

TCDSB Special Education Plan Review

Input from the Ad Hoc Committee for January items, presented at SEAC February 17, 2021

For each section of the TCDSB Special Education Plan 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.

1. Special Education Staff

1. Required by Ministry guidelines

- i. Information on the types of staff who provide special education programs and services
- ii. Appendix B-2
 1. Services offered
 2. Staff category
 3. Qualifications required for categories of staff
 4. FTEs
 5. Range of programs
 6. Split by elementary panel and secondary panel

2. Findings

- i. The information required is largely there but the plan does not follow the required format for the information as set out in the guidelines (Appendix B-2)
- ii. It's confusing to list the FTE's by both staff type and Special Education program

3. Recommendations

- i. Reformat the information into the format required in Appendix B-2 of the guidelines
- ii. Remove FTE's from the bulleted descriptions of staff types
- iii. Add a column to the chart required in Appendix B-2 listing which identification(s) the staff work with

2. Equipment

1. Required by Ministry guidelines

- i. How the board determines whether a student requires individualized equipment, such as assistive technology
- ii. How the board allocates its budget for equipment
- iii. Criteria used for purchasing individualized equipment.

2. Findings

- i. How the board determines need is overly complex
- ii. No reference to how the board allocates its budget for equipment
- iii. Criteria used for purchasing is buried in with the determination of need section

3. Recommendations

- i. Separate every required section and add headings:
 1. How the board determines whether a student requires individualized equipment
 2. Budget allocations
 3. Criteria used for purchasing and the process for the timely approval, purchase and training to use the individualized equipment
- ii. Simplify the description of how the board determines need
- iii. Add the budget allocation section (Q – what level of detail is appropriate/helpful?)

- iv. Simplify the criteria used for purchasing and add the process for the timely approval, purchase and training to use the individualized equipment (e.g. 1. Principal assembles documents. 2. Approval of a Superintendent. 3. Mr. Reid approves the purchase. 4. Purchasing Department buys the equipment. 5. Distribute equipment to school and provide training.)
- v. Although the chart on the second page is not required by the Guidelines, it is helpful. Recommend it be kept in some format in this section.
- vi. On page 2, replace “Equipment orders through Special Equipment Amount are based on a Ministry funding formula.” with “SEA is funded by the Ministry of Education and claims are submitted by the TCDSB on the student’s behalf.”
- vii. On page 2, replace “The type of equipment purchased:” with “Here are a few examples of some of the types of equipment provided to Special Education students:”

3. Transportation

1. Required by Ministry guidelines

- i. describe the types of students with special needs who are eligible to receive transportation and that gifted students are currently not eligible
- ii. the ways in which students can access the transportation.
 - 1. students in special education programs (ISP classes), including students who are in regular classrooms
 - 2. students in educational programs in care and/or treatment, custody, and correctional facilities
 - 3. students attending Provincial and Demonstration Schools
 - 4. students who require transportation in order to attend summer school programs (e.g. children in wheelchairs)
- iii. the process for deciding whether a student with special needs will be transported with other children or whether it is in the best interests of the student to be transported separately
- iv. the safety criteria that are used by the board in the tendering and the selection of transportation providers for exceptional students
 - 1. drivers must have first-aid training;
 - 2. wheelchairs must be secured during transit;
 - 3. a criminal record checks
 - 4.

2. Findings

- i. The first 4 paragraphs of this section cover the reasons why we don’t provide transportation for gifted students.
- ii. There is a chart on the first page that goes into the amounts spent on transportation by groups of students, largely by identification but not entirely.
- iii. The ways in which students can access the transportation services is incomplete and unclear.
- iv. Separate transportation for students has no separate heading.
- v. The separate transportation process does not list the criteria for the decisions.
- vi. There are 6 pages dedicated to safety criteria.

3. Recommendations

- i. Clearly state which students by IPRC identification and placement are eligible for transportation.
- ii. Make one statement that Gifted students are currently responsible for their own transportation to and from the program.
- iii. Eliminate the chart with amounts spent. It is not required and out of date.
- iv. Ways in which students can access transportation services needs to follow the guidelines with the following 4 categories and headers:
 - 1. Students in special education programs, including students who are in regular classrooms (there is no clear heading for this section)

2. Students in educational programs in care and/or treatment, custody, and correctional facilities
 3. Students attending Provincial and Demonstration Schools (this has been split into 2 sections, provincial schools and demonstration schools, consolidate and remove the excess information)
 4. Students who require transportation in order to attend summer school programs (add this category/header)
- v. Limit the information in the section on “The 4 categories of the ways special education students access transportation services” to simple procedures used to access transportation services. Remove repetitive sections on the criteria and process related to identification.
 - vi. Add a clear header for the separate transportation for students where needed.
 - vii. The guidelines require a description of the process that goes beyond “we will tell you if you qualify”. Describe the steps in the application process as well as the criteria used to make the decision.
 - viii. The transportation safety criteria are excessively detailed and contains unnecessary information. Simplify this to point form to a single page or less. Make simple statements that cover the following points:
 1. All drivers have first-aid training; (Perhaps specify by who ie. St. John’s Ambulance or Red Cross)
 2. Wheelchairs are always secured during transit;
 3. Drivers must pass a criminal record checks. (If it an annual check, include that detail.)
 - ix. A statement that busses and drivers must comply will all applicable Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Education and TCDSB standards. This would cover just about everything needed beyond what is in the guidelines. Add links to the appropriate websites for reference in the “additional information section”.

4. Transition planning

1. Required by Ministry guidelines

- i. There is no specific transition planning section to the ministry guidelines.

2. Findings

- i. There appears to be overlap with section 15 (Coordination of services)
- ii. Much of this appears to refer to part C of the “Special Education in Ontario, Kindergarten to Grade 12”

3. Recommendations

- i. Keep this section. Make sure it accurately reflects the transition guidelines in Part C of the “Special Education in Ontario, Kindergarten to Grade 12”.