







Special Education Superintendent Update

February 2022



Upcoming events:

 AUTISM PROGRAMS AND SERVICES Transition Planning Workshop for Parents of Children with Autism in Grades 7 and 8 on the Credit Earning Pathway  <i>Supporting Students to Grow and Learn in New Environments</i> Webinar and Q & A Date: Tuesday February 22, 2022 Time: 7:00 pm- 8:00 pm Parent & Student Information Website: https://sites.google.com/tcdsb.ca/transitiontohighschoolsd/home <i>Presented by:</i> Autism Programs and Services – Transition Team & School Support Program, Surrey Place Centre	 TCDSB SPECIAL SERVICES TRANSITION TEAM Transition Planning Workshop for Caregivers of Students in Grades 7 and 8 MEDD/ISP Programs  <i>Supporting Students to Grow and Learn in New Environments</i> Webinar and Q & A Date: Thursday February 24, 2022 Time: 7:00 pm- 8:00 pm Transition Resources Website: https://sites.google.com/tcdsb.ca/meddtransitiontohighschool/home <i>Presented by:</i> Special Services – Transition Team & School Support Program, Surrey Place Centre
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Eighty TCDSB staff are engaged in an enhanced Autism training program offered through the Geneva Center. This training supports learning about foundational Autism and Applied Behaviour Analysis skills and support techniques.



Staff are collaborating with Surrey Place to support the determination of TCDSB sites for the Ontario Autism Program Entry to School skill building program. This Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services-led initiative will provide targeted support for pre-school students with Autism, before they attend school for the first time.



SPECIAL SERVICES

What services do School Psychology Professionals offer?



School Psychology Professionals utilize their knowledge of child & adolescent development, along with their understanding of school climate & culture to **provide these 5 levels of service**



Direct Student-focused

- Psychological assessment to determine/diagnose learning, behaviour & mental health problems/disorders
- Specific recommendations, plans & goals for intervention & progress monitoring
- Individual and group counselling & other mental health interventions



Indirect Student-focused

- Consultation with school personnel
- Parent collaboration
- Interagency liaison



Whole Class & School-wide

- Participate in problem solving teams
- Advise and direct prevention & early intervention programs
- Provide professional development for school personnel



System & District Wide

- Develop & implement academic & mental health screening
- Evaluate intervention & prevention programs
- Develop & implement inclusive parenting programs



Educational research design & statistical analysis:

- Project design & planning
- Data collection, analysis & interpretation of results
- Translation of findings into practical applications



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Learn more at bit.ly/2PPX7Af

February is Psychology Month!

During this month, we focus on how school psychologists help support student learning and mental health, as well as supporting parents and school staff. The goal is to create awareness of, and interest in, the diverse roles psychology plays, and to share with the public how psychology contributes to the overall well-being of the school community. More information can be found at our Psychology webpage and twitter account (@TCDSB_Psych).

WHAT IS

Psychology



How School Psychology Professionals Support Ontario Schools During School Closures

School Psychology Professionals in Ontario School Boards provide the following evidence-informed Educational Services remotely via **telepractice and virtual care** to students, staff and parents. Service delivery is **responsive to emerging needs** and is provided according to the Standards of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.



Support the continuity of learning for all students, including students with special education needs:

- Consult with teachers and administrators, students and families on supporting the transition for continuity of learning
- Provide strategies for academic skills, executive functioning, organization and study skills
- Support the transition for continuity of learning based on the student's learning profile and/or Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for teachers and parents
- Review and consult on external psychological, psychiatric and/or medical assessments
- Support and participate in remote Identification, Placement and Review Committees (IPRCs)
- Provide direct feedback of psychological assessment results (if testing portion completed pre-closure) with communication of diagnoses as appropriate, to parents, students, schools, and community services for programming recommendations and **access to service**
- Provide Professional Learning webinars for school staff on relevant topics related to continuity of learning, mental health and well-being



Continue to provide mental health and well-being supports to students remotely

- Support students, parents and teachers with **check-ins, prevention and intervention strategies** for mental health, resiliency and well-being given the changing nature of support required as the response evolves
- Help establish daily routines and balance for learning, physical activity, social connection and leisure
- Support students in managing stress/fears about not seeing friends and other forms of loss
- Provide strategies for emotion regulation
- Provide appropriate psychological counselling interventions through virtual care and/or refer to community services as needed depending on student and family needs
- Continue to work with School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) to support provision of resources across the tiers, effective practices in virtual care and utilize training tools for providing remote mental health supports



Provide support through Crisis Response:

- Support students and families with emerging mental health crises through virtual care and access to community services as needed
- Provide traumatic events support including crisis, grief and critical incidents supports
- Provide suicide prevention, intervention and postvention support
- Participate in VTRA (Violence Threat Risk Assessment)

Our scientist-practitioner training helps us to translate current educational and mental health research into practical School Psychology applications for Ontario students and schools.



Support the transition back to schools:

- Continue to proactively research, review, plan and update best practices for transition back to school
- Plan ahead to address prevention, intervention and follow up of mental health needs due to school closures
- Create a strong proactive plan on how to manage the increase of anxiety and school refusal when schools reopen
- Participate in School Team Meetings to support students' transition back to school and develop, provide and/or support necessary interventions
- Support the development of individual student transition plans
- Prepare to expedite and prioritize necessary psychological assessments when schools re-open to address emergent and existing needs
- Focus on working together, in multidisciplinary teams, sharing ideas and finding collaborative solutions within our Boards to support the return to school for all students, especially the most vulnerable, including those with special education and mental health needs

The Association of
Chief Psychologists with Ontario School Boards

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SPECIAL SERVICES



Speech and Language staff created training resources and professional development for special education staff to help support creating referrals to the Children's Treatment Centres for Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and speech services for students.

Assessment and Programming teachers and Programming and Assessment teachers are providing system-wide support for staff who are updating and revising student Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Assessment & Programming



The Mental Health Team is continuing to promote mental health activities and resources throughout the system with the following activities:

- In collaboration with our Safe Schools colleagues, Special Services facilitated workshops to all school administrators on *Mitigating and Other Factors: Widening the Lens* to support administrators in considering all mitigating factors when considering suspending a student.
- Providing *Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)* to our Social Workers, Psychologists and Guidance Counsellors to ensure our system is able to intervene appropriately and effectively in cases of students struggling with suicidal ideation.
- Providing a workshop to our newly hired teachers through our New Teachers Induction Program on *How to Support Students Struggling with Anxiety*.
- In collaboration with Safe Schools, providing a parent workshop on *Fostering Healthy Relationships*.
- The Mental Health toolkit was updated with resources to support staff with infusing strategies to support mental health and well-being during the Bell

