



REPORT TO

**STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND WELL BEING, CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF EDUCATION ASSISTANT EFFICIENCIES IN THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY PANEL**

*For you have been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat; for the breath of the ruthless is like a storm against a wall Isaiah 25:4*

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
December 19, 2016	January 12, 2017	<a href="#">Click here to enter a date.</a>

Cristina Fernandes, Superintendent of Special Services  
 Paul De Cock, Comptroller for Business Services & Finance

**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 uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.*

*We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.*



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## A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report will provide a preliminary analysis of the staff reductions in Education Assistants (EA) and Child & Youth Workers (CYW) at TCDSB. Staff will present a final assessment in April 2017 to coincide with, and inform the budget process.

Staff analysed quantitative data about students with special needs and the staff deployed to support the students, factoring the board-approved reductions to EAs and CYWs, and draw conclusions about the impact on student achievement and well-being for students receiving special education support.

The Research department staff initiated a Multiple Case Study approach in elementary and secondary schools in an effort to gather qualitative and perceptual data about the impact on reductions to EA and CYW staff.

*The cumulative staff time dedicated to developing this report was 45 hours.*

## B. PURPOSE

1. At the Student Achievement and Well Being, Catholic Education and Human Resources Committee on June 2, 2016, Trustees approved a motion directing staff to review Educational Assistant efficiencies board-wide in both elementary and secondary.
2. Staff are only able to provide a preliminary report at this time, and will bring a final analysis to the Board in April 2017 to coincide with and inform the budget process.

## C. BACKGROUND

1. **June 4, 2015** – At a Special meeting of the Board, Trustees approved reductions of FTE 30.00 EAs and FTE 7.00 CYWs
2. **June 2, 2016** – At Student Achievement and Well Being, Catholic Education and Human Resources Committee, Trustees approved reductions of FTE 56.0 EAs and FTE 5.00 CYWs
3. **June 2, 2016** – At Student Achievement and Well Being, Catholic Education and Human Resources Committee, Trustees approved a motion requesting a review

of Education Assistants efficiencies board-wide in both elementary and secondary schools.

4. The following Chart captures the **REDUCTIONS (FTE)** in support staff over the past two years in Education Assistants, Child & Youth Workers and external contracted support workers:

School Year	EA	CYW	Contract Support Workers
2015-2016	30.00 (\$1.5M)	7.00 (\$0.4M)	\$2.3M
2016-2017	56.00 (\$2.8M)	5.00 (\$0.3M)	\$0.2M
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>86.00 (\$4.3M)</b>	<b>12.00 (\$0.7M)</b>	<b>\$2.5M</b>

## D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

### ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

1. The following metrics were reviewed to learn about the impact of reductions in Education Assistants and Child and Youth Workers in both elementary and secondary panels of the TCDSB
  - a. **METRIC #1** Student Data /Support Staff Data 2013 – 2016 (**APPENDIX A**)  
*Over the four year span, the following changes have been noted:*

#### Students with IEP

- i. Overall, the total number of students with IEPs has **decreased** over the last four years in Elementary (808 students or 8%) and in secondary panels. (641 students or 9%).
- ii. The number of students with an IEP that have gone through an IPRC process has **decreased** for Elementary students (15%) and Secondary students (21%).
- iii. The number of Students with an IEP (not identified through an IPRC) has **decreased** for Elementary students (2%) and **increased** for Secondary students (17%).
- iv. In secondary schools, although there has been an **increase** of students (429) with and IEP that have not been identified or placed according to the IPRC process, there has been a **decrease** (1070) in students with an IEP that have been through the IPRC process. This has produced an **overall decrease** of 641 students with special needs.

- v. Overall, there has been a **decrease** to students with Special Education needs from 2013 (17,569) to 2016 (16,120) for a total decrease of 1449 students or 8 %.

### **Support Staff**

- vi. EA Allocation has **decreased** overall by FTE 86.00 and CYW Allocation has **decreased** overall by FTE 12.00, representing 8% and 6% reduction of the overall complement respectively.
- vii. Outside Agency Support Staff **decreased** by \$2.3 M from 2014-15 to 2016-17, representing a 93% reduction in expenditures.

### **Placements**

Students with special education requirements are serviced according to five different placements. These placements are defined by the Ministry of Education as follows:

- *A regular class with indirect support* where the student is placed in a regular class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialized consultative services.
- *A regular class with resource assistance* where the student is placed in a regular class for most or all of the day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified special education teacher.
- *A regular class with withdrawal assistance* where the student is placed in a regular class and receives instruction outside the classroom, for less than 50 per cent of the school day, from a qualified special education teacher.
- *A special education class with partial integration* where the student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class for at least 50 per cent of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.
- *A full-time special education class* where the student remains for the entire school day.

Changes to enrolment in these classes over the four years (2013-2016) are described below:

- viii. There has been an overall *decrease* in Elementary of 3% and an *increase* in Secondary of 2% for those students that are serviced through the **Regular Class with Indirect Support** placement.
- ix. There has been a *decrease* in Elementary of 28% and a *decrease* in Secondary of 26% for those students that are serviced through the **Regular Class with Resource Assistance** placement.
- x. For those students that are serviced through the Regular Class **Withdrawal Assistance** placement there has been a *decrease* in Elementary of 8% and a *decrease* in Secondary of 9%.
- xi. For those students that are serviced through an Intensive Support Program (**ISP**) **with Partial Integration** placement there has been a *decrease* in Elementary of 11% and an *increase* in Secondary of 1%.
- xii. For those students that receive Intensive Support Program (**ISP**) **Full Time** placement there has been an *increase* in Elementary of 28% and an *increase* in Secondary of 20%.

- In the elementary panel, there have been *decreases in student enrolment* in four of the five placement categories with an increase of placement (20 students) in the ISP Class full time.
- In the secondary panel, there have been *decreases in student enrolment* in three of five placement categories. Both ISP class with Partial Integration and ISP class full time saw increases (5 students and 13 students respectively).

b. **METRIC #2** – Benchmark of Support Staff in Coterminous District School Boards (**Appendix B**)

*Over a two year span, the following changes have been noted:*

- i. Relative to other coterminous district school board, the TCDSB continues to have a greater number of Educational Assistants and Child and Youth Workers relative to other boards.
- ii. Of the seven boards compared in **Appendix B**, the ratio of support staff to student enrolment is significantly greater than 5 other boards. It was noted that only Durham CDSB has a ratio marginally greater than TCDSB.

**c. METRIC #3 – Report Card Learning Skills for Students with an IEP (APPENDIX C)**

The Learning Skill and Work Habits section on the Ontario Provincial Report Card allows a teacher to assess a student’s ability to engage in the skills listed in the chart below:

<b>Responsibility</b>	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fulfils responsibilities and commitments within the learning environment;</li> <li>• completes and submits class work, homework, and assignments according to agreed-upon timelines;</li> <li>• takes responsibility for and manages own behaviour.</li> </ul>
<b>Organization</b>	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• devises and follows a plan and process for completing work and tasks;</li> <li>• establishes priorities and manages time to complete tasks and achieve goals;</li> <li>• identifies, gathers, evaluates, and uses information, technology, and resources to complete tasks.</li> </ul>
<b>Independent Work</b>	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• independently monitors, assesses, and revises plans to complete tasks and meet goals;</li> <li>• uses class time appropriately to complete tasks;</li> <li>• follows instructions with minimal supervision.</li> </ul>
<b>Collaboration</b>	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accepts various roles and an equitable share of work in a group;</li> <li>• responds positively to the ideas, opinions, values, and traditions of others;</li> <li>• builds healthy peer-to-peer relationships through personal and media-assisted interactions;</li> <li>• works with others to resolve conflicts and build consensus to achieve group goals;</li> <li>• shares information, resources, and expertise and promotes critical thinking to solve problems and make decisions.</li> </ul>
<b>Initiative</b>	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• looks for and acts on new ideas and opportunities for learning;</li> <li>• demonstrates the capacity for innovation and a willingness to take risks;</li> <li>• demonstrates curiosity and interest in learning;</li> <li>• approaches new tasks with a positive attitude;</li> <li>• recognizes and advocates appropriately for the rights of self and others.</li> </ul>
<b>Self-regulation</b>	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sets own individual goals and monitors progress towards achieving them;</li> <li>• seeks clarification or assistance when needed;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assesses and reflects critically on own strengths, needs, and interests;</li> <li>• identifies learning opportunities, choices, and strategies to meet personal needs and achieve goals;</li> <li>• perseveres and makes an effort when responding to challenges.</li> </ul>
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**From *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools (2010)***

The provincial Report Cards report on Student Learning Skills and Work Habits. This data was collected for each student with an IEP that attended TCDSB *over the last three years*. Students would receive one of the following ratings: E-Excellent, G-Good, S-Satisfactory, N-needs improvement and B-Blank in the six areas.

Over 9,700 students were counted as part of this collection of data.

- i. After analysing the data, there are no significant, discernible differences between learning skills prior to staff reductions as compared to the years with reductions. (**Appendix C**)
  
- d. **METRIC #4** – Safe Schools Progressive Discipline Data for Students with an IEP (**APPENDIX D**)
  - i. There has been a *decrease* of 113 students with an IEP receiving Suspensions from school under Section 306 of the Education Act.
  - ii. There has been a *decrease* of 994 instructional days lost to Suspension for students with an IEP.
  - iii. There has been an *increase* of 5 students with an IEP receiving Suspensions Pending possible Expulsion from school under Section 310 of the Education Act.
  - iv. There has been a *decrease* of 4 students with an IEP receiving Suspensions categorized as Violent Incidents.
  - v. There has been an *increase* of 11 students with an IEP receiving a Fresh Start under Board policy S.S. 12 Fresh Start.
  - vi. There has been a *decrease* of 16 students with an IEP receiving a School Expulsion under Section 310 of the Education Act.
  - vii. There has been a *decrease* of 4 students with an IEP receiving a Board Expulsion under Section 310 of the Education Act.

- viii. Based on these results, it can be surmised that the reduction of EAs and CYWs has not given rise to the number of Safe Schools Progressive Discipline incidents for students with an IEP.

## ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

### **Impact of Changes in Special Education: Multiple Student Case Study**

2. An internal research study was initiated in October 2016, to help identify the impact of changes in the special education model in the TCDSB, focusing on a cross-section of students with special education needs, in all placement settings.
3. Eight schools (5 elementary, 3 secondary) were selected to participate in the study. **All schools had experienced a loss of FTE 3.00 or greater to Education Assistants over the past two years.** Within these schools, 35 students (20 Elementary, 15 Secondary) were identified centrally for participation. Students selected for inclusion in the study were drawn from a range of exceptionalities and placement options. (**APPENDIX E**)
4. Given the diversity of student needs and the variation of instructional strategies, assessment and reporting structures that exist in the special education program, a multiple student case study approach was used. This method allows for gathering of evidence to outline the uniqueness of every situation and to identify themes that emerge. Principals were provided with an information and consent letter for all parents of students in the study. Research staff visited each school to collect information regarding each student included in the study for whom there was consent.
5. A template was used to collect information from teachers, parents and students regarding the impact of changes to support staff on students. The following are examples of types of research questions asked of the participants:
  - Please describe the needs of the student. Have these needs changed over the past three years?
  - What supports is the student currently receiving? Include staffing, programming, materials, equipment, space etc. How has this changed in the past three years?
  - Have changes in needs and support had a significant impact on the student's behaviour, social-emotional wellbeing, achievement,



adaptive functioning? Do you perceive the changes to be negative or positive or has there been no change? What is the evidence?

6. School visits took place in November and December, 2016. The collection and compilation of information is ongoing. **Appendix E** outlines the tracking process that will be used to formulate a final analysis. Research staff are currently summarizing information to compile each case study. The case studies will be shared with the Special Education Review Committee to identify emerging themes to help inform the final report.
7. The final report will outline emerging themes on student well-being and achievement, areas for growth, and promising practices.

## **E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. Staff will continue to monitor the quantitative data from Appendices B-E throughout the balance of this school year and respond appropriately. Continuous dialogue with principals, special education teachers and Assessment and Program Teachers (Elementary)/Program and Assessment Teachers (Secondary) will inform further actions, supports and interventions required.
2. An analysis of the qualitative data obtained through the Multiple Case Study by the Research department and Special Services will be conducted to assess the impact of staff reductions on students receiving special education supports.
3. The Special Education Review Committee meets monthly to review changes to Special Education policies, procedures and the service delivery model.
4. Staff will present the analyses to SEAC.

## **F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This report is for the consideration of the Board and.