



REPORT TO

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

RESPONSE TO PRESENTATION AT SEAC TO THE ONTARIO AUTISM PRESENTATION

How strong god is! He despises no one; there is nothing he doesn't understand. Job 36:5

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
November 6, 2017	November 6, 2017	
Peter Stachiw, Chief of Autism Programs and Services Cristina Fernandes, Superintendent of Special Services		

INFORMATION REPORT

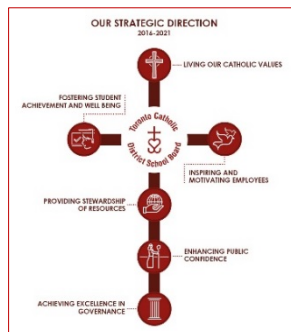
Vision:

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 is a response to questions that were posed by Autism Ontario through their presentation at SEAC on September 13th, 2017.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 5 hours

B. PURPOSE

On September 13th, 2017, SEAC received an association report from Autism Ontario that posed 8 questions. This report provides answers to these questions.

C. BACKGROUND

1. On September 13th, 2017 Autism Ontario posed the following questions.

- I) Has the TCDSB applied for the additional funding as offered in the MOE's letter dated June 28, 2016?
- II) What has been implemented during this transition and beyond to support students with ASD using the additional funds?
- III) What collaborative role does the TCDSB share with MCYS and/or the MOE in the transition and implementation of the new OAP?
- IV) How does *Connections for Students* support students with ASD transitioning to school and beyond and is there supportive data?
- V) Does the TCDSB employ ABA facilitators? If yes, what is their role?
- VI) How much is the Behaviour Expertise Amount (BEA) allotment for the TCDSB and to what capacity is it being used according to its purpose?
- VII) How are the students with ASD in K-12 supported using ABA methods in achieving their academic and socio-emotional goals to their fullest potential and what measurable data has been collected and is available to show that it's working?
- VIII) Will PPM 149 and its associated TCDSB policies be amended to accommodate the collaborative relationship that the TCDSB will

have with the MCYS in supporting achievement for students with ASD through the new Ontario Autism Program?

2. This report provides answers to these questions.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

The questions posed are answered below:

1. **Question: Has the TCDSB applied for the additional funding as offered in the MOE's letter dated June 28, 2016?**

Answer: In the MOE's letter dated June 28, 2016 it stated that schools boards were eligible to apply for additional funding to provide after-school skills development programs for children. Yes, the TCDSB applied for this additional funding. As a result of this funding the board through a licence agreement with Corbrook Awakening Abilities is running an after school skills development program Francis Libermann Catholic Secondary School.

2. **Question: What has been implemented during this transition and beyond to support students with ASD using the additional funds?**

Answer: During this transition many things have been implemented to help support students with ASD while building capacity within the board.

- Additional staff have been added including speech and language pathologists, educational assistants and Autism Support teachers;
- Focused professional development for Kindergarten teachers and Special Education teachers in elementary is being provided;
- Evidence based literacy and numeracy resources for the lower functioning students with Autism have been purchased for the teachers in elementary Multiple Exceptionalities/Development Disability ISP classes;
- Resources for the lower functioning students with Autism have been purchased for teachers in the secondary Multiple Exceptionalities/Development Disability ISP classes;
- Sensory kits are being purchased to support students with Autism in the elementary and secondary Multiple Exceptionalities/Development

Disability ISP classes, the Program to Assist Social Thinking (PAST) classes and Autism ISP classes.

3. **Question: What collaborative role does the TCDSB share with MCYS and/or the MOE in the transition and implementation of the new OAP?**

Answer: The TCDSB meets regularly with Surrey Place Centre (SPC) which is the lead agency under MCYS. We work in collaboration through the Connections for Students initiative transitioning students from Autism Intervention Programs (AIP) into the school system. We also have a transition team that has representatives from SPC where we meet regularly to discuss transitions, review our practices and run workshops for parents and staff. We are in contact with the MOE through teleconferences and our local representative as needed. As the information for the new OAP is released through the different ministries we are in contact to discuss the updates and plan for the changes.

4. **Question: How does *Connections for Students* support students with ASD transitioning to school and beyond and is there supportive data?**

Answer: The Connections team is multi-disciplinary and includes the parents, school principal, teacher, TCDSB Connections for Students staff, Surrey Place Centre Connections for Students staff and other professionals, as determined on an individual basis.

- The Connections initiative supports the transitioning from the Autism Intervention Program (AIP) to school in a seamless manner;
- Ensure that the school and teacher have the information they need about the student's skills/abilities, difficulties and teaching strategies that have helped him/her learn in the AIP;
- Make sure the student maintains the gains that were made in the AIP and to support continued learning of new skills.

Approximately six months prior to the child's transition from the AIP and once parental consent is received, the board is informed. Staff gather the necessary information about the student's program, teaching strategies which have been successful and resources which are needed as part of the program.

- This involves a visit to the student's AIP;
- Discussion with AIP staff;
- Gathering and reviewing assessments;
- Meeting with parents and school staff;
- Acquiring and preparing needed resources and materials.

Connections for Students staff work with school staff to ensure they have the information needed to collaborate with the school in planning the student's program and to assist with program implementation, as needed.

After the student has transitioned from the AIP, Connection for Students staff continue to provide support to the school. The nature of support is individualized and continues for up to six months after transitioning. Regular contact is made between the parents, school and Connections team through scheduled meetings. After this period, assistance continues to be available at the request of the school from the board's Autism Team. Data is collected regarding the number of students that are in Connections and this is reported to the Ministry of Education.

5. Question: Does the TCDSB employ ABA facilitators? If yes, what is their role?

Answer: All Autism Support teachers in the board including the Connections for Students staff are trained in ABA practices. Ongoing training is provided through the Geneva Centre and sponsored by the MOE which staff attend on an annual basis. Currently ABA facilitators/practitioners are not regulated in the province. The Autism Support teacher's assistance is available on a referral basis. The priority is given to tier 3 and tier 2 students to provide direct instruction to individual student. For tier 1 students, the Autism Support teacher consults with school staff to provide program support. This may include assessments of skills; functional behaviour analysis; preparing for transitioning students from an AIP, elementary to secondary school and into post-secondary; modelling to help build capacity in implementing ABA principles; providing professional development through workshops and courses for staff and parents.

6. **Question: How much is the Behaviour Expertise Amount (BEA) allotment for the TCDSB and to what capacity is it being used according to its purpose?**

Answer: The Behaviour Expertise Amount (BEA) allotment for the TCDSB is \$338,542. It is used to hire staff to work with schools in supporting students through transitioning from AIPs, providing training to school staff on ABA principles and creating resources.

7. **Question: How are the students with ASD in K-12 supported using ABA methods in achieving their academic and socio-emotional goals to their fullest potential and what measurable data has been collected and is available to show that it's working?**

Answer: Students with ASD in K-12 are supported using ABA methods to achieve their academic and socio-emotional goals through a multi-disciplinary approach. When students are experiencing difficulty the services of the Autism department can be accessed through a referral process. This can include support from an Autism Support teacher, Psychologist, Speech and Language Pathologist, Social Worker and/or Educational Assistant. The goal is to provide short term support to build capacity and gradually release responsibility to the school. In some cases, the support is ongoing. Data is locally collected on an individual basis which can include Antecedent Behaviour Consequence (ABC) charts, functional behaviour analysis, observations and discussions with staff. Data is also collected through the PPM 140 survey. This helps inform training and implementation within the board. Referrals to the department are also tracked to determine what type of interventions the team is providing.

8. **Question: Will PPM 149 and its associated TCDSB policies be amended to accommodate the collaborative relationship that the TCDSB will have with the MCYS in supporting achievement for students with ASD through the new Ontario Autism Program?**

Answer: We do not know at this point as the implementation of the PPM is still evolving.

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Staff will continue to inform SEAC with respect to changes to the Ontario Autism Program.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of SEAC.