



SPECIAL SERVICES

SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2023



UPCOMING PARENT ENGAGEMENT SERIES

Saturday February 25th, 2023

The Transition Team will be hosting two parent workshops:

1. Transition Planning Workshop for Parents of Students with Autism in Grades 7 and 8 on the Credit Earning Pathway
2. Transition Planning Workshop for Parents of Students in Grade 7 & 8 in Multiple Exceptionality/Developmental Disability ISP Classes.

Information will be shared with schools to inform their parent communities.

AUTISM

On Saturday January 21st, the Transition Team hosted a parent workshop, **Preparing For Life After High School**. The workshop was very well attended and included presentations by the Transition Team in collaboration with Surrey Place and representatives from Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) and Passport Funding. Families were able to ask questions and meet individually with the staff and the representatives afterwards.



PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology staff offered an interactive presentation on **Trauma-Informed Practices in Schools**. The pandemic, as we know, has brought about unprecedented stress to students and school staff, and being present as a learner has become more challenging. This is especially so for students who may be struggling with trauma. Some children may be withdrawn while others may be presenting with more challenging behaviors. This presentation aimed to address these needs by enhancing knowledge and skills and building the capacity of school staff to engage in trauma-informed practices, so they are equipped to support the well-being of all students. Participants learned about the impact of trauma on students, how to identify main components of trauma-informed classrooms as well as strategies to foster safety, connection, and self-regulation. Participation was open to 50 staff from both the elementary and secondary panel.

MENTAL HEALTH

The Mental Health Team supported the mental health of students throughout the system with the following activities:

- The mental health team was able to train 13 school administrators in **SafeTalk** which is a half-day suicide awareness and prevention workshop. The feedback from the event was very positive. Similar training for school administrators will be offered in the near future.
 - During **Bell Let's Talk** week from Jan 23-27, the mental health team shared a system calendar of wellness activities, conversation starters and class announcements with all educators. Many of our schools participated in Bell Let's Talk and mental health activities in their schools and posted on social media.
 - Safe Schools offered a full day workshop on **Anti-Sex Trafficking for Youth: Trauma-Informed Prevention & Intervention** for staff. A total of 73 staff from across the system participated.
 - A multi-disciplinary team involving Mental Health, Student Success and Guidance lead resource teachers has been planning the relaunch of the student-led mental health initiative across the board. Formerly known as Stop the Stigma, the team presented the plan for the launch of the **Mental Health Action Teams** to all school administrators. Schools are now nominating their Teacher Mentors for the teams and beginning to recruit student leaders for their schools.
 - **Staff Well-Being workshops** will be held for approximately 100 newly appointed teachers through the New Teacher Induction Program in early February.
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