



REPORT TO

## SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION 2014-2015

*"So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me." Ezekiel 33:7*

**Created, Draft**

**First Tabling**

**Review**

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F. Piddisi, Superintendent of Special Services

### INFORMATION REPORT

**Vision:**

*At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.*

**Mission:**

*The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community rooted in the love of Christ. We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge and to lead lives of faith, hope and charity*



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## A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. An Accountability Framework for Special Education (AFSE) was established and approved by SEAC/Board (*February 17, 2010 /March 3, 2010*) for the annual review of special education programs and services in order that student achievement and well-being is reported and that programs and services are continually renewed and improved, fairly and equitably, on an evidentiary basis. The AFSE is fully aligned with the TCDSB Board Learning and Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BLIPSA) and the TCDSB Multiyear Strategic Plan (MYSP).
2. This current AFSE Report outlines the following next steps and planned improvements designed to support the TCDSB achievement and well-being goals for students with special educational needs in the 2015 – 2016 academic year:
  - a. There is an understanding that the use of EQAO goals to foster student achievement and well-being is not useful for students with Blind/Low Vision, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Developmental Disability, Giftedness, Mild Intellectual Disability and Multiple Exceptionalities. Further, the aggregate EQAO information for Behaviour comprises so few students that if EQAO is used it must be used with caution in making system decisions as the results in most cases reflect specific individual circumstances.
  - b. JUMP Math is being introduced and supported in all Intensive Support Programs across the exceptionalities.
  - c. Lexia literacy support is being provided as required across the system as a Tier Two and a Tier Three intervention.
  - d. The support demands created by Full Day Learning present a range of significant challenges including physical, medical, behavioural and curricular needs. Staff will address this need through the revision of the Kindergarten Intervention Needs Development (KIND) Intensive Support Program shifting to a focus on capacity building at the school level.
  - e. Intensive Support Program Teams for Behaviour to support students with social/emotional needs are being investigated through action research as one alternative to the Intensive Support Program Behaviour Classroom.

- f. Exemption rates for students with Autism are declining however still too high. Staff are addressing this successfully through newly developed guidelines for staff working with parents and students.
- g. The focus of instructional improvement related to the achievement and well-being of students identified with Giftedness will be delivered and measured in relation to students' organization and self-regulation learning skills as most all of them meet or exceed the Provincial standards in literacy and numeracy.
- h. In the targeted areas of reading, mathematics and credit accumulation our results were mixed for students with a Learning Disability. We did not meet our elementary mathematics target and in fact did worse. However, the trend is positive for students in Grade Nine. In reading our results were flat in the primary and junior assessments and did not meet our annualized goal of 3 percent improvement however with respect to the secondary assessment (OSSLT) we exceeded our goal through a 7 percent increase of students achieving at or above the Provincial standard. EQAO and CAT4 results from students who participated in Empower Reading indicate significant reading gains across all measures. We did not increase the percentage of students with LD who earned 16 credits by the end of Grade 10 however the percentage of students who earned 14 credits was 86 percent compared to 90 percent for all students. Given the mixed results we will continue with our Empower Reading programs and strategies, focus on Learning Skills for all students with LD and introduce a new strategy for elementary mathematics achievement through the use of JUMP Math resources and support.
- i. We did meet our gap closing goals in the Primary Division Provincial assessments for students with Language Impairment however we did not meet our goals in the Junior Division. The reasons are unclear and so we plan to continue our goals to close the gap between students with LI and all students. To help us do that we will continue our work with Early Learning, provide professional development opportunities for our ISP Teachers to be able to deliver more strategies which support social and language development and pilot a new evidence-based resource: Focused Intervention Program for Phonemic Awareness (FIPPA).

- j. The aggregate achievement and well-being goals developed for elementary students with Mild Intellectual Disability will now be expressed and measured through the percentage of students who achieve at Levels 3 and 4 in Language Arts and Number Sense and Numeration expectations as described in the Individual Education Plan and reported on the Provincial Report Card. Professional development for staff is being provided in developing the Individual Education Plan with these achievement goals in mind.
  - k. The aggregate achievement and well-being goals developed for students with Multiple Exceptionalities and/or Developmental Disability are expressed and measured through the number of successful functional literacy and numeracy expectations met in the Individual Education Plan. These measures focus teachers to set and meet semester based achievement targets. Professional development for staff is being provided on an ongoing basis.
  - l. Improvements in the achievement and well-being of our Blind / Low Vision students will be linked to providing all eligible students with appropriate, individual accommodations for all Provincial assessments.
  - m. Improvements in the achievement and well-being of our Deaf and Hard of Hearing students will be linked to targets related to the use of hearing assistance technologies which permit students to access the curriculum fully.
3. It is understood that any planned changes and/or improvements arising from this report will be entirely funded through the reallocation of existing funds within the Special Education Department.
  4. This report is provided for the information of SEAC.

## **B. PURPOSE**

1. SEAC's advice to Board is required as the AFSE is a part of the TCDSB's Special Education Plan and the Board's Learning and Improvement Plan for Student Achievement.

## **C. BACKGROUND**

1. An accountability framework was established for the annual review of all special education programs and services in order that student achievement and well-being is reported and that programs and services are continually renewed and improved.
2. The Accountability Framework for Special Education, as applied to each of the Ministry recognized exceptionalities and placements, consists of two distinct parts: a descriptive overview of the department's program *and* a corresponding measure or goal for improvement. The goals are an integral part of the TCDSB Board Learning Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and along with the program description, they can be found on the TCDSB public website.
3. A standing Program Review Committee for each of the exceptionalities meets on a regular basis to collect and analyse student achievement and well-being data. Each Program Review Committee is an expert panel of teachers, social workers, psychologists, speech and language pathologists, autism specialists, educational researchers, teacher federation representatives, educational assistants, Child and Youth Workers and school and area administrators. The AFSE through the work of the Program Review Committees provides the context for continuous improvement and for reaching the student achievement and well-being goals articulated by provincial initiatives, including: *Learning for All: K-12 (LAA K-12)*, *Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario*, *Growing Success* and *Assessing Achievement in Alternative Areas (A4)*.

## **D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH**

1. See Appendixes A, B, C, D and E:
  - a. Appendix A: *EQAO Results over time by LD, Special Education and All Students*
  - b. Appendix B: *EQAO Results over time by LI, Special Education and All Students*
  - c. Appendix C: *EQAO Trends by Special Education and LD Elementary*
  - d. Appendix D: *EQAO Trends by Special Education and LD Grade 9*
  - e. Appendix E: *EQAO Trends by Special Education and LD OSSLT*

*f. Appendix F: EQAO Results over time by Autism, Special Education and All Students*

**E. ANALYSIS / NEXT STEPS**

1. Program Review Committee: *Autism*

a. 2014 Goals: That the current achievement gap between students identified with Autism and all students be reduced (See Appendix F):

1. from 42 percent to 38 percent in Grade 3 Reading
2. from 37 percent to 33 percent in Grade 6 Reading
3. from 17 percent to 15 percent on OSSLT

b. Observations:

1. Overall, it appears that students while with Autism achieve below their peers on provincial assessments in grades 3 and 6, they perform at levels closer to their peers on the OSSLT and the Grade 9 assessment of Mathematics. (See Appendix F.)
2. The results from the May, 2014 EQAO assessments indicate that primary reading results for students with Autism have remained consistent (25 percent). The gap between students with Autism and all students has remained fairly consistent over the last 4 years. (See Appendix F.)
3. For the Junior Division, reading results have shown improvement since 2010/11, but have dropped in May 2014, with 28 percent of students reaching at or above the provincial standard. The gap between students with Autism and all students has improved slightly over the last 4 years, with a 3 percent drop in the gap from 2010/11 to 2013/14. (See Appendix F.)
4. On the OSSLT the results for students with Autism showed a 9 percent improvement from 2012/13 to 2013/14. Students with Autism achieved a 74 percent success rate, a gap of 10 percent when compared to all students. Results should be treated with caution, as numbers are very low. (See Appendix F.)

5. Exemption rates for students with Autism are high compared to all students with special needs and provincial results for students with Autism. In grade 3, the exemption rate dropped 10 percent from 2012/13 at 52 percent to 2013/14 at 42 percent. In grade 6 the exemption rates also dropped from 41 percent in 2012-13 to 33 percent in 2013/14, a positive trend.

c. 2015 Goals: Based on the 2014 results that the current achievement gap for students with Autism and all students be reduced to:

1. 40 percent in Grade 3 Reading
2. 41 percent in Grade 6 Reading
3. 9 percent on the OSSLT
4. 32 percent in Grade 3 Mathematics
5. 33 percent in Grade 6 Mathematics

(Note: In grade 9 the mathematics achievement results for students identified with Autism exceed or are consistent with ‘all students’.)

d. Next Steps:

1. The committee has developed information for administrators for students with Autism regarding preparation for EQAO assessments and guidelines for exemptions. A drop in exemption rates has been noted as a result of this resource. This information will be shared with board staff working with students with Autism and their parents. Information will also be included in the guidelines for staff regarding ‘assessment literacy’ to address concerns such as anxiety for students with Autism.
2. A list of effective literacy resources for students with Autism has been developed and will be shared with board staff. These resources will be made available for staff in each region of the board.
3. JUMP math is being made available for students with Autism in Intensive Support Programs (ISPs). Access to other literacy resources for students with Autism will also be investigated (e.g., Prodigy).

4. Information on assistive technology usage for students with Autism during provincial assessments will be explored. This is an important consideration for this group of students.
5. Professional development for staff working with students with Autism will continue to be provided with an emphasis on effective literacy and numeracy instruction.
6. Programs for students with Autism will continue to be expanded in response to identified need, using evidence informed practices.

## 2. Program Review Committee: *Behaviour*

- a. 2014 Goals: For students identified with Behaviour who participate on provincial assessments, the current achievement gap be reduced by 10 percent between students identified with Behaviour and all students, as measured through primary, junior, Grade 9 EQAO assessments and OSSLT in Reading, Writing and Mathematics by May 2014.
- b. Observations: The 2013-2014 Grade 3 and 6 EQAO results for Behaviour are opposite to 2012-2013 results. For 2013-2014, the percentage of Primary students identified with Behaviour who fall within the Level 3 and 4 achievement categories across the EQAO assessments is larger than that of their Junior counterparts. A larger percentage of junior students identified with Behaviour fall within the Level 2 achievement category across the EQAO assessments in Reading and Writing than that of their Primary counterparts.  
  
(The number of students identified Behaviour is so small that percentages are only valuable for general understanding of trends.)
- c. 2015 Goals: For students identified with Behaviour who participate on provincial assessments, the current achievement gap be reduced by 8 percent between students identified with Behaviour and all students, as measured through primary, junior and intermediate assessments (i.e., Lexia, JUMP Math and EQAO) in Reading, Writing and Mathematics by June 2015.

d. Next Steps:

1. Focus on social/emotional prerequisite skills for learning Reading, Writing and Mathematics
  - a. Development of social skills, self-esteem, self-advocacy and self-regulation skills
  - b. Teach compensatory strategies for attention and organizational deficits
2. Focus on strategies for teaching Reading, Writing and Mathematics
  - a. Use JUMP Math
  - b. Use Lexia Reading Programme
  - c. Use Empower programme where available
  - d. Use of Assistive technology (e.g. Smart Board, Premier, Co-writer, Draft Builder, Kurzweil and Dragon Naturally Speaking).

3. Program Review Committee: *Blind and Low Vision (B/LV)*

a. 2014 Goals:

1. Primary:

- a. A 12 percent increase in the number of students identified BLV who achieve level 3 in Primary EQAO assessment in:
  - b. Reading from 25 percent to 37 percent
  - c. Writing from 74 percent to 86 percent

2. Junior:

- a. A 16 percent increase in the number of students identified BLV who achieve level 3 in Junior EQAO assessment in Reading, Writing and Mathematics from 17 percent to 33 percent.

- b. Observations: There are too few students identified as B/LV to make statistically reliable EQAO Goals. More suitable goals would pertain to enabling students who are B/LV to participate in EQAO testing.

c. 2015 Goals: Observations regarding the use of accommodations for EQAO and other testing in 2014-2015 will focus on students not only in the Primary and Junior Divisions, but also those in the Intermediate and Senior Divisions. Observations will be documented in February and May 2015.

1. 100 percent of TCDSB students who receive TDSB/TCDSB Vision Program support, who are eligible to write the EQAO/OSSLT tests, and who are cognitively able to do so will participate in the testing with appropriate accommodations.
2. Accommodations for students who receive TDSB/TCDSB B/LV supports will be provided through intentional conversations between the B/LV Itinerant teachers and classroom teachers.

d. Next Steps:

1. List and Track accommodations used for EQAO for B/LV students and their impact on student success (February and May 2015).
2. Students who are visually impaired and are integrated in the regular classroom and who have multiple special needs will be provided with additional support.
3. Itinerant Vision Teachers will continue to hold the following qualification: Teaching Students Who Are Blind – Part 1.
4. Continue to train students with blindness and low vision about how to travel using a white cane or dog guide in the school and local community through certified Orientation and Mobility (O/M) specialists.

4. Program Review Committee: *Developmental Disability / Multiple Exceptionalities*

a. 2014 Goals:

1. Developmental Disability (DD) Program Goals: By June 2014 elementary students with a DD identification will collectively meet 70 percent of the functional literacy skills expectations as outlined on the IEP and as reported on the alternative report card.
2. Multiple Exceptionalities (ME) Program Goals: By June 2014 elementary students with an ME identification will collectively meet 70 percent of the functional literacy skills expectations as outlined on the IEP and as reported on the alternative report card.

b. Observations:

1. Developmental Disability (DD) Programs:

- a. Alternate achievement measures were analysed for students identified with a Developmental Disability as EQAO results were not an appropriate measure for this group of students.
- b. Based on the June 2014 Alternative Report Card elementary students identified with a Developmental Disability collectively met 58 percent of the overall number of functional literacy skill expectations as outlined in their IEP. This represents an 11 percent decline from the findings from June 2013, but is higher than the findings from June 2012 (when students met 54 percent of overall number of functional literacy skill expectations).
- c. For 2013/2014 a numeracy goal was identified and was analysed based on the functional numeracy skill expectations on the June 2014 Alternative Report Card. Results for functional numeracy skill expectations

indicate that 60 percent of these expectations were being met by DD students. This information will be used as a baseline for future planning.

## 2. Multiple Exceptionalities Programs

- a. Alternate achievement measures were analysed for students identified with a Multiple Exceptionality as EQAO results were not an appropriate measure for this group of students.
- b. Based on the June 2014 Alternative Report Card elementary students identified with Multiple Exceptionalities collectively met 51 percent of the overall number of functional literacy skill expectations as outlined in their IEP. This represents a 13 percent decline when compared to results from June 2012 and 2013.
- c. For 2013/2014 a numeracy goal was identified and was analysed based on the functional numeracy skill expectations on the June 2014 Alternative Report Card. Results for functional numeracy skill expectation indicate that 52 percent of these expectations were being met by ME students. This information will be used as a baseline for future planning

### c. 2015 Goals:

#### 1. Developmental Disability Program Goals:

- a. By June 2015, 70 percent of the functional literacy expectations as outlined on the IEP and as reported on the alternative report card will be met for elementary students with a DD identification.
- b. By June 2015, 70 percent of the functional numeracy expectations as outlined on the IEP and as reported on the alternative report card will be met for elementary students with a DD identification.

## 2. Multiple Exceptionalities Programs Goals:

- a. By June 2015, 70 percent of the functional literacy expectations as outlined on the IEP and as reported on the alternative report card will be met for elementary students with a ME identification.
- b. By June 2015, 70 percent of the functional numeracy expectations as outlined on the IEP and as reported on the alternative report card will be met for elementary students with a ME identification.

### d. Next Steps (DD/ME):

1. Plan and communicate with staff and parents about the ME and DD Program Review process, including goals. Information is available on the board website. In addition, a newsletter about ME and DD initiatives will be developed for staff and parents.
2. Enhance achievement in functional literacy and functional numeracy for students identified with Multiple Exceptionalities (ME) and Developmental Disabilities (DD). The following activities have been recommended by the committee:
  - a. That the alternative report card be reviewed. It has been recommended that the alternative report card include an achievement scale that indicates the level of independence for students on an alternative curriculum.
  - b. A collaborative inquiry is being developed with staff in ME-DD programs to investigate issues related to effective literacy and numeracy programming.
  - c. A 'best practices guide' for ME and DD programs to support evidence informed practices. Resources to support each area will also be provided.

- d. Resources at the secondary level are also being developed, with a focus on the 'Pathway to Community Participation'.
- e. Continue to provide professional development for staff working with students in ME and DD programs. The provision of IEP workshops specifically focussed on literacy and numeracy programs for students identified as ME and DD will be provided in the Fall of 2015.
- f. Identification criteria for ME and DD have been updated to reflect new DSM 5 diagnostic criteria. Placement guidelines are also being reviewed.

5. Program Review Committee: *Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (D/HH)*

a. 2014 Goals:

- 1. Transition all D/HH students in elementary Oral Intensive Support Placement (ISP) classrooms to 100 percent personal hearing assistance technology by June 2014.
- 2. Transition all D/HH students in elementary Oral D/HH ISP classroom settings to 100 percent usage of hearing assistance technology by June 2014, including the use of classroom sound field systems.
- 3. Target all grade 8 students in Oral D/HH ISP settings for 100 percent usage of personal hearing assistance technology—by June 2014.
- 4. Target hearing assistance technology usage by the grade 8 cohort in their transition to secondary: the goal is 50 percent usage in grade 9.

b. Observations:

- 1. Through role modelling, education and prompting, the use of hearing assistance technology increased for ISP students, in the regular classroom.

2. From an acoustic perspective, the all-day JK/SK classes have a higher noise floor (~ 80dB A). As a result, instead of using the typical JK/SK integration for ISP students we used reverse integration to address the poorer signal to noise ratios in the larger classes.
3. In Grades 1-7 at Cosmas and Damien 100 percent of the students used Hearing Assistance Technologies (17 students in total).
4. In Preschool, JK and SK 75 percent of the students at The Divine Infant used Hearing Assistance Technologies (6 out of 8 students).
5. 100 percent of all other students at The Divine Infant used Hearing Assistance Technology.

c. 2015 Goals:

1. 100 percent use of Hearing Assistance Technology (HAT) to access the curriculum.

d. Next Steps:

1. Track the number of students, who use Hearing Assistance Technology (HAT) for the purpose of improving their ability to:
  - a. access the curriculum
  - b. gain an understanding of when to use HAT
  - c. appreciate the value of HAT usage for the improvement of their academic performance
2. Provide support for three types of student transition:
  - a. Elementary ISP to elementary regular class placements
  - b. Elementary grade 8 ISP to secondary ISP class placement
  - c. Elementary grade 8 ISP to secondary regular class placement

3. Use 21<sup>st</sup> Century fluencies and technologies, to connect Regular Classroom and Intensive Support Program Class students from around the Board to facilitate peer learning experiences and support collaborative access to curriculum.

6. Program Review Committee: *Giftedness*

- a. 2014 Goals: To increase the percentage of students identified with Giftedness in Grade 6 who have excellent Self-regulation and Organizational skills by 5 percent and maintain the improvement for this cohort through Grade 8 to ensure successful transition into secondary.
  1. While almost all students identified with Giftedness achieve Levels 3 and 4 in the Reading, Writing and Mathematics on the EQAO assessments, tracking of the assessment of the learning skills of the Grade 8 cohort (2013-14) when they were in Grade 7, 6, and 5 indicated an overall decline in the percentage of students who achieved excellent on the Term 2 Learning Skills section of the Provincial Report Card.
  2. Improvement in learning skills would encourage and support students in achieving levels 3/4 on EQAO assessments and prepare them for secondary and post-secondary education therefore improvement of the learning skills of Self-Regulation and Organization have been targeted for students with an identification of Giftedness.
- b. Observations:
  1. For the 2013/2014 Grade 6 student cohort, the chart below shows the evaluation of their Organization and Self-Regulation Learning Skills from their Grade 5 Term 2 Provincial Report Card. These data provide the baseline for tracking of these students.

Baseline 2013/2014 for Grade 6 cohort (From Grade 5 Term 2 Provincial Report Card)		
	Organization	Self-Regulation
Excellent	62.9 percent	66.4 percent
Good	28.9 percent	28.2 percent
Satisfactory	5.7 percent	4.6 percent
Needs Improvement	2.5 percent	0.7 percent

2. The February 2014 – Term 1 Provincial Report Card Learning Skills data for the 2013-14 Grade 6 student (same) cohort was collected. The percentage of students achieving Excellent in Organization and Self-Regulation will be used to assess students' progress in relation to the Goal:

2013/2014 Term 2 Grade 6 Data (n=280)		
	Organization	Self-Regulation
Excellent	68.9 percent	65.7 percent
Good	22.5 percent	25.7 percent
Satisfactory	7.5 percent	7.1 percent
Needs Improvement	1.1 percent	1.4 percent

- c. 2015 Goals for students identified with Gifted in Grade 7 (2013-14 Grade 6 Cohort):
1. that the percentage who achieve Excellent on Organization based on Term 2 report card, increase by 5 percent from 63 percent to 68 percent
  2. that the percentage of students who achieve Excellent on Self-Regulation based on Term 2 report card increase by 5 percent from 66 percent to 71 percent
- d. Next Steps:
1. Continue capacity-building professional development to Regular Classroom teachers and school Special Education Teachers (SET - Elementary/Secondary)

2. Continue collaboration/communication between Regular Classroom teachers, school Special Education Teachers (SETs) and Intensive Support Program teachers in the Gifted Programs regarding strengths, needs, accommodations recorded in the Individual Education Plan (IEP)
3. Gifted Placement Review Committee (GPR Committee) will develop and share with schools information that addresses learning needs of a student identified with Giftedness and provides some resource suggestions for teachers (i.e., Gifted Department Newsletters)
4. Continue capacity building professional development to Special Education teachers of Gifted Programs (Elementary/Secondary)
5. Share strategies and resources to meet achievement goals at monthly meetings.
6. Plan presentation for teachers and parents of the Gifted Program on Supporting Student Mental Health and Well-Being with a focus on strategies for developing Organization and Self-regulation skills for students identified with Giftedness (i.e., April/May Information Night).

7. Program Review Committee: *Learning Disability*

a. 2014 Goals:

1. By June 2014 there will be a 3 percent increase in the percentage of students with LD who reach level 2 and above in mathematics as measured through Junior division EQAO assessments.
2. By June 2014 there will be a 3 percent increase in the number of students with LD who reach level 3 and 4 in reading as measured through Junior division EQAO assessments.
3. By June 2014 there will be a 2 percent increase in Grade 10 credit accumulation for students with LD (from 73 to 75 percent).

b. Observations:

1. *Mathematics achievement: the Junior EQAO assessment in May 2014* indicated no increase in the percentage of students with LD who reach level 2 and above, but in fact there was a decrease from 63 percent to 56 percent. 17 percent of students with LD reached the provincial standard compared to 18 percent last year, in spite of the professional development for Special Education Teachers for the past 3 years for the application of Leaps and Bounds as resources. (These results are consistent with a decreasing percentage of all students reaching provincial standards in mathematics at the Junior level, both at TCDSB and at the provincial level.) Compared to reading and writing, a relatively large percentage of students with LD has been well below provincial standards, at Level 1 in mathematics (40 percent in 2011, 35 percent in 2012, 33 percent in 2013 and 36 percent in 2014). Therefore, increasing the percentage of students who are achieving at Level 2 and above seems to be a goal that continues to reflect current student needs. (See Appendix C.)
2. *Mathematics achievement: the Grade 9 EQAO assessment* indicated an increasing trend for students with LD both in Academic and Applied courses in the past 3 years: 70 percent, 77 percent and 82 percent reaching provincial standards in Academic, and 30 percent, 33 percent and 34 percent reaching provincial standards in Applied courses. More data are required about students with LD who are taking Locally Developed courses in mathematics and thus are not included in the Grade 9 EQAO data. (See Appendix D.)
3. *Mathematics instruction/programming: data collected in 2014* through the survey of Special Education Teachers who participated in professional development in mathematics indicate that the training and resources made available to them are promising for closing the gap for students placed in the regular class. For successful implementation a closer collaboration (including co-planning and co-teaching) with the regular classroom teachers is required. However, at this time, this appears to be a gap which needs to be addressed in order to effectively utilize these teaching resources and strategies. On the other hand, data from the survey

indicate that these resources are not sufficient to meet the needs of those students who have significant Learning Disabilities. In order to respond to this need, additional alternative resources (JUMP Math) are being implemented in LD Intensive Support Programs in 2014-15.

4. *Reading achievement: the results of the Junior EQAO assessment* in 2014 indicated that the percentage of students with LD who reach level 3 and 4 remains the same as last year, at 38 percent. It should be noted that EQAO data have shown an increasing trend for students with LD from 2011, with the following percentages of students with LD performing at the provincial standard: 30 percent (2011), 35 percent (2012), 38 percent (2013) and 38 percent (2014). (See Appendix C.)
5. *The results of OSSLT* indicate that 60 percent of (first time eligible) students with LD were successful, an increase of 7 percent compared to 2013. Data indicate that students receiving test accommodations for EQAO do not take advantage of the available use of assistive technology to the extent that would be desirable. Reasons and ways to facilitate it need to be investigated. (See Appendix E.)
6. *Reading instruction/programming: Empower Reading intervention* is being offered to students with identified or suspected LD to address difficulties in decoding and spelling (Grade 2-5 and 6-8) and in reading comprehension (Grade 2-5). This intervention is provided in 80 TCDSB schools. *Data collected* from participating students indicated that: across grades, across programs and across settings, students made significant gains on all reading measures. Their teachers also reported that most students were more likely to participate in reading and enjoy it - and feel better about themselves as readers. The long-term impact of Empower Reading has also been evaluated by assessing students' reading achievement 4 and 5 years after completing Empower, and there is evidence of improvement in both CAT4 and EQAO results. However, while students demonstrate substantial progress upon completing Empower Reading, many continue to have reading test scores below grade level and will need on-going support.

7. *Credit accumulation:* At the end of 2013-14 school year, 70 percent of Grade 10 students with LD had 16/16 or more credits, compared to 81 percent of all Grade 10 students. This represents a decrease from 73 percent in 2013. On the other hand, 86 percent of Grade 10 students with LD have completed 14 or more credits, compared to 90 percent of all Grade 10 students.

c. 2015 Goals:

1. *In Mathematics in the Junior Division:* decrease the percentage of students with LD in the lowest achievement category (Level 1 on EQAO in Grade 6, and Stanines 1,2,3 on CAT4 in Grade 5) by June 2015.
2. *In Reading in the Junior Division:* increase in the percentage of students with LD who reach level 3 and 4 on the EQAO assessments by June 2015.
3. Increase the percentage of *Grade 10 Credit Accumulation* for students with LD compared to June 2014.

d. Next Steps:

1. Continue to implement Empower Reading intervention, including the systematic and strategic implementation of the additional components of Empower Reading intervention, i.e. Comprehension (in grades 2-5), and Decoding in grades 6 -8).
2. Upon the completion of the research phase of the secondary reading intervention (PHAST PACES) by SickKids' Learning Disability Research Program, introduce the elements of the TCDSB model used for overseeing and supporting the elementary Empower Reading into secondary schools.
3. Implement a strategic roll-out of Lexia Reading (a digital literacy intervention), targeting students with LD who require continued support to improve their reading.
4. In Mathematics, continue to provide the Special Education Teacher (SET) with support and resources for use in the regular classroom and in alignment with the curriculum used in the regular

classroom. Continue to provide professional development (including the impact of LD on mathematics skill acquisition) to SET and regular classroom teachers. Explore ways and implement strategies to facilitate a closer collaboration between the regular classroom teacher and SET in order to increase the achievement of students with LD.

5. In Mathematics in Intensive Support Programs (ISPs), support the implementation of JUMP Math through appropriate professional development for teachers, and monitor effectiveness by continuous systematic tracking of student progress.
6. Focus on the use of assistive technology by students with LD by investigating and addressing the reasons for inadequate use of technology as accommodation.
7. In secondary school explore pass/fail rates in key courses for students with LD in order to devise/implement strategies to increase credit accumulation.
8. Continue to provide professional development (centrally and locally) for classroom teachers and school staffs; SETs, Empower and ISP teachers to facilitate a better understanding of the academic and social-emotional/mental health implications of LD, and strategies to foster success .
9. Focus on supporting the development of Learning Skills in students with LD. Facilitate the understanding of the role and development of executive functioning skills by providing professional development to classroom teachers and SETs. Focus on developing self-regulation and self-advocacy skills in students with LD. Offer learning opportunities (central and local) to students on LD to facilitate understanding, acceptance, and inclusion on part of peers, and self-understanding, self-advocacy and self-regulation for students with LD.
10. Continue to provide central and local in-services for parents on LD and on their role in fostering academic success, resilience and positive mental health.

8. Program Review Committee: *Language Impairment*

a. 2014 Goals: That the achievement gap between students identified with Language Impairment (LI) and all students be maintained or reduced by 5 percent:

1. from a 47 percent gap (in 2013-14) to a 42percent gap (for 2014-15) in Grade 3 Reading
2. from a 49 percent gap (in 2013-14) to a 44percent gap (for 2014-15) in Grade 6 Reading
3. from a 46 percent gap (in 2013-14) to a 41percent gap (for 2014-15) on the OSSLT students.

b. Observations:

1. The sample size of students identified with LI who wrote the EQAO Primary Reading assessment and the Junior Reading assessment has remained relatively small and similar in size over the last 3 years. 51 students wrote the primary assessment in 2011-12; 68 students in 2012-13; and 48 students in 2013-14, and 52 students wrote the Junior assessment in 2011-12; 49 students in 2012-13; and 73 students in 2013-14. For the following observations, bear in mind the small sample size that participated in the Primary and Junior assessments.
2. In 2013-14, the Grade 3 Reading results suggest LI students achieved the goal, closing the gap by 7 percent, rather than 5 percent as stated in the 2013-14 goal [i.e., 54 percent (2012-13) to 47 percent (2013-14)]. (See Appendix B.)
3. In 2013-14, the Grade 6 Reading results suggest LI students increased the gap by 1 percent rather than decreasing the gap by 5 percent, as stated in the 2013-14 goal [i.e., 48 percent (in 2012-13) to 49 percent (2013-14)]. (See Appendix B.)
4. In the past 3 years the number of students identified with LI participating in the EQAO Grade 9 Mathematics assessments is small in both Academic and Applied courses. The percentage of students with LI achieving the provincial

standard on the academic assessment in 2013-14 was 40 percent (2 students), and in 2012-13, 50 percent (2 students) and on the Applied assessment, 46 percent (10 students) achieved the provincial standard in 2013-14, and 18 percent (4 students) in 2012-13. (See Appendix B.)

5. The number of First Time Eligible students identified with LI participating in the OSSLT has been small: 16 students in 2011-12; 25 students in 2012-13; 38 students in 2013-14. The percentage of students with LI that were successful on the OSSLT in 2013-14 was 38 percent (9 students), and in 2012-13, 45 percent (9 students) were successful. (See Appendix B.)
- c. 2015 Goal: That the achievement gap between students identified with LI and all students continue to be reduced by 5 percent on the Primary and Junior Reading assessments, and the OSSLT for First Time Eligible students.
  - d. Next Steps:
    1. Continue to develop resources to support the delivery of evidence-based approaches for oral language and literacy instruction for students with communication difficulties.
    2. Facilitate early intervention support for students with oral language and literacy difficulties (i.e., speech-language pathology Early Identification consultations to every FDK classroom; board wide Early Identification of Children's Learning Needs Strategy).
    3. Partner with Early Learning to support Full Day Kindergarten Educator Teams in exploring and applying strategies to promote social, language, and literacy development in the classroom (i.e., modified Hanen® Learning Language and Loving It program).
    4. Provide strategic PD opportunities to all LI-ISP teachers, support staff and regular classroom teachers across all divisions who support students with the LI identification to

address critical student learning needs in both literacy and math.

5. Continue to support the implementation of specialized literacy and math programs in the LI-ISP classes (e.g., Empower Reading intervention, including implementation of the Comprehension, grades 2-5 component and JUMP Math for numeracy).
6. Develop resource materials for SBSLT teams to support successful transitions for students entering and exiting Kindergarten Language Programs and LI-ISP classes.
7. Pilot in select schools new evidence-based resource, Focussed Intervention Program for Phonemic Awareness (FIPPA), to support the achievement of literacy goals for primary students.

9. Program Review Committee: *Mild Intellectual Disability*

a. 2014 Goals:

1. By June 2014 in the elementary panel 50 percent of student identified with a Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) in Grades 1- 6 will meet Level 3 or 4 in the Language Arts expectations in the area of Reading in the student Individual Education Plan (IEP) as reported on the Elementary Provincial Report Card.
2. By June 2014 in the elementary panel 50 percent of students identified with a Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) in Grades 7 -8 will meet Level 3 or 4 in the Language Arts expectations in the area of Reading in the student Individual Education Plans as reported on the Elementary Provincial Report Card.
3. By June 2014 in the elementary panel 60 percent of students identified with a Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) in Grades 1 – 6 will meet Level 3 or 4 in the Mathematics expectation - Number Sense and Numeration -in the student Individual Education Plans as reported on the Elementary Provincial Report Card.

4. By June 2014 in the elementary panel 50 percent of students identified with a Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) in Grades 7-8 will meet Level 3 or 4 in the Mathematics expectation - Number Sense and Numeration -in the student Individual Education Plans as reported on the Elementary Provincial Report Card.

b. Observations:

1. The Elementary Report Card data (June 2014) results for Language Arts for Grades 1 – 6 were 36 percent of student achieving Level 3 or 4 on the Ontario Curriculum Expectations from the student IEP. The results reflect a decline in achievement from June 2013 where 44 percent of Grade 1 – 6 students achieved Level 3 or 4.
2. The Elementary Report Card data (June 2014) results for Language Arts for Grades 7- 8 were 41 percent on the Ontario Curriculum Expectations from the student IEP. The results represent an increase in achievement from the June 2013 where 37 percent of the students achieved Level 3 or 4.
3. The Elementary Report Card data (June 2014) – Number Sense and Numeration for Grades 1 – 6 where 53 percent on the Ontario Curriculum Expectations from the student IEP. The results reflect an increase in achievement from the June 2013 where 48 percent of students achieved Level 3 or 4.
4. The Elementary Report Card data (June 2014) – Number Sense and Numeration for Grades 7 – 8 where 50 percent on the Ontario Curriculum Expectations from the student IEP. The results reflect an increase in student achievement from June 2013 where 40 percent of students achieved Level 3 or 4.
5. The number of students identified with a Mild Intellectual Disability (Grades 1 – 6, N= 101; Grades 7-8, N=98) requires that any interpretation of data and trends should be completed with caution when considered for future planning.

c. 2015 Goals:

1. By June 2015 in the elementary panel 50 percent of students identified with a Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) in Grades 1 – 6 will meet Level 3 or 4 in the Language Arts expectations in the area of Reading in the student Individual Education Plans as reported on the Elementary Provincial Report Card.
2. By June 2015 in the elementary panel 50 percent of students identified with a Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) in Grades 7 -8 will meet Level 3 or 4 in the Language Arts expectations in the area of Reading in the student Individual Education Plans as reported on the Elementary Provincial Report Card.
3. By June 2015 in the elementary panel 50 percent of students identified with a Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) in Grades 1 – 6 will meet Level 3 or 4 in the Mathematics expectation - Number Sense and Numeration -in the student Individual Education Plans as reported on the Elementary Provincial Report Card.
4. By June 2015 in the elementary panel 50 percent of students identified with a Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) in Grades 7-8 will meet Level 3 or 4 in the Mathematics expectation - Number Sense and Numeration -in the student Individual Education Plans as reported on the Elementary Provincial Report Card.

d. Next Steps:

1. Focus on implementation of JUMP Math in MID ISP Classes. Provide support to MID ISP Teachers through professional development.
2. Focus on development of IEP's linking learning expectations to achievable Ontario Curriculum Learning Expectations. Provide professional development to MID ISP Teachers in IEP writing. Provide professional development to SET Teachers in IEP development.
3. Investigate monitoring student progress through Alternative Report Card Learning expectations.

4. Investigate the year 5, 6, and 7 high school exit/ graduation data for students with a Mild Intellectual Disability.
5. Investigate the programming pathways in secondary school for students with a Mild Intellectual Disability (MID).
6. The identification criteria for MID has been updated to reflect the DSM-V diagnostic criterion.

## **F. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. The Accountability Framework for Special Education (AFSE) is a process in that it provides expert advice based on a comprehensive, evidentiary and practical review of the major programs and services in special education. It supports our capacity to implement incremental changes to program services that support our MYSP. This AFSE Annual Report to SEAC is part of the Special Education Plan, reviewed by SEAC, and submitted to the Ministry of Education through the completion of a checklist provided by the Ministry.
2. The AFSE is an integral part of both the Board Learning and Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BLIP/SA) and the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP).
3. The next steps generated in this report were developed through the on-going collaborative work of the AFSE Program Review Committees (PRC). The PRCs for each exceptionality report to the Superintendent of Special Services who in turn submits a comprehensive report (AFSE Report) to SEAC.
4. The Revised Goals for 2015 are tentative and will be revisited and finalized in the fall based on the analysis of all relevant data that will become available at that time.
5. The Program Review Committee's continue their work on an on-going basis.

## **G. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

1. This report is for the consideration of SEAC.