

**Report from the Informal Working Group
to TCDSB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
Meeting on February 8, 2023**

INTRODUCTORY:

The working group has broken down their review into 3 parts for each section reviewed of the TCDSB Special Education Plan (Spec Ed Plan):

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

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, our suggested changes.

SCOPE of review:

Review at this time is done from the perspective of compliance with Part B of the Ministry Guidelines document and referenced sections. We may also comment on:

- If the section is well organized in a consistent manner?
- If the section is consistent with the Board’s Mission, Vision and Goals?
- If the section is consistent with Ministry Memorandums and legislation
- If the section understandable by the average parent new to Special Education at the Board?
- Does the section reflect best practices as based on expert research and experience?

- If the section adequately addresses concerns that have been raised to SEAC members from the public or through their organizations?
- Are recommendations from the previous year's reviews reflected in the report?

Sections reviewed this month:

1. Special Education Placement provided by the board.
2. Special Education Staff
3. Appendix: Special Education Staff
4. Staff Development
5. The Board's General Model for Special Education

1. Range of placements [*Plan section 9*]:

a. Required:

- 1.a.i. Provide details on the range of placements offered by the board.
- 1.a.ii. Inform the public that placement of a student in a regular class is the first option considered by an IPRC.
- 1.a.iii. You are required to describe how the board's SEAC provides their advice on determining the range of placements offered.
- 1.a.iv. Acknowledge that placement of a student in a regular class is the first option considered by an IPRC.
- 1.a.v. Outline ways a student can be integrated into the regular classroom when the placement meets the student's needs and follows the parents' preferences.
- 1.a.vi. Outline specific information about each type of placement provided at the elementary and secondary levels.
- 1.a.vii. List for each category of exceptionality, the range of placement options available, along with the criteria for admission, the admission process, and the criteria for determining the level of support provided in each placement, including the board's criteria for assigning intensive support for students who need a great deal of assistance.
- 1.a.viii. state the maximum class size for each type of special education class.
- 1.a.ix. List the criteria for determining the need to change a student's placement.
- 1.a.x. Describe the alternatives provided when a student's needs cannot be met within the board's range of placements and how the options are communicated to parents.

b. Findings:

- 1.b.i. This section has been completely rewritten and significantly improved from the previous version. The visual presentation is excellent.
- 1.b.ii. The guidelines expect specific information to be presented before “outlining the detailed about each type of placement provided” and the related content. An example would be an acknowledgement that placement of a student in a regular class is the first option considered by an IPRC.
- 1.b.iii. Maximum class sizes are missing.
- 1.b.iv. Criteria for change to a student’s current placement are missing.
- 1.b.v. Alternative available options are not explained if the student’s needs cannot be met within the board.
- c. Recommendations:
 - 1.c.i. Review the section and add the required points found missing {see Findings above}.
 - 1.c.ii. Add class sizes to each section based on identification/placement or a separate “Class Size” section that states the class size for each type of placement is ‘X’ number of students.
 - 1.c.iii. Add how a change in a student’s placement could happen. Many parents get frustrated with placements after some time and are further frustrated because they do not understand their rights and the path required to obtain a change in their child’s placement.
 - 1.c.iv. Alternate placement, such as Provincial and Demonstration schools, CTCC etc. needs to be added and briefly explained with a reference to that section of the plan.

2. Special Education Staff [*Plan section 12*]:

- a. Required
 - 2.a.i. Specific details on board staff.

b. Findings

- 2.b.i. The Types of Staff who provide special education programs and services have been included.
- 2.b.ii. The two sections, “Special Education Staff” and the required “Appendix B-2”, have been combined.

c. Recommendations

- 2.c.i. The first part of the section should concentrate on the programs and services offered by Special Education Staff, and the remainder by formatted as required by the Appendix B-2.
- 2.c.ii. The section titled “American Sign Language” is out of place as all other sections relate to a person and not a skill.
- 2.c.iii. The section titled “Deaf/Blind” Interveners needs explanation at how the visual items (e.g., ASL) are handled with a Blind student.

3. Appendix Special Education Staff [*Plan section 12*]:

a. Required

- 3.a.i. information on the types of staff who provide special education programs and services.
- 3.a.ii. Must follow Appendix B-2
 - 3.a.ii.1. Staff Categories.
 - 3.a.ii.2. Qualifications required for these categories of staff.
 - 3.a.ii.3. FTEs.
 - 3.a.ii.4. Split by elementary panel and secondary panel.

b. Finding

- 3.b.i. The information required is largely there, but the plan needs to follow the format required in the guidelines (Appendix B-2).
- 3.b.ii. Some of the words have been unnecessarily bolded.

c. Recommended

- 3.c.i. Reformat the information into the format required in Appendix B-2 of the guidelines.

4. Staff Development [*Plan section 13*]:

a. Required by the Ministry Guidelines

- 4.a.i. Details of the board's professional development plans for special education staff.
- 4.a.ii. The overall goal of the special education staff development plan.
- 4.a.iii. Ways in which staff provide input for the plan.
- 4.a.iv. Ways in which the school board's SEAC is consulted about staff development.
- 4.a.v. Methods of determining priorities in staff development.
- 4.a.vi. The board offered courses, in-service training, and other professional development activities.
- 4.a.vii. Ways in which staff are trained on the legislation and special education ministry policy, with particular attention to training for new teachers.
- 4.a.viii. Details of the board's budget allocation dedicated to the staff development plan in special education.
- 4.a.ix. Any cost-sharing arrangements with other ministries or agencies for staff development.
- 4.a.x. Ways in which school board staff are made aware of the board's special education plan and of professional development opportunities.
- 4.a.xi. Does it reflect any new legislation and Ministry PPMs.
- 4.a.xii. Results of any consultations (setting priorities).

b. Findings in the TCDSB plan

- 4.b.i. There is a detailed chart of the board's professional development plans for special education staff.
- 4.b.ii. Most of the required points in the guidelines are missing.
- 4.b.iii. There are no courses offered that reference changes in legislation or PPM in the staff training chart on special education. The guidelines expect some training that is focused on legislation, PPM, the legal framework.
- c. Recommendations to the TCDSB plan
 - 4.c.i. The chart is useful, but a great deal of information is missing, and the chart should come after as an appendix to the missing information to demonstrate how the board is meeting the Ministry expectations in this section.
 - 4.c.ii. Most of the missing points will need their own header with the related information below it.

5. Model for Special Education [*Plan section 2*]

- a. Required:
 - 5.a.i. A general philosophical approach for the delivery of services.
 - 5.a.ii. A description of the service delivery model.
 - 5.a.iii. A statement that we comply with the following legal standards:
 - 5.a.iii.1. Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom.
 - 5.a.iii.2. The Ontario Human Right Code.
 - 5.a.iii.3. The Ontario Education Act.
 - 5.a.iii.4. The Regulations made under the Ontario Education Act and,
 - 5.a.iii.5. Any other relevant legislation.
- b. Findings:

- 5.b.i. The philosophical approach is vague and is not related to the “Model for Special Education” section of the Special Education plan. The heading is present but very long.
 - 5.b.ii. The philosophical approach document includes ableism-type statements.
 - 5.b.iii. There is no description of the Service Delivery Model.
 - 5.b.iv. There is a statement of compliance, and this meets the guidelines.
 - 5.b.v. Although not required, there is no statement to include support of Catholic Values, Pontifical statements, the Board’s mission statement and relevant scientific pedagogical research regarding educating special needs students.
- c. Recommendations:
- 5.c.i. The philosophical statement heading needs to be shortened to “Philosophy Approach” or “TCDSB Philosophy” or similar.
 - 5.c.ii. The philosophical approach paragraph is unfocused. It should clearly explain the “Model for Special Education” and ideas clarified.
 - 5.c.iii. Ableist type statement should be removed or edited to reflect more modern approaches to or model of Special Education.
 - 5.c.iv. The required “Service Delivery” description must be added with an appropriate heading.
 - 5.c.v. A heading should be added to the compliance statement section.
 - 5.c.vi. The compliance statement should be expanded to reflect support of Catholic Values, Pontifical statements, the Board’s mission statement and relevant scientific and pedagogical research regarding educating special needs students.