



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

RECOMMENDATION TO BOARD FROM THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth. 3 John 1:8

Drafted

December 5, 2024

S. Harris – Recording Secretary
S. Adaikpoh – Assistant Recording Secretary

Meeting Date

January 30, 2025

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

Vision: *IN GOD'S IMAGE: Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope.*

Mission: *Nurturing the faith development and academic excellence of our Catholic learning community through the love of God, neighbour, and self.*



MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
2022 - 2025

IN GOD'S IMAGE: Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope



Brendan Browne
Director of Education

Adrian Della Mora
Associate Director of Academic Affairs & Chief Operating Officer

Derek Boyce
Associate Director of Corporate Services and Chief Commercial Officer

Ryan Putnam
Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides the Board of Trustees with a recommendation from the **SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 0.5 hours.

B. PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Trustees with a recommendation from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

C. BACKGROUND

1. On 2024-12-04, the Special Education Advisory Committee met.
2. At that meeting, there was a recommendation proposed to the Board of Trustees.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

The Special Education Advisory Committee met on 2024-12-04 and a motion regarding Agenda Item 18a) Consideration of Motion from SEAC regarding Modified School Days, Denial of Education was unanimously passed.

E. SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Special Education Advisory Committee recommends to the Board of Trustees that the following be approved:

WHEREAS: The mission of the Toronto Catholic District School Board is to be an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ;

WHEREAS: Modifying a special need student's school day denies them the ability to participate in their school community, interact with their peers and bond the school community with their home and parish;

WHEREAS: Educating all students is the primary purpose of this school board and the publicly funded education system in Ontario;

WHEREAS: Time spent out of class for any student creates a gap in their education that needs to be closed so they may keep up with their peers. The more time out of class the bigger the gap and the more difficult it is to close. Closing this gap is even more difficult for a student that has a disability that affects their ability to learn. Should the gap become sufficiently large the student will not be able to close this gap regardless of supports provided at school or home and they will fail to graduate, be required to repeat a grade, be moved to a segregated Intensive Support Program (ISP) where their education gap will continue to grow, thus breaking the link with their peers and school community;

WHEREAS: The Education Act provides Principals the ability to arbitrarily shorten a special needs student school day if the resources provided by the board are not adequate to educate the student full time. See:

R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298: OPERATION OF SCHOOLS – GENERAL

Under daily "Daily Sessions" which states:

"3. (1) The length of the instructional program of each school day for pupils of compulsory school age and pupils in full day junior kindergarten or kindergarten shall be not less than five hours a day excluding recesses or scheduled intervals between classes. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298, s. 3 (1); O. Reg. 78/14, s. 1 (1).

...

(3) Despite subsection (1), a board may reduce the length of the instructional program on each school day to less than five hours a day for an exceptional pupil in a special education program. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298, s. 3 (3).";

WHEREAS: Boards and Principals have interpreted this section of the Education Act to allow them to modify a special needs student's school day up to and including having the student remain at home for an extended period of time and allow routine late drop offs and early pick-ups by the transportation department;

WHEREAS: The Education Act does not require tracking of the frequency of this decision, documentation of the reason, steps being taken to return the student to a regular classroom to resume their education;

WHEREAS: Given the multitude of challenges a Principal encounter every day in the performance of their duties it is easy for them to not prioritize the resumption of the education and return to school full time for a student on modified days; and

WHEREAS: This Modified school days and denial of education issues as it affects special needs students is a widespread problem in public education reported by many parents and organization/associations dedicated to supporting the families of special needs students as outlined in the 2 appendices attached from Inclusion Canada and the New Brunswick Child and Youth's advocates office. It has also been brought up as an issue at Toronto Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee meetings by a Trustee;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: Special Education Advisory Committee recommends to the board a policy be created to track special needs students and those suspected of having special needs who are on modified days, be it one day or for an extended period;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: At the time of determining a modified days schedule will be implemented a report be prepared with key student information, school, date and involved staff and positions listed along with the reason for the decision and the plan to return the student to school full time. This report must be updated every 2 weeks throughout the school year with progress reports, changes in plans until the student returned to school full time and/or other developments make it no longer required;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: A copy of the report and updated reports will be added to the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR), provided to parents, the Area Superintendent and Superintendent of Special Services. The Superintendents are to review the reports, delegate and follow up with their staff and others as appropriate with the goal of returning the student to school full time;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: A summary report of the numbers of student on "modified school days" be provided to Special Education Advisory Committee and the Board of Trustees on a bi-annual basis, January and June of the school year. Showing monthly totals and year over year changes; and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: Policy and staff be ready to implement this process by the start of the next school year.