



Special Education Superintendent Update

March 2022



Upcoming event



April 5: Workshop in partnership with *Behaviour Matters* for parents to help understand and identify children's emotions.



March 7 to 13 is Social Work Week in Ontario

Social work has always been essential.
Now, social workers are...

In Critical Demand



This week complements National Social Work Month in Canada. At the TCDSB, School Social Workers offer expertise in children's development and mental health. Social workers employed in our system carry a minimum of a Master's in Social Work and are regulated by the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers.

Serving approximately 7000 students a year, social workers engage in diverse activities to support students, families, and schools. We are privileged to learn and grown in diverse communities to ensure our service is of the highest caliber.

TCDSB social workers provide consultation, prevention, counseling, and crisis response services, just to name a few. The needs in our system are varied and certainly increased as a result of the pandemic.

As the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) illustrates, *"Despite these challenges, it is fundamental to our profession to close with a message of hope and resilience. As a profession grounded in principles of social justice, optimism comes naturally. We are secure in the knowledge that our profession is united in our shared commitment to sustain social change and to continue to transform the legacy of our profession through our daily efforts on the frontlines, in our classrooms and in our offices (CASW)."*

This year's themes are appropriately *#InCriticalDemand* to acknowledge that social workers are needed *#MoreThanEver!*

#MoreThanEver
MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS
FOR ALL.

Social workers. Here for you.





In collaboration with the Equity Department, plans were made for Black Mental Health Week that is being acknowledged this week (March 7-11). A compilation of resources has been disseminated to support learning about the impact of anti-Black racism on Black mental health and to equip staff to create and sustain mentally healthy environments in which Black students, families, staff, and the greater community feel a sense of safety, welcoming, belonging, and inclusion.

The Mental Health Team continues to promote mental health activities and resources throughout the system, including the following:

- In collaboration with Safe Schools, Curriculum, and Nurturing our Catholic Community Departments, the team provided professional development to different staff groups on facilitating classroom conversations about cannabis within the context of the Health and Physical Education curriculum.
- Provided *SafeTALK Suicide Awareness training* to 17 student support staff to equip these staff to recognize students who may be experiencing suicidal ideation and connect them with the appropriate professionals for intervention (i.e. social work, psychology, guidance).
- Facilitating ongoing training on a new mental health intervention protocol, *Principle Guided Psychotherapy for Children and Adolescents*, for a pilot group of school social workers and psychologists to add to the range of tools they can draw from to support students with anxiety.
- In collaboration with Safe Schools, Curriculum, and Nurturing our Catholic Community Departments, the team provided a parent/guardian webinar with 167 participants in attendance: *Helping Your Teen Navigate Emotional Times* with psychologist Eva de Gosztonyi, faculty member of the Neufeld Institute

The Speech and Language department provided hands-on professional development to Speech-Language Pathologist staff on February 28th to present a comprehensive review of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) tools for students.



The Deaf and Hard of Hearing department is inviting Deaf/Hard of Hearing students in grade 7 to 12 to participate in the virtual *Ottawa Deaf Youth Conference - 'together 2022'* on May 18 and 19. *Cochlear Canada* has donated live closed captioning for the conference. The conference will also be interpreted into English and American Sign Language (ASL). Student attendees will receive full-length conference t-shirts - generously donated by TD Canada Trust.



This year to celebrate *World Autism Month* in April, we are holding a student-centered online conference entitled, *We Belong*, on Thursday April 7th. We are inviting secondary students to participate in this event from across the TCDSB who share a diagnosis of Autism. Students will hear a keynote address from Daniel Share-Strom, an adult with Autism and participate in virtual breakout sessions focused on developing their passions, using personal fitness to manage stress, adulting and focusing on their strengths. Our aim is to give our students the opportunity to interact with adults who have come to understand their diagnosis as a strength, and to connect with students who share similar experiences.



TCDSB WORLD AUTISM DAY 2022

APRIL 4TH, 2022

DAY EVENT

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION
KISARA

BOOK
DO YOU WANT TO PLAY: MAKING FRIENDS WITH AN AUTISTIC KID
BY DANIEL SHARE-STROM

AUTISM NEWSLETTER
LINKS TO SCHOOL RESOURCES, ACTIVITIES AND MORE.

EVENING EVENT

MASS AT THE CEC
BEING STREAMED LIVE