

Report from the Informal Working Group to TCDSB SEAC February 9, 2022

## **INTRODUCTORY Remarks**

### **Special Education Plan Review (Spec Ed Plan Review)**

In April 2021, the Informal Working Group recommended to SEAC that Special Services (SS) Staff give priority for revision to the following five areas of the Spec Ed Plan:

1. IPRC Process
2. IEP Process
3. Special Education Placements provided by the Board
4. Parent Guide to Special Education
5. Board's Consultation Process

SEAC approved this priority order and SS Staff revised these and other sections for the submission to the Ministry of Education required every year by July 31<sup>st</sup> when there are changes to the Board's Spec Ed Plan.

For the 2021-2022 SEAC Review of the Spec Ed Plan, the Informal Working Group is planning to start the review with these five sections, and then continue the review of the other sections in the order that they occur in the Spec Ed Plan.

Questions for Superintendent Meehan and the two sections reviewed for the February 9, 2022 SEAC meeting follow.

### **Questions for Superintendent Meehan:**

1. When will the next Board Learning Improvement Plan (BLIP) be completed and what portion of it will be relevant to Special Services and the Spec Ed Plan?

## **TCDSB Spec Ed Plan Review: The Board's General Model for Special Education July 2021**

For each section of the TCDSB Special Education Plan we have commented with three sections:

1. "Required" refers to what is required by the Ministry guidelines.
2. "Findings" are what the working group observed in the TCDSB Special Education Plan currently on the TCDSB website.

3. “Recommendations” are what we think needs to be changed in the TCDSB plan, and in some areas, our suggested changes.

## **1.The Board’s General Model for Special Education**

### **a. Required by the Ministry Guidelines**

“The school board's special education plan must outline in detail the board's general philosophy and service-delivery model for the provision of special education programs and services. The board's special education plan must be designed to comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the *Education Act* and regulations made under

### **The Board’s General Model cont’d:**

the act, and any other relevant legislation. The board must include a statement in the plan confirming that the plan has been designed in accordance with this requirement.”

### **b. Findings**

The TCDSB General Model does contain information on the philosophy and the service-delivery model, but the wording may be difficult to understand by parents, especially newcomers to Canada.

Paragraphs 2 & 3: These paragraphs describe the TCDSB philosophy extremely well.

Paragraph 4: This paragraph does express the service-delivery model used by the TCDSB.

Paragraph 5: This paragraph expresses only part of the delivery model. Also, in line four, we recommend replacing “the child” with “their child” and replacing “The” with “They”.

Paragraph 6: The mandated statement that the General Model comply with the legislation has been included.

### **c. Recommendations**

Paragraph 1: This quotation is wonderful, but it is no longer available on the Ministry website, therefore we recommend that this paragraph be removed.

We recommend adding a paragraph/section header to describe the service-delivery paragraphs that follow.

Paragraph 4: We recommend that the TCDSB Special Education Plan either include a new section called “Definitions” to explain the technical language used in this paragraph or, add a link to the sections of the Special Education Plan where the reader can find a description of these terms and more information on the types of services and programs offered.

Paragraph 5: We recommend that other parties be added such as the school principal, teachers, TCDSB resource staff, board support staff, agency representatives, and/or the parents’ representatives who help provide the full service-delivery model.

## **TCDSB Spec Ed Plan Review: Parent Guide For Special Education July 2021**

For each section of the TCDSB Special Education Plan we have commented with three sections:

4. “Required” refers to what is required by the ministry guidelines.
5. “Findings” are what the working group observed in the TCDSB Special Education Plan currently on the TCDSB website.
6. “Recommendations” are what we think needs to be changed in the TCDSB plan, and in some areas, our suggested changes.

### **1. Parent Guide For Special Education**

#### **a. Required by the Ministry Guidelines**

## **TCDSB Spec Ed Plan Review: Parent Guide For Special Education July 2021 cont’d:**

- i. This guide is not required by the Ministry Guidelines to be part of the Board’s Special Education Plan. It is required under Reg. 181/98 and is part of the Board’s “Roles and Responsibilities” outlined in Section A and referred to in Section B.
- ii. The Ministry provides a sample of the “Parents’ Guide to Special Education” in appendix D-1 pages D32 to D43 of the Ministry’s **Special Education in Ontario Kindergarten to Grade 12 Policy and Resource Guide Draft Version, 2017**. Much of the

TCDSB “Parent Guide to Special Education” is copied from the sample guide.

b. Findings

The previous version of this guide had many variances from the Ministry sample “Parents’ Guide For Special Education”. The missing or less accurate wording was revised satisfactorily. A new and greatly improved document was created that is aligned with the Ministry sample.

1. “What is the role of the IPRC?” This section does not exist in this version of the Parents’ Guide but the content is covered.
2. “Once a child has been placed in a special education program, can the placement be reviewed?” has a different title from this section of the sample guide but the content is there.
3. What can parents do if they disagree with the IPRC decision? The previous version did not include a helpful way to access the Board name and address information needed for parents to send an appeal to the appropriate place/person. This has been addressed.
4. “How do I appeal an IPRC decision?” section is missing but this information is contained in the guide.
5. The “Overview of the Special Education Process” section is not in the sample guide.
6. The Ontario Ministry of Education “Category of Exceptionalities” is not in the sample guide.

c. Recommendations

Here are the suggested items to address in the next revision of the “Parents’ Guide For Special Education”.

1. Page 11, “Organizations to Assist Parents” section does not contain a complete list of organizations. We suggest either (a) remove this list, (b) provide a longer, more complete list, or (c) state “For more information about community agencies in the GTA, call 211.”
2. Page 11, “Organizations to Assist Parents” section. Add website information for each organization.

3. Page 11, “Representatives nominated by these organizations can be members ...” Remove the word “are” and replace with “can be”.
4. Page 11, “Organizations to Assist Parents” section. Remove the pagination typo (page 9).