

Roles and Responsibilities

The Ministry of Education has begun to define roles and responsibilities in elementary and secondary education in several key areas:

- legislative and policy framework;
- funding;
- school system management;
- programs and curriculum;

It is important that all involved in special education understand their roles and responsibilities, which are outlined below.

The Ministry of Education:

- defines, through the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda (PPM), the legal obligations of school boards regarding the provision of special education programs and services, and prescribes the categories and definitions of exceptionality;
- ensures that school boards provide appropriate special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils;
- establishes the funding for special education through the structure of the funding model. The current model consists of the Foundation Grant, the Special Education Grant, and other special purpose grants;
- requires school boards to report on their expenditures for special education;
- sets province-wide standards for curriculum and reporting of achievement;
- requires school boards to maintain special education plans, review them annually and submit amendments to the ministry;
- requires schools boards to establish Special Education Advisory Committees (SEAC);
- establishes Special Education Tribunals to hear disputes between parents and school boards regarding the identification and placement of exceptional pupils;
- establishes a provincial Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) to advise the Minister of Education on matters related to special education programs and services;
- operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind, or who have severe learning disabilities.

The Toronto Catholic District School Board:

- educates students to their full potential in a school community formed by Catholic beliefs and traditions;
- establishes school board policy and practices that comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda and our Catholic philosophy;
- monitors school compliance with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- requires staff to comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- provides professional development to staff on special education;
- establishes policy regarding the delivery of special education programs and services;
- provides appropriately qualified staff to provide programs and services for the exceptional pupils of the board;
- works to secure sufficient funds in a timely manner to provide programs and services and reports on the expenditures for special education as required;
- has undertaken an extensive consultation process with the various stakeholders in the development of its special education plan;
- reviews the plan annually and submits amendments to the Minister of Education;
- provides statistical reports to the ministry as required and as requested;
- prepares, updates and distributes to parents a parent guide about special education programs, services and procedures prior to any Identification, Placement & Review Committee (IPRC) meetings (Parent guide to be available in English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Ukrainian, Chinese, Tamil, Tagalog, Polish, Braille, and Large Print.);

- establishes one or more IPRCs to identify exceptional pupils and determine appropriate placements for them;
- *establishes a Special Education Advisory Committee and*
 1. *provides an opportunity for SEAC to be heard prior to making decisions which impact on special education,*
 2. *takes SEAC recommendations into account before making decisions which impact on special education;*
- *responds to SEAC recommendations advising the Board of Trustees of the feasibility and viability of the implementation of the recommendations.*

The Special Education Advisory Committee: (SEAC)

- provides opportunities for discussion and dialogue regarding improvements to special education services;
- makes recommendations to the Board with respect to any matter affecting the establishment, development, and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the board;
- participates in the board's annual review of its special education plan;
- participates in the board's annual budget process as it relates to special education within the time constraints provided;
- reviews the financial statements of the board as they relate to special education;
- invites ongoing information/presentation regarding new initiatives within the TCDSB and partnerships;
- advocates for needs of exceptional students including sufficient resources for equipment, transportation and staff to enable the delivery of service;
- shares information with respect to the Associations represented;
- receives regular updates on new initiatives.

The school principal:

- promotes the education of the whole child within the context of a Catholic community rooted in Gospel values;
- carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda, and through board policies;
- communicates Ministry of Education and school board expectations to staff;
- strives to provide that appropriately qualified staff are assigned to teach special education classes;
- communicates board policies and procedures about special education to staff, students; and parents;
- ensures that appropriate assessments are requested if necessary and that parental consent is obtained. Utilizes interpreters as required;
- ensures that the identification and placement of exceptional pupils, through an IPRC, is done according to the procedures outlined in the Education Act, regulations and board policies;
- consults with parents and with school board staff to determine the most appropriate program for exceptional pupils;
- ensures the development, implementation, and review of a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), including a transition plan, according to provincial requirements;
- ensures that parents and students 16 and older are consulted in the development of the IEP and that they are provided with a copy of the IEP;
- ensures the delivery of the program set out in the IEP.

The teacher:

- carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda in keeping with the Catholic values espoused by the Toronto Catholic District School Board;
- follows board policies and procedures regarding special education as outlined in our delivery of services model;
- maintains up to date knowledge of special education practices;
- works with special education staff and parents to develop the IEP for an exceptional pupil;
- provides the program for the exceptional pupil, as outlined in the IPRC and the IEP;
- communicates the student's progress to parents;
- works with other school board staff to review and update the student's IEP.

The special education teacher, in addition to the responsibilities listed above under "the teacher":

- holds qualifications, in accordance with Regulation 298, to teach special education;
- monitors the student's progress with reference to the IEP and modifies the program as necessary in conjunction with the regular class teacher and parent;
- assists in providing academic assessments for exceptional pupils.

The Early Childhood Educator

The parent/guardian, through the Parents Guide to Special Education (Appendix A) and dialogue with school staff:

- becomes familiar with and informed about board policies and procedures in areas that affect the child;
- participates in IPRCs, parent-teacher conferences, and other relevant school activities as outlined in the Toronto Catholic District School Board's delivery model process;
- participates in the development of the IEP;
- works in participation with the school staff working with the student;
- supports the student at home;
- works with the school principal and teachers to foster an enabling learning environment;
- is responsible for the student's attendance at school;
- keeps school staff informed of changes which may impact on learning as the child works towards his/her full potential.

Within the TCDSB our vision of students with special needs are students who will strive to fulfill their roles and responsibilities with the skills they possess. They are students who:

- strive to achieve academically and socially
- contribute in a constructive way to their class, school and community
- communicate with staff and fellow students in an acceptable way considering their level of development
- apply Christian values to life's opportunities, challenges and choices
- comply with the requirements as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda;
- comply with board policies and procedures;
- participate in IPRCs, parent-teacher conferences, and other activities, as appropriate.
- make a commitment to work consistently in achieving the expectations that have been outlined in their Individual Education Plan especially at the intermediate and secondary level
- learn to be self-advocates and learn to effectively communicate their needs to their teachers so that appropriate accommodations and modifications can be determined and implemented.
- demonstrate a willingness to attend class and to work hard.
- *Catholic School Graduate Expectations?*

For each of the sections of the TCDSB Special Education Plan below we have commented with 3 sections:

1. "Required" refers to what is required by the ministry guidelines.
2. "Findings" are what the working group observed in the TCDSB Spec Education Plan folder document.
3. "Recommendations" are what we think needs to change, and in some areas, our suggested changes.

Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities

1. Required by Ministry guidelines

- i. A list of the ministry's categories and definitions of exceptionalities in Part A of the guide. Starting on page A-14
- ii. describe the ways in which the board's IPRCs applies them (the categories and definitions of exceptionalities) in making decisions on identification and placement

2. Findings

- i. For the most part the categories and definitions of exceptionalities follows the ministry guide verbatim.
- ii. The only 2 sections that deviate from the Ministry guide are Autism where there are minor formatting problems with the bullet points and the Learning Disability section where there are substantial differences.
- iii. There is no description of the ways in which the board's IPRC applies them in making decisions on identification and placement.

3. Recommendations

- i. A copy and paste of the guidelines for this section should be considered.
- ii. The autism section bullet points do not all align with the ministry definitions. Correct those that do not. See page A-15
- iii. The Learning Disability section is substantially different from the definition in the guide. We recommend substituting the ministry guide definition on pages A-15 to A-16.
- iv. Add a description of the ways in which the IPRCs apply the categories and definitions of exceptionalities in making decisions on identification and placement.

Provincial and Demonstration schools

1. Required by Ministry guideline

- i. information on programs and services offered by Provincial and Demonstration Schools that is provided by the ministry in the Provincial Schools and Demonstration Schools section in Part F of this guide
 1. Provincial Schools and Demonstration Schools:
 2. Provincial School details
 3. Demonstration School details
 4. Contact Information for Provincial Schools and Demonstration Schools
 - i. See appendix F-2 from the Ministry guide.
 - ii. current statistics, by program, on the number of students who are qualified to be resident students in the board who are currently attending Provincial and Demonstration Schools
 - iii. information about how transportation is provided for students to and from the Provincial or Demonstration School, including transportation of an assistant, if necessary

2. Findings

- i. Some working has changed and points omitted from the guideline in the Provincial Schools and Demonstration Schools sections
- ii. We have summarized much of the information about the W. Ross Macdonald School in Brantford for deaf and blind students. This is the only school for which we go into this level of detail. Information is not organized in a logical manner and is incomplete.
- iii. We list more provincial and demonstration schools than the ministry does.
- iv. We comingle the transportation and number of students who attend sections.

3. Recommendations

- i. This is a suggested format, for the most part we should copy and paste the relevant bullet points and content for:
 1. Provincial and Demonstration schools (page F6 & F7)
 2. Provincial schools (DHH and BLV)
 1. information (page F8)
 2. admission (page F7)
 3. transportation. (page F8)
 4. List of provincial schools (page F9)
 3. Demonstration school (Severe LD)
 1. Information (page F10)
 2. admission (page F7)
 3. transportation (page F8)
 4. List of demonstration schools (page F10)
 4. Include Ministry link for additional school information <https://pdsbnet.ca/en/schools/>
- ii. Use the ministry list of contacts for Provincial and demonstration schools (page F14)
- iii. Note the ministry lists 7 Provincial and demonstration schools but guidelines list 8 schools. Centre Jules-Leger has been removed from the ministry website, possibly because it is French or there may be another reason. We need to determine if it should be included or not.
- iv. Separate out the sections on “Transportation” and “Number of students who attend”. List Transportation separately under Provincial Schools and Demonstration schools.