Special Education Program Overview and Improvement Planning

Exceptionality: Learning Disability AF 2 LD
Placement: Regular Class with Resource Support K-12

A. Definition: Learning Disability (LD)

The Ministry of Education defines *learning disability* as one of a number of neurodevelopmental disorders that persistently and significantly has an impact on the ability to learn and use academic and other skills and that:

• affects the ability to perceive or process verbal or non-verbal information in an effective and accurate manner in students who have assessed intellectual abilities that are *at least* in the average range;

• results in (a) academic underachievement that is inconsistent with the intellectual abilities of the student (which are at least in the average range) and/or (b) academic achievement that can be maintained by the student only with extremely high levels of effort and/or with additional support;

• results in difficulties in the development and use of skills in one or more of the following areas: reading, writing, mathematics, and work habits and learning skills;

• may typically be associated with difficulties in one or more cognitive processes, such as phonological processing; memory and attention; processing speed; perceptual-motor processing; visual-spatial processing; executive functions (e.g., self-regulation of behaviour and emotions, planning, organizing of thoughts and activities, prioritizing, decision making);

• may be associated with difficulties in social interaction (e.g., difficulty in understanding social norms or the point of view of others); with various other conditions or disorders, diagnosed or undiagnosed; or with other exceptionalities;

• is *not* the result of a lack of acuity in hearing and/or vision that has not been corrected; intellectual disabilities; socio-economic factors; cultural differences; lack of proficiency in the language of instruction; lack of motivation or effort; gaps in school attendance or inadequate opportunity to benefit from instruction. (Policy and Program Memorandum 8, Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014)

At TCDSB, the diagnosis of Learning Disability is used to describe the LD learning profile, which is based on the LD definition by the LDAO[1].

B. Placement options:

❏ Regular Class with Indirect Support
☒Regular Class with Resource Support[2]

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[1] Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario http://www.ldao.ca/introduction-to-ldsadhd/introduction-to-ldsadhd/what-are-lds/official-definition-of-lds/

[2] The student is placed in a regular class for most or all of the school day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified special education teacher. (Ministry of Education).

❑ Regular Class with Withdrawal Support
❑ Special Education Placement with Partial Integration–Intensive Support Program (ISP)
❑ Full-Time Special Education Placement

C. Description:

The program goal is to provide support for students with LD in their areas of need. The emphasis is on ensuring students have access to the Ontario curriculum through the applications of appropriate accommodations, differentiated instruction, and the use of assistive technology. In addition, instruction focuses on helping students understand their strengths and needs as learners, advocate for themselves, and take responsibility for their own learning. Students are provided with direct support by the Special Education Teacher within the regular class. Collaboration and ongoing communication between the classroom teacher and the Special Education teacher ensures that the student's needs are met. The classroom teacher provides accommodations and/or modifications as documented in the Individual Education Plan (IEP).   Instructional components of programming include: Ontario curriculum and alternative curriculum to address specific needs, as well as social skills, self-advocacy and organizational/study skills, as documented in the IEP.

D. Planning Components:

Key Contact(s): System Design - Chief Psychologist Program Operation – Area Superintendent; Chief Psychologist; Designated Psychology staff in each region		
1. PROGRAM DESIGN AND ADMINISTRATION		
Components	**Description**	**Responsibility**
Grades	• JK – Grade 12	• School Principal
Group size	• Regular class sizes as per ministry guidelines and collective agreements	• School Principal • Area Superintendent
Time & Frequency	• Student attends their regular class • Direct support from special education teacher as needed	• Principal • Regular Classroom and Special

		Education Teacher • SBSLT (SBS + JT) [3]
Facility Requirements	• Regular size classroom • Access to networked computers	• School Principal • Area Superintendent
Transportation	• Offered in home school • Bussing as per board policy	• Principal • Transportation Department
School selection criteria	• N/A	
Locations/schools involved	• Student attends home school	• Principal
Accountability Framework	• Development of a framework for accountability and continuous improvement is in process • Goals will be set by the committee, in accordance with overall goals from the Special Services Department, using the goal format approved by the board	• Special Education Framework • Accountability Framework Committee
2. STUDENTS		
Components	**Description**	**Responsibility**
Early Identification	• P/PM 11, Early Identification of Children's Learning Needs Strategy • According to TCDSB Early Identification of Children's Learning Needs Strategy for Kindergarten, Year 1 to Gr.1 • Intake meetings, case conferences, consultations • School-Based Support Learning Team meetings (SBSLT) • Early Identification conferences with Kindergarten, Year 1, to Gr.1 teachers • Kindergarten Language Program (KLP), as appropriate	• Superintendent, Special Services • Chief Speech-Language Pathologist • Principal • Classroom teacher • SBST • SBSLT • Speech-Language Pathologist

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[3] School Based Support Learning Team (SBSLT) includes members of the School Based Support Team and the Joint Team

Referral criteria	• Elementary and secondary students with mild/moderate /severe/ LD may be referred for resource support
	• SBSLT recommendation, based on:
	    o psychological assessment indicating an LD diagnosis
	    o other assessments as appropriate
	    o student's response to previous interventions (as applicable)
	    o parent input
	• Individual Education Plan (IEP) may be required
	• parent consent is required
	• Formal identification and placement by Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) –optional
		• School Principal
		• Classroom Teacher
		• Special Education Teacher
		• Psychology staff and other SBSLT members present assessment findings
		• Parent/Guardian
		• Student, if older than 16 years of age

Identification by Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)	• Formal identification by Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) is optional for resource support • Psychological assessment indicating an LD diagnosis[4] is required for identification by IPRC • Parent/guardian consent • Student consent, as appropriate	• School Principal • Psychology staff and other SBSLT members present assessment findings • Parent/Guardian • Student, if older than 16 years of age
Placement decisions by Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)	• Formal placement by Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) is optional for resource support • LD diagnosis is required for placement by IPRC • Parent/guardian consent • Student consent, as appropriate	• School Principal • Psychology staff and other SBSLT members present assessment findings indicating the need for placement • Parent/Guardian • Student, if older than 16 years of age
Admission	• By IPRC decision, or SBSLT • Based on psychological assessment results and other information the	• School Principal • Psychology staff and other

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[4] LD diagnosis based on LDAO definition of LD

	student is considered for an LD resource support • Psychological assessment results are shared with the receiving classroom teacher and Special Education Teacher • Other assessments may be considered and shared with the receiving classroom teacher and Special Education Teacher as appropriate • Parental consent is required • Parent input is invited • Student input is invited as appropriate	SBSLT members present assessment • Regular Classroom Teacher • Special Education Teacher • Parent/Guardian • Student, if older than 16 years of age
IPRC - Review	• Annual reviews are required; they may be waived by parents/guardians under specific Ministry and TCDSB guidelines	• Principal chairs • Parent/Guardian • Special Education Teacher, • Regular Classroom Teacher(s) • Student, if older than 16 years of age
Individual Education Plan (IEP)	• An IEP is developed for an identified student to outline accommodations, modifications and alternative curriculum expectations, as appropriate • IEPs are updated at every reporting period as needed	• Principal • Teachers • Consultation from the SBSLT as appropriate • With input from parents and students as appropriate
Assessment to inform student learning (assessment for/as/of learning)	• As outlined in *Growing Success (2010)* • Elementary and secondary curricular assessments as outlined by TCDSB Curriculum Leadership & Innovation, appropriate to grade level • Other standardized assessments as applicable (e.g., EQAO, CAT4) • Assessment of individual expectations, as outlined in the IEP	• Principal • Special Education Teacher, regular class Teacher • Resource staff (Curriculum Leadership & Innovation) • Consultation with SBSLT members as appropriate
Formal assessment to inform student learning (e.g.,	• Psychological assessment that indicates an LD diagnosis[5], includes the student's learning profile (strengths/needs) and programming recommendations	• Psychology staff • Other SBSLT/Joint Team members as appropriate

[5] LD diagnosis based on LDAO definition of LD

| psychology, speech and language, etc.) | • Assessments by other disciplines may be required (Speech-Language, Social Work, Occupational Therapy, Audiology)
• Assessment results are discussed with
   1. Parent and student
   2. Special education and classroom teacher(s) (with parental consent)
• Assessment report included in the Ontario Student Record – OSR (with parental consent) | • School Principal |

Components	Description	Responsibility
Transition Process:		

Demission /Change of placement	• For exceptional students who were formally identified, demission and change of placement can only be determined by the IPRC
	• Decision to demit from withdrawal support may be based on:
	   o Classroom based assessment data
	   o Additional assessment data (e.g., data integration platform)
	   o New formal assessment data, where available
	   o SBSLT recommendation
	   o Parental input/request
	   o Student request, if appropriate
	• For students not formally identified, demission is by SBSLT recommendation
		• School Principal chairs the review IPRC meeting
		• School Principal chairs the SBSLT meeting
		• Classroom teacher; Special Education Teacher
		• Participation of SBSLT members as appropriate
		• Parent participation
		• Student participation as appropriate

Transition	• Transition planning as per PPM 156 as documented in the IEP for both identified and non-identified students • Exchange of information meetings; Grade 8 to Grade 9, as per board policy • Consideration is given to transition to post-secondary	• School Principal • Classroom Teacher, Special Education Teacher • Parent • Student if 16 years or older or younger if appropriate

		• SBSLT
		• Other elementary and secondary school staff as appropriate

3. PERSONNEL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT		
Components	**Description**	**Responsibility**
Staff qualifications/training requirements	• Classroom teacher and special education teacher qualifications consistent with board policy and Ministry requirements • Special Education Teachers require Special Education Part 1 qualifications	• School Principal • Area Superintendent • Teacher
Professional learning opportunities (e.g., training, mentoring, etc.)	The following opportunities may be available: • IEP training and updates • Training in Assistive Technology use • Training in Data Integration Platform (DIP) use • PD opportunities offered by TCDSB Special Services, Curriculum Leadership & Innovation and Student Success central teams • PD opportunities offered at the local school level by members of the SBSLT • SBSLT to provide support and mentoring as needed • Other PD opportunities outside of TCDSB	• Chief Psychologist • LD PR team • School Principal • Teacher • TCDSB Special Services, Curriculum & Accountability, Student Success central teams • SBSLT
Reflective practice: tools to inform teacher learning and practice	• May be used periodically by school teams, and groups of regular classroom and Special Education teachers to guide practice, with participation of the Educational Research Department	• School Principal • Teachers • Educational Research Department
Staff Appraisal	o Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) o EA and CYW Appraisal, if appropriate	• School Principal

Components	Description	Responsibility
	Resources	
Classroom resources/materials	• School block and Special Services funding • Elementary and secondary curricular resources (literacy, numeracy) • Ministry of Education documents: Learning for All: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/LearningforAll2011.pdf • Education for All: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/speced/panel/speced.pdf • Caring and Safe Schools: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/Caring_Safe_School.pdf • Shared Solutions: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/shared.pdf • INTEGRA- https://www.childdevelop.ca/programs/integra-program • Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario: http://www.ldao.ca • Learning Disabilities Association of Toronto District http://www.ldatd.on.ca • LD@School: www.ldatschool.ca • Trillium Demonstration School for Students with Learning Disabilities http://www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/trillium/index.html • TCDSB LD Electronic resources, SharePoint and website	• School Principal • Teachers • Area Superintendent • Chief Psychologist • LD PR Team • Consultation with SBSLT

	• TCDSB LD program resources for teachers (Literacy, Numeracy, Alternate)	
Special Education Amount (SEA)	• Based on individual learning needs, as recommended by a relevant qualified professional • Equipment must be essential for access to the curriculum for a claim to be made (must meet Ministry of Education SEA criteria)	• SEA Team • Teachers • School Principal • Superintendent, Special Services • SBSLT staff • Information Technology staff, as required
Special Incidence Portion (SIP)	o Application for funding submitted for students with intensive safety and/or health needs according to Ministry of Education SIP criteria	• School Principal • Teacher • Superintendent, Special Services • Area Superintendent • Support by SBSLT and special services staff
Professional Support Central/Regional/ External	• Ongoing program and student support is provided by SBSLT members • Consultation and direct support as appropriate by TCDSB staff including the school SLP, psychology, social work, APT/PAT • Consultation support by TCDSB central team staff (e.g., Special Services, Curriculum Leadership & Innovation, Student Success) • Community/outside agency support is governed by the TCDSB Third Party Protocol and Partnership Agreements • LD related community agencies (Integra, LD Association of Toronto Region, LD Association of Ontario, etc.)	• School Principal • Teacher • SBSLT staff as appropriate • Special Services, Curriculum Leadership & Innovation, Student Success central teams
Support documents	o Learning for All (Ministry of Education, 2011) o Education for All (Ministry of Education, 2005) o Student Success High Yield Strategies (TCDSB, 2010) o Supporting Student Success in Literacy (TCDSB, 2009) o Differentiated Instruction Resources and kits from Ministry of Education o Special Education Guide for Educators (Ministry of Education, 2001) o Transition Resource Guide (Ministry of Education, 2002)	• Special Services Department and Superintendent • Curriculum Leadership & Innovation Department • Student Success

- IEP Resource Guide (Ministry of Education, 2004) - Documents on evidence-based intervention practices; e.g., research articles, websites, descriptive pamphlets, etc. - LDAO documents (Definition of LD, other resource documents) - TCDSB LD Program brochures - TCDSB LD program resources for teachers	

4. PARENTS		
Components	**Description**	**Responsibility**
Home School Communication	- Ongoing communication between Regular Class Teacher, Special Education Teacher and parent/guardian - Parent-teacher interviews - IPRC's and Annual Reviews	- Regular Class Teacher - Special Education Teacher - School Principal - Parent
Shared Solutions	Follow process outlined in Shared Solutions (Ministry of Education)	- Teacher - Special Education Teacher - Parent - Principal - Superintendent of Special Services - Area Superintendent
Parent Guide	TCDSB Special Education Parent Guide	- School Principal - Superintendent, Special Services
Parent Involvement	- Ongoing communication - Parent evening sessions – curriculum nights - Individual Education Plan (IEP) - Parents participate in Identification Placement Review Committee (IPRC) meetings - Parent Teacher Interviews - School and School Board Information Fairs	- School Principal - Teachers

5. COMMUNICATION		
Components	**Description**	**Responsibility**
External	• TCDSB Website/Portal • Special Education Advisory Committee • TCDSB Department Brochures • Information Fair • TCDSB Special Services Parent Guide • LD, Empower brochures	• Superintendent of Special Services • Communication Department • Chief Psychologist
Internal	• TCDSB Website/Portal • Email • Director's Bulletin • TCDSB Policy and Procedures • Share Point Websites (for Empower teachers; Principals and educators)	• Superintendent of Special Services • Principal • Communication Department • Chief Psychologist