

Good evening. I am asking the board to make sure all students get what they need this year, the support they're entitled to, so they can reach their potential and have a better year starting in September. The TCDSB says it is committed to assessing and placing all special education students each year but it has already planned to delay this year's OLSAT-8 testing for all Grade 4's as well as the related results, IPRCs, and placement offers.

Last year, COVID delayed things. This year, we've had lots of time to figure it out. If we count backwards:

- All special education students, including those Grade 4's being tested this year and identified as gifted, deserve to start school on September 7 in the appropriate program, with the necessary supports.
- For students and teachers to be ready at the start of September, parents need to get their children's offers of placement in early June so the families can reply before the end of June.
- This means conducting Identification, Placement & Review Committee meetings for all identified Grade 4's in May. If you're promising to do 200 IPRCs on an expedited basis in the fall, you can also do this in May, and save families a lot of needless chaos and stress.
- To run the May IPRCs, Grade 4 tests have to be administered before the end of April (which is 3 weeks from now).

So where are we?

- Testing started in March, just a few weeks ago, for a few Grade 4's attending "in person". As we learned this week, schools can shut down very fast.
- Yet the latest shut down offers a chance to pivot and simply test all remaining Grade 4's this month online.
- Other boards organized testing so that parents pick up the test at the home school, students open it on camera, they do the test with a teacher watching, and parents return the test in a sealed envelope.
- Remember, teachers conduct tests online daily with "virtual" students.
- Some parents of Grade 4's recently received a test date and letter saying "it is anticipated that the results of this assessment will be available in the Fall".

- At the March 24 SEAC meeting, staff said "we won't hold these current grade 4/next year Grade 5 IPRCs until the fall".
- It's already been decided despite the clear obligation and reminders from the Ministry of Education to complete all IPRCs before end of this schoolyear (June 2021).
- It's not okay to make parents wait until the fall. Once again, this cannot wait until "normal operations resume".
- Instead of staff writing a report explaining why they can't do this on time, please just do this.
- The special education community wants to know that the mental health and well-being of these students matters. Parents, who have lost their jobs, their businesses, and turned on a dime whenever schools shut down or didn't reopen until late September, do not want their children's education delayed any further.
- This is a very doable and reasonable request.
- You want to boost sanity and mental health? Get this work done by the end of June.
- On behalf of many students, their families, their classmates, and their teachers, support from Trustees and staff to complete this work by the end of June would be very much appreciated. Thank you very much.

Here is some brief history and background on this issue:

The Ministry of Education stated twice in at least two Memos that the Ministry expects that all IPRC's should have been completed on schedule, even if remotely. (A summary of these M of E memos are attached below for your reference.) The TCDSB and TDSB are the only 2 school boards in the province that did not meet this expectation in 2019-2020.

An IPRC, or "Identification, Placement & Review Committee" meeting is a half hour to hour long meeting that includes the student's parent, and typically also includes a principal, special education consultant, and/or psychologist, as appropriate. The purpose is to evaluate the student's Special Education needs, previously obtained assessments, and parent's preference, in order to identify a Special Education exceptionality, leading to a specified Placement and/or possible education supports.

Regulation 181/98 governs IPRCs, which are to be held every school year for Special Education students who seek them or are referred, in order to

confirm placements, typically for the following school year.

Excerpts from MOE Memos:

“The Ministry has sent two communications to school boards, on April 21, 2020 and May 27, 2020 with clear expectations regarding Identification, Placement and Review Committees (IPRC).

On April 21, 2020, it was written:

Boards are expected to continue to conduct annual reviews by IPRCs as set out under Ontario Regulation 181/98.

And on May 27, 2020, it was written:

As indicated in our previous memo, IPRCs should continue to conduct annual reviews. Any initial IPRC decisions that were in progress at the start of the school closure period should also continue. Going forward, as set out in Ontario Regulation 181/98, initial IPRCs may be requested by parents and/or initiated by boards following the appropriate processes.”