



REPORT TO

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

COORDINATED SERVICE PLANNING IN TCDSB SCHOOLS

"... The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." Matthew 4:16

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C. Fernandes, 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 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 reviews for SEAC the requirements of the Toronto Coordinated Service Planning and the implications for the TCDSB.

B. PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to summarize the purpose of the proposed Coordinated Service Plan agreement and to outline the benefits and challenges, as well as any financial expectations of the TCDSB.

C. BACKGROUND

1. In 2014, the Ontario government introduced the Special Needs Strategy with respect to services for students. Coordinated Service Planning is part of the provincial strategy that involves cross-ministerial co-operation with four ministries (Ministries of Child and Youth Services, Community and Social Services, Education, and Health and Long-Term Care) to improve services for children and youth with special needs in Ontario.
2. The government of Ontario funds a broad array of programs and services for children and youth with special needs, delivered by multiple service providers.
3. Families report that the current system can often result in confusion and frustration when accessing services for their children and youth with multiple and/or complex special needs. Coordination is often complicated due to multiple entry points into the health, education and children's services systems; conflicting eligibility and service policies amongst providers.
4. Students impacted by this strategy are students with multiple and/or complex special needs and their families, students requiring multiple specialized services (e.g. rehabilitation services, autism services, developmental services, and/or respite supports) and services from multiple professionals. It is probable that these students will have ongoing service needs.
5. The government identified communities across the province that were supposed to work on an approach to address the rehabilitation and coordinated service planning. Communities were to design a plan that identified a single coordinating agency, dedicated service planning coordinators and a single coordinated service plan for each eligible child.

EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. All district school boards are being asked to sign a memorandum of understanding with the community agencies in the region that would commit the board to work with different partners in a collaborative manner to achieve the objectives of the strategy.
2. In signing this agreement, the TCDSB would be committing to the following:
 - i. Supporting the implementation of Coordinated Service Planning in Toronto;
 - ii. Contributing to the system vision, design of the model, development of operational strategies and participating in the system-wide management of resources and expertise;
 - iii. Placing the needs of children and youth and their families ahead of individual organization priorities, needs and aspirations;
 - iv. Being an active participant in a coordinated service plan for a student;
 - v. Supporting the implementation of strategies that will integrate and streamline Coordinating Service Planning processes within the Board; and
 - vi. Assigning Board staff to participate in monthly planning and implementation meetings.

METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Coordinated Service Planning Benefits to TCDSB families:

- Families will know where to go when they have a concern about their child's development
- Students with multiple and/or complex special needs and their families will have access to coordinated service planning
- Students can have access to appropriate assessments of their needs/strengths prior to school entry.
- Coordinated service planning will be available to all children including those attending Section 23 Programs

- Families will have a clear point of access to information and services for their children with multiple and/or complex special needs
- Transparency and support for families who are experiencing challenges when accessing services from different sectors in the community.
- Children will receive seamless and effective speech-language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy services as they move into and through school.

2. Implications for TCDSB:

Resources:

- TCDSB may require new resources to meet the capacity needs created by the needs of the strategy
- Additional staff allocation to provide for a case manager at the school/system level would be required to work with students entering the school system with an identification
- Additional staff resources needed to support transition to school (potentially through assessment programming teachers, an intake team, the local school administrative)

Communications:

- TCDSB will require the dissemination of information to our stakeholder community
- Organizing exchange of information with outside agencies and obtain consent for sharing of information.

Strategy Development:

- Develop strategies to balance needs of complex care students and students with learning needs that are not complex but still need to be addressed.
- Expectations of parents with respect to a plan of care and supports available at TCDSB, which may differ from what is offered in the community.
- Expectations of community partners with respect to what can be accomplished in the school setting, given collective agreements and role definitions.
- Parents of students coming to school with a plan of care will expect supports to be in place immediately, but staff may require training in some cases.
- There will need to be consideration with respect to the transitioning of students with an individual education plan, and how these transition plans will align with IEP.

Process questions:

- Considerations will need to be made with respect to:
 - the necessary paper work and how processes are documented;
 - the method by which information would be communicating information to admin, teachers and families;
 - how decisions will be made with respect to which school community may be able to accommodate the student's needs;
 - which staff will update information (TCDSB forms or community platform) and,
 - who will invite coordinated service planners to school team meetings.

Other Considerations:

- Balancing the needs of agencies vs. availability of supports at school given student needs
 - Balancing a family's desire for therapy/support with school mandate to deliver curriculum
 - The strategy does not propose how Psychology, Mental Health and other children's initiatives may be a part of the school's processes.
 - School boards have not received any information with respect to expected volume of students that may be part of this strategy and the potential may impact schools.
3. Overall, many of the existing TCDSB processes would continue to be used to monitor the work of community agencies, although attention to existing collective agreement contacts would need to be taken into consideration.
 4. Additionally, there will be a need for community agencies to understand that students who require therapeutic settings may not be able to be accommodated in a school setting due to the crossover of medical/therapeutic services that TCDSB staff may not be able to address in the school setting.
 5. Costs related to implementation of the agreement are difficult to measure given the limited information with respect to number of students and schools that may be involved with student intakes annually. Most costs would be associated with staff time dedicated to the intake process(es) as well as any required training to support the student reintegration into the school system.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of SEAC.