

Consideration of Motion – Grade 4 Assessments, IPRCs and Placements

To: Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), June 9, 2021

MOVED BY: Deborah Nightingale, SEAC Representative for ABC Ontario

SECONDED BY:

WHEREAS: The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) has committed to creating school communities focused on the success, mental health and well-being of all students, including special education students;

WHEREAS: The TCDSB annually tests all Grade 4 students using the universal screen OLSAT-8 to identify areas students are struggling in and their learning needs as well as to determine giftedness. These tests are normally conducted for all TCDSB Grade 4 students between January and March;

WHEREAS: Special needs students without an initial or an annual IPRC review before the end of August 2021, will not have their support requirements updated and will not be prepared for the return to school on September 7, 2021;

WHEREAS: Parents and students should be afforded a fair and reasonable opportunity to be offered, consider and respond to student placements before the end of August 2021;

WHEREAS: Identification, Placement and Review Committees (IPRCs) and offers of placement were conducted late last year. TCDSB staff had one year notice to ensure that all Grade 4 students complete these tests and related IPRCs and offers of placement before the end of June 2021;

WHEREAS: It has been proposed at SEAC that any Grade 4 tests not concluded in person can be administered virtually;

WHEREAS: The TCDSB is required by the Ministry of Education and our Special Education Plan, to have prompt and equitable assessment of all students in a timely manner;

WHEREAS: Even the appearance that a decision was made to not attempt to perform any assessments of giftedness for a full grade of students seems to be

inequitable and unjustified discrimination against an entire category of special education students;

WHEREAS: There was a delegation to the Board on April 8. This highlighted the need for timely testing of all Grade 4 students as well as IPRCs and placement offers for students identified as gifted as a result of those Grade 4 tests before school starts in September 2021; and

WHEREAS: This issue was extensively discussed at the SEAC meeting on April 21.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommends that all Grade 4 TCDSB students, whether attending school “in person” or “virtual”, have the OLSAT-8 assessment administered, if not in person, then virtually;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: In order to accomplish the required goal of having all students placed in the correct program at the start of September, SEAC recommends that the TCDSB take the following steps:

1. Complete all OLSAT-8 assessments for all Grade 4 students, whether attending school in person or virtual, as soon as possible, and in any event, no later than June 30, 2021;
2. Complete all IPRCs for students identified with the exceptionality of gifted as soon as possible, and in any event, no later than July 31, 2021;
3. Issue all offers of placement for students identified with the exceptionality of gifted as soon as possible, and in any event, no later than August 20, 2021; and
4. So that parents and students have time to consider and make inquiries with destination schools to make their decisions, allow parents to reply to placement offers on a rolling basis, at their earliest opportunity;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommends that in order to conclude all of these steps for all Grade 4 students in an equitable manner, TCDSB does not wait to process IPRCs until the last assessment is written. Instead, as soon as students are assessed, their IPRCs should be held so that all students can equitably start in their appropriate placement at the start of the school year; and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: It is not acceptable or equitable to not try to complete these steps this school year for a specific population. SEAC urges and strongly recommends that the TCDSB affirm that it will fulfill its obligation, as

required by the Ministry of Education and Special Education Plan, to complete all assessments before the end of June and all resulting IPRCs and offers of placement for all special education students, including all Grade 4 students, before the end of August so that all students are equipped to start in their correct placement on the first day of school in September 2021.