Assistive Technology (AT) Team led professional development sessions for TCDSB teachers assigned to teach virtually at St. Anne Catholic Academy.

## Participation in Workshops

What training session did you attend?

233 responses



- 8:30 - 10:00 - Google Classroom - Intermediate/Advanced
- 8:30 - 10:00 - EquatIO (Introduction Math & Science)
- 8:30 - 10:00 - Read&Write
- 10:30 - 12:00 - Google Classroom - Intermediate/Advanced
- 10:30 - 12:00 - EquatIO (Focus Grades 9 & 10 Math)
- 10:30 - 12:00 - Read&Write
- 1:00 - 2:30 - Google Classroom - Intermediate/Advanced
- 1:00 - 2:30 - EquatIO (Focus Grade 11 & 12 Math)
- 1:00 - 2:30 - Read&Write

## Total Breakdown of Attendance/Participation Levels

A large proportion of participants engaged in sessions for Google Classroom with 153 participants. There were a total of 52 participants in sessions for EquatIO, followed by 28 participants in sessions for Read&Write. There were 233 participants engaged in the AT Team training sessions.

Session Title	Number of Attendees	% Attendance as Compared to Total Attendees
8:30 - 10:00 - Read&Write	8	3.43%
8:30 - 10:00 - Google Classroom - Intermediate/Advanced	106	45.49%
8:30 - 10:00 - EquatIO (Introduction Math & Science)	20	8.58%
10:30 - 12:00 - Read&Write	9	3.86%
10:30 - 12:00 - Google Classroom - Intermediate/Advanced	28	12.02%
10:30 - 12:00 - EquatIO (Focus Grades 9 & 10 Math)	18	7.73%
1:00 - 2:30 - Read&Write	11	4.72%
1:00 - 2:30 - Google Classroom - Intermediate/Advanced	19	8.15%
1:00 - 2:30 - EquatIO (Focus Grade 11 & 12 Math)	14	6.01%
<b>TOTAL TRAINED/ATTENDED</b>	<b>233</b>	

SESSION TOPIC	Total Number of Attendees in All Sessions by Topic	% Attendance per topic as Compared to Total Attendees
Total Training in EquatIO	52	22.32%
Total Training in Google Classroom	153	65.67%
Total Training in Read&Write	28	12.02%









## Additional Comments



“Team extensively knowledgeable and appreciated how they all navigated to support all staff ( as each one is at a different entry point). They clearly understood how to pace and stop at times to ensure that our learning was positive and if there were any questions time was allotted for this.”

“Very useful, informative and timely...didn't have to wait long for training - Thanks!”

“Continue the GREAT JOB. Very friendly presenters and well organized! TKS!!”

“The best session I have ever attended. As a new LTO I was never provided any official training and have been learning as I went. I thought I had learned everything I could but there were SO many new features I had yet to experience. So very well explained too. Thank you so very much to you both for hosting this session. I had planned to take the rest of the evening off but now I will excitingly be attempting to make new rubrics in google classroom all night! Thank you for all your help again”



The Social Work Department is currently providing support to over 2,500 students. In addition, we have provided intervention for over 8 critical incidents. We are gearing up to support our annual Angel Tree Christmas and hope to spread joy during this challenging time.

The Social Work department continues to work on student engagement as we evaluate our roles in the Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL) program and general attendance mandate. Our goal is to listen to student and family needs and gear our supports in meaningful and equitable ways.