

Report from the Informal Working Group to TCDSB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) at the June 8, 2022 Meeting

## **INTRODUCTORY Remarks**

Special Education Plan Review (Spec Ed Plan Review)

This report contains feedback on:

1. Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies Tab 4 Blue Book
2. Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Process Tab 6 Blue Book

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

1. “Required” refers to what is required by the Ministry guidelines found in Special Education in Ontario (Draft Version, 2017) PART B: Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans)  
[http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/os/2017/spec\\_ed\\_3.html#intro](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/os/2017/spec_ed_3.html#intro)
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 instances, includes our suggested changes.

### **I Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies Tab 4 in the Blue Book and Tab 5 in the Red Book**

#### **a) Ministry Requirements:**

##### **Requirements of the Standard**

As stated in Policy/Program Memorandum No.11, “Early Identification of Children's Learning Needs”, boards must have in place “procedures to identify each child's level of development, learning abilities, and needs”, and they must “ensure that educational programs are designed to accommodate these needs and to facilitate each child's growth and development”. The board's special education plan must explain these procedures for school staff and for parents and other members of the public. The plan must also include the statement that “these procedures are a part of a continuous assessment and program planning process which should be initiated when a child is first enrolled in school or no later than the beginning of a program of studies

immediately following Kindergarten and should continue throughout a child's school life” (Policy/Program Memorandum No. 11).

The school board's special education plan must contain a description of the following:

- the guiding principles or philosophy used by the board for early identification of children's learning needs
- the teacher's role in early identification
- the parent's role in early identification
- policies and procedures on screening, assessment, referral, identification, and program planning for students who may be in need of special education programs and services
- procedures for providing parents with notice that their child is having difficulty
- procedures used within the board for referring a student for an assessment (e.g., an assessment by an in-school team or by professional resource staff) should learning problems be identified that might result in the student's being referred eventually to an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) (these procedures include notifying parents and involving them in the process)
- procedures for providing parents with notice that their child is being considered for referral to an IPRC
- procedures for providing parents with notice that their child is being considered for a special education program and related services if the child is not referred to an IPRC
- the types of assessment tools/strategies used to gather appropriate information on students in order to assist in the development of appropriate educational programs
- the types of early intervention strategies that are used to support students prior to referral to an IPRC

**b) Findings:**

- i. The background of the TCDSB logo is distracting and makes the pages difficult to read.
- ii. The first two paragraphs describe the continuous assessment and program planning process as required;

- iii. Documents dated 2009 and 2010 are still referenced. There may be newer versions;
  - iv. The Board's guiding principles are stated;
  - v. The procedural chart titled TCDSB Early Identification of Children's Learning Needs, Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 has not been revised from 2021. The same comments as presented in 2021 still apply: small font, acronyms, hard to follow. Staff have indicated that the chart will be revised, perhaps there could be one overview chart with much reduced language and three separate charts for a) all students, b) students at risk, and c) students with special needs with full descriptive language in each;
  - vi. The Section on early intervention initiatives is informative and useful;
  - vii. Many of the findings from March, 2021 are still applicable.
- c) **Recommendations:**
- i. Many of the recommendations from March, 2021 have not yet been implemented;
  - ii. Describe and include the procedures for providing parents with the various notices required.

## **II Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Process Tab 6 Blue Book and Tab 1 in the Red Book**

### **a) Ministry Requirements:**

The Ontario Regulation 181/98 formalized the Ministry requirements related to the Identification, Placement and Review Committee ("IPRC") process. Part D of the 246-page Policy and Resource Guide - [Special Education in Ontario - Kindergarten to Grade 12 \(2017\)](#) provides most of the Ministry's requirements. The TCDSB Spec Ed Plan must include:

1. The IPRC Structure:
  - a. Responsibility to establish the Committee.
  - b. The mandated members, and,
  - c. The invited members.
  - d. The timing of the notice provided to the members.
  - e. The information provided to the members prior to the meeting.
2. The IPRC Purpose:
  - a. To determine a student's strengths and weaknesses.

- b. To identify the student's exceptionality.
  - c. To recommend placement of a student to provide the best possible educational program.
  - d. To provide for an Individual Education Plan ("IEP").
  - e. Steps to be followed when a Parent agrees with the IPRC decision.
  - f. Steps to be followed if a Parent disagrees with the IPRC decision.
3. Of significance for this report the Regulation requires the TCDSB to provide:
- a. Statistics on the number of IPRCs held and the appeals made during the previous school year.
  - b. Parents with a copy of the Board's Parent Guide prior to the IPRC meeting. *A sample copy of a "Parent's Guide to Special Education" which shows details of the IPRC process and appeals, can be found in Appendix D-1 of the "Special Education in Ontario, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2017)" document.*

**b) Findings:**

- 1.The TCDSB Parent Guide does not adequately explain the importance of the IPRC process.
- 2.The Ministry required IPRC process description is lacking.
- 3.The requirement to provide statistical information is not contained within the TCDSB plan.
- 4.Statistics as to the number of IPRCs and appeals for the previous year cannot be located anywhere within the TCDSB Spec Ed Plan.

**c) Recommendations:**

- 1. Make the IPRC process a highlighted area within the TCDSB Parent Guide and include a summary of the process and a link to the TCDSB Spec Ed Plan IPRC section.
- 2. Ensure all the Ministry required IPRC elements are correctly summarized within the TCDSB Spec Ed Plan.
- 3. Provide a link to the "Parents Guide" within this section of the TCDSB Spec Ed Plan.
- 4. Provide details of the Ministry's required statistical information within the TCDSB Spec Ed Plan.
- 5. A regular review of the "TCDSB Parents Guide" should be included in the TCDSB Spec Ed Plan review process.