

**Consideration of Motion: Promotion of Inclusive practices in the Multi-Year Strategic plan.**

To: SEAC

October 20, 2021

Moved By: Tyler Munro, SEAC Representative for Inclusion Action in Ontario Education and Community (IAO)

Seconded by: Melanie Battaglia, SEAC Representative for Autism Ontario

**WHEREAS:** The mission of the TCDSB is to be an Inclusive learning community, uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ;

**WHEREAS:** An “Inclusive” school board is one that focuses on educating all students in regular classrooms and delivering necessary services and accommodations to special needs students in a regular classroom at their students’ local school and in their local community. Those boards operate few or no special segregated classrooms (ISP classes);

**WHEREAS:** Pope Francis and Catholic Social Teachings strongly support the establishment and operations of Catholic Schools following the “Inclusive” model:

- ‘An inclusive education finds a place for all and does not select in an elitist way the beneficiaries of its efforts.’ – Pope Francis;
- “An education in the fullness of humanity should be the defining feature of Catholic schools” – Pope Francis;
- “Putting the entire person at the centre of education” - Pope Francis;
- “Orienting educational work towards the margins, social margins and existential margins through service, encounter and welcome.” – Pope Francis;

- "Education is an inclusive movement. An inclusion that goes towards all the excluded: those for poverty, for vulnerability due to wars, famines and natural disasters, for social selectivity, for family and existential difficulties," – Pope Francis;
- Vatican City, Feb 20, 2020 / 10:08 am (CNA)- Pope Francis called for an educational revolution Thursday, telling the Congregation for Catholic Education that more effort needs to be made to accelerate the inclusiveness of education;
- FRATELLI TUTTI Encyclical Letter Pope Francis writes: [98]I would like to mention some of those “hidden exiles” who are treated as foreign bodies in society. Many persons with disabilities “feel that they exist without belonging and without participating”. Much still prevents them from being fully enfranchised. Our concern should be not only to care for them but to ensure their “active participation in the civil and ecclesial community. That is a demanding and even tiring process, yet one that will gradually contribute to the formation of consciences capable of acknowledging each individual as a unique and unrepeatable person”. I think, too, of “the elderly who, also due to their disability, are sometimes considered a burden”. Yet each of them is able to offer “a unique contribution to the common good through their remarkable life stories”. Let me repeat: we need to have “the courage to give a voice to those who are discriminated against due to their disability, because sadly, in some countries even today, people find it hard to acknowledge them as persons of equal dignity”; and
- “Defense of the right to life implies the defense of all other rights that enable the individual with the disability to achieve the fullest measure of personal development of which he or she is capable. These include the right to equal opportunity in education, in employment, in housing, and in health care, as well as the right to free access to public accommodations, facilities, and services.” US Catholic Bishops Statement on Disability (2016).

**WHEREAS:** Thirty (30) years of extensive research supporting accommodating special needs student within regular classrooms has shown, with an Inclusive approach:

- The special needs student does the same or better academically in an Inclusive classroom;
- Academically all students do better in Inclusive classrooms;
- Teachers become more effective educators by broadening their teaching skills which benefit all students in Inclusive settings;
- Students learn to interact socially and accept those who are not like them, those who are different;
- Special needs students learn to interact with their peers in a typical accommodated, class setting and this eases the transition into adult life, making them more productive members of society. An artificial segregated setting can never achieve this and discourage accommodation in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code; and
- Monies can be diverted from expensive segregated programs, bussing and underutilized assets to training staff, hiring frontline staff supporting students in regular classrooms and hiring support staff.

**WHEREAS:** Nineteen (19) of the sixty (60) English language school boards (32%) in Ontario promote the use of Inclusive classrooms and operate no or only a few Intensive Support Program (ISP) classes for a limited number of Identifications;

**WHEREAS:** Twelve (12) of the twenty-nine (29) English Language Catholic School Boards (41%) in Ontario promote the Inclusive classroom and operate no or only a few ISP classes for a limited number of Identifications;

**WHEREAS:** New Brunswick, which has similar student enrollment levels as TCDSB, prohibits by law the segregation of any student due to a

disability. New Brunswick has been a global leader in Inclusive education for 35 years;

**WHEREAS:** Most school boards that promote Inclusive classrooms achieve similar or superior results on standardized testing when compared to geographically overlapping boards that segregate special needs students, some by significant amounts. Renfrew Catholic District School Board (DSB) Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) scores are 19% higher than Renfrew DSB. Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB EQAO scores are 16% higher than Hamilton-Wentworth DSB. Of note Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB has been operating without ISP classes as we know them for over 50 years;

**WHEREAS:** There is a presumption by TCDSB staff at all levels that the current ineffective and expensive parallel model of special education is best suited for a special needs student. This presumption is made without benefit of reviewing research or having experience in Inclusive school boards. Parents and advocates who request an Inclusive placement for a student are dismissed without serious consideration of the request and they are often subject to significant pressure from staff to consent to a segregated placement recommendation;

**WHEREAS:** There are few, if any, accommodations provided to students in ISP classes that could not be provided in a regular class if staff were trained and supported to provide those accommodations; and

**WHEREAS:** Promoting Inclusive Education is consistent with our Catholic values, modern pedagogy research and practices, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, The Ontario Human Rights Code, the laws and court rulings of Canada and Ontario. It is more cost effective than a segregated approach and helps all students reach their potential.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** That SEAC recommend to the Board that a senior team be put together to develop a pilot project or plan that identifies key deliverable and goals for each year in order to promote Inclusive placements for special needs students that are currently or likely to be placed in ISP classes to be included in the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) being prepared. As part of the MYSP SEAC suggests the senior team:

- Provide a modern definition of Inclusion in an education setting that will be posted prominently on the board's website, on related documents and shared with staff;
- Consult with experts in Inclusive Education, Inclusive school boards, SEAC, review research and review available plans for transitioning a board to an Inclusive model;
- Develop a general strategy for preparing staff, departments and the board to support a transition to an Inclusive model;
- Identify and prioritize policies and procedure documents that need to be updated to reflect a change to an Inclusive model of education, including the Special Education Plan; and
- Identify groups of students that will be transitioned to the Inclusive model each year, the staff groups that will educate and support them and the training they will need.

Additional information:

Websites:

<https://fullinclusionforcatholicschools.org/>

<https://inclusiveeducation.ca/>

<https://ace.nd.edu/> The Alliance for Catholic Education, University of Notre Dame

<https://inclusiveschools.org/>

<https://www.ncld.org/> National Center for Learning Disabilities.

<https://ollibean.com>

<https://iod.unh.edu/cie> University of New Hampshire, Center on Inclusive Education.

<https://www.mcie.org/> Maryland Coalition of Inclusive Education

## References:

FRATELLI TUTTI Encyclical Letter

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20201003\\_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html#\\_ftn76](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html#_ftn76)

## Research:

The Case for Inclusive Education: TDSB research department.

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/research/docs/reports/A%20Case%20for%20Inclusive%20Education13Aug13.pdf>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346088396\\_A\\_Relict\\_of\\_the\\_Past\\_Identification\\_Placement\\_and\\_Review\\_Committees\\_in\\_Ontario's\\_Education\\_System](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346088396_A_Relict_of_the_Past_Identification_Placement_and_Review_Committees_in_Ontario's_Education_System)

## Negative effects of Educating Children in Self Contained Classrooms:

- ☐ No educational advantage of a self-contained, segregated classroom, only disadvantages. (Buckley, S.J., Bird, G., Sacks, B. & Archer, T., 2006)
- ☐ No academic advantage (Falvey, 2004)
- ☐ Inferior quality of IEP goals (Hunt & Farron-Davis, 1992)
- ☐ Poorer quality of instruction in academic skills (NCLB, Wheelock, 1992)
- ☐ Lack of generalization to regular environments (Stokes & Baer, 1977)
- ☐ Disruption of opportunities for sustained interactions and social relationships with typical students (Strully & Strully, 1992)
- ☐ Decrease in the confidence that general education teachers have for teaching diverse learners (Giangreco *et al.*, 1993)
- ☐ Absence of appropriate role and behavior models (Lovett, 1996)
- ☐ Negative impact on classroom climate and student attitudes about differences (Fisher, Sax, & Rodifer, 2000)
- ☐ Children with Down Syndrome who are educated in special classrooms are more than 2 years behind on expressive language than children with Down Syndrome who are fully included (Buckley, *DownsEd*)
- ☐ No gains were made in speech and language in the students that were in special classrooms (Buckley, *DownsEd*)
- ☐ No improvements in school achievements (Cuckle, 1998)

- There is no such thing as a self-contained world, educating students in a self-contained room does not allow the students to learn all of the other things they will need to survive in this very large world (Decatur & Bassett, 2007)
- Students who stay their whole career in a self-contained classroom, have a 5 percent shot at a diploma. And that is immoral,” said the DOE’s chief academic officer, Shael Polakow-Suransky. “We cannot allow thousands of kids to be confined to failure.”
- Disruption of sustained opportunities for social relationships (Strully & Strully, 1992)
- Disruption of Maslow’s Theory that “all human beings need to belong before they can achieve” (Kunc, 1992)