



REPORT TO

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

### ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION 2017-18

*So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time,  
if we do not give up. - Galatians 6:9*

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### 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**

An accountability framework was established for the annual review of special education programs and services in order that student achievement and well-being be reported and that programs and services could be continually renewed and improved. This report is composed of the following sections:

**Part A** -Overview of student achievement for students with special needs.

**Part B** - Reporting on Overall achievement by exceptionality where feasible/ appropriate.

**Part C** - Reporting on Safe Schools information for 2016-17

**Part D** - Reporting on the ongoing work of the accountability framework committees as listed below:

- a. Autism
- b. Behaviour
- c. Blind/Low Vision (BLV)
- d. Deaf/ Hard of Hearing (DHH)
- e. Gifted
- f. Language Impairment (LI)
- g. Learning Disability (LD)
- h. Mild Intellectual Disability (MID)
- i. Multiple Exceptionalities/Developmental Delays (ME/DD)

**Part E** - Update on implementation of specific Special Education Programs

*The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 90 hours.*

## **B. PURPOSE**

1. This report is an annual standing report on the rolling calendar for the Student Achievement Committee. The 2016-17 report (Part One) went to the Board of Trustees last on April 6, 2017.
2. This report provides an overall review of student achievement for 2016-17 on the EQAO assessments where available, with a broad strokes overview of achievement of students with special needs and comparisons over the last few years as well as an outline of the work of the accountability frameworks for different exceptionalities.

## C. BACKGROUND

1. Beginning in 2010, TCDSB began to measure student achievement of Special Education students on an annual basis through the establishment of an Accountability Framework for Special Education (AFSE).
2. The purpose of the Accountability Framework is to conduct an annual review of Special Education services and programs through the lens of student achievement. As such, programs and services are reviewed for effectiveness to ensure ongoing continued improvement across the different exceptionalities.
3. 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 and along with the program description, they can be found on the TCDSB public website.
4. The work of the Accountability Framework Committee is shared through the context of each exceptionality's goal setting and their analysis of student achievement results.
5. An analysis is provided on student achievement by exceptionality, where appropriate.
6. This report examines the EQAO results for students with Special Education support and their achievement results and trends over the last five years where possible.
7. The Accountability Framework committees set and implement strategies that are exceptionality-specific with the intent of improving student outcomes through the listed goals and strategies.

## D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

Understanding the scope of students serviced to Special Services is paramount to understanding the diversity of students needs being serviced. Below is a chart identifying students by the predominant exceptionality. It important to note that a number of students have more than one exceptionality.

Special Education Needs (based on predominant exceptionality)	Number of Students	Percent of Total Group
Autism	1763	10.4
Behaviour	188	1.10
Blind and Low Vision	15	0.09
Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing	97	0.57
Developmental Disability	141	0.83
Giftedness	2408	14.15
Language Impairment	840	4.94
Learning Disability	2920	17.16
Mild Intellectual Disability	373	2.19
Multiple Exceptionalities	182	1.07
N/A	8016	47.10
Physical Disability	73	0.43
Speech Impairment	2	0.01
	17018	100.0

### Part A -An overview of student achievement as it pertains to students with special needs.

1. This section of the report will provide an analysis of each part of the report as outlined in the Executive Summary. EQAO results only affect students in grades 3, 6, 9 and 10 who have exceptionalities. As such, within some exceptionalities the low numbers in each grade will not be reported. Please refer to **Appendix A** for detailed information on Grade 3 and 6 Reading, Writing and Mathematics scores as well as Grade 9 Math and Grade 10 OSSLT. Provincial comparisons of results reported below are for students with exceptionalities.
2. Summary of results for exceptional students achieving level 3 and 4 on the provincial assessments (excluding Gifted):

**a. Areas of Relative Strength**

- i. Gr.3 Reading – 6% increase from 39% to 45% and above province (43%)
- ii. Gr.3 Writing – 1% decrease from 56% to 55% but above the province (54%)
- iii. Gr.6 Reading – increase from 44% to 48% and slightly below province (51%)
- iv. Gr.6 Writing – increase from 48% to 53% and above province (51%)

**b. Areas for Growth:**

- i. Gr.3 Mathematics – decrease from 33% two years ago to 30% but above province (29%)
- ii. Gr.6 Math – maintained at 15% from two years ago and below province (18%)
- iii. Gr.9 Academic Math– increase from 66% to 67% but below province (71%)
- iv. Gr.9 Applied Math– decrease from 35% to 32% but below province at 37%

**c. Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)**  
(Reported by percent of students successful)

- i. Full Time – decrease from 56% successful to 53% and above province at 52%
- ii. Part Time – increase from 27% to 32% but below province (34%)
- iii. Students completing Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC) is 38%, increase of 5%; the provincial level is 42%

**d. Next Steps:**

- i. As part of the Renewed Math Strategy, continue to provide release days for special education teachers to work with grade level teachers to develop and implement strategies to support mathematics. (all grades)

## **Part B – EQAO Overall Achievement of Students receiving Special Education support(s) by Exceptionality (Autism, LI, LD)**

1. A large proportion of students with Special Education supports participate in the Grades 3, 6 and 9 EQAO assessments and the Grade 10 OSSLT. Given the wide range of performance on these assessments and considerable differences in the prevalence of certain exceptionalities, **it would not be appropriate or feasible to report on some exceptionalities.**
2. **Appendix B** charts EQAO and OSSLT achievement results over 3 years for the following exceptionality: **Autism**  
Some highlights are described below:

### **a. Areas of Relative Strength:**

- i. Gr.3
  - increase in number of students with Autism that wrote the assessment (from 91 to 132)
  - 6% more students wrote the assessment (less exemptions)
- ii. Gr.3 Writing – maintained steady at 39%
- iii. Gr. 6 Reading – increase from 28% to 33%
- iv. Gr. 6 Writing – increase from 38% to 43%
- v. Gr. 9 Applied Math – increase from 41% to 47% and above province at 37%

### **b. Areas for Growth:**

- a. Grade 3 reading - decrease from 33% to 29% in student achievement at level 3 and 4
- b. Gr. 3 Mathematics – decrease from 39% two years ago to 23%
- c. Gr. 6 Math – slight decrease from 20% two years ago to 19%
- d. Academic – decrease from 100% to 86% (due to very small sample size)

### **c. Grade 10 OSSLT (Reported by percent of students successful)**

- i. Full Time – decrease from 54% successful to 52% and at the same level as province (52%)
- ii. Part Time – decrease from 35% to 34% but at same level as province (34%)

- iii. Students with Autism completing OSSLC is 42%, increase of 3%; same as provincial level (42%)
- iv. Deferred students have decreased by 1% to 11% for Full Time students and maintained at 10% for Part Time students

**d. Next Steps:**

- i. As part of the Renewed Math Strategy, continue to provide release days for special education teachers to work with grade level teachers to develop and implement strategies to support mathematics. (all grades)
- ii. Use newly purchased resources to support ongoing work with this student population. (See Appendix F).

**3. Appendix C charts EQAO and OSSLT achievement results over 3 years for the following exceptionality: Learning Disability (LD)**

**a. Areas of Relative Strength:**

- i. Gr. 3 Writing – increase from 71% two years ago to 75%, well above the province at 54%
- ii. Gr. 6 Reading – increase from 50% to 56% and above province (51%)
- iii. Gr. 6 Writing – increase from 48% to 53% and above province (51%)
- iv. Grade 9 Academic Math – increase from 69% to 72% and above province (71%)

**b. Areas for Growth:**

- i. Gr. 3 Reading – decrease from 44% to 42%
- ii. Gr. 3 Mathematics – decrease from 46% to 31%
- iii. Gr. 6 Math – decreased from 17% to 13%
- iv. Grade 9 Applied Math– decrease from 37% to 32%

**c. Grade 10 OSSLT (Reported by percent of students successful)**

- i. Full Time – decrease from 55% two years ago to 52% successful (same level as special needs in province at 52%)
- ii. Part Time – decrease from 38% to 35% but above province (34%)
- iii. Students completing OSSLC is 39%, increase of 9%; the provincial level is 42%

- iv. Students deferred were 4% which is a decrease of 3%, thus more students are writing the assessment

**e. Next Steps:**

- a. As part of the Renewed Math Strategy, continue to provide release days for special education teachers to work with grade level teachers to develop and implement strategies to support mathematics. (all grades)
- b. Continue implementation of Empower and Lexia programs as strategies that support decoding and comprehension for students in primary

4. **Appendix D** charts EQAO and OSSLT achievement results over 3 years for the following exceptionalities: **Language Impaired (LI)**

**a. Areas of Relative Strength:**

- i. Gr. 3 Reading – increase from 31% to 43% and above province (43%)
- ii. Gr. 6 Reading – maintained at 30%
- iii. Gr. 6 Writing – increase from 47% to 51%
- iv. Gr. 6 Math – increased from 9% to 13%
- v. Gr. 9 Academic Math – increase from 100% to 83% (low sample size)

**b. Areas for Growth:**

- i. Writing – decrease from 57% to 49%
- ii. Mathematics – decrease from 40% two years ago to 20%
- iii. Gr. 9 Applied Math – decrease from 25% to 37% and same as special needs in province at 37%

**c. Grade 10 OSSLT (Reported by percent of students successful)**

- i. Full Time – increase from 39% successful to 50%
- ii. Part Time – decrease from 25% to 14%
- iii. Students completing OSSLC is 28%

**d. Next Steps:**

- i. As part of the Renewed Math Strategy, continue to provide release days for special education teachers to work with grade



level teachers to develop and implement strategies to support mathematics. (all grades)

## **Part C: Safe Schools Information for Students with Special Needs**

Please refer to **Appendix E** for further information, including a 5-year trend for Students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

### **1. Elementary Schools 2016-2017 [Comparison with 2015-2016 data]**

Some comparisons with the previous year (2015-2016) indicate:

- Decrease in the number of males with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) who were suspended (-21)
- Decrease in the number of females with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) who were suspended (-11)

### **2. Secondary Schools 2016-2017 [Comparison with 2015-16 data]**

At the Secondary level, the data indicate that fewer students overall are receiving suspension as a progressive discipline consequence with a slight increase in female suspensions

Some comparisons with the previous year (2015-2016) indicate:

- Decrease in the number of males with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) who were suspended (-29).
- Slight increase in the number of females with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) who were suspended (+8). However, there is a decrease in suspensions of female students with an IEP over the last 3 years (-28).

Although there is a slight increase in suspensions of female students with an IEP and continued decrease in suspension of male students with an IEP, a three year trend data confirms a downward trend of suspension of students with IEP (-78).

## **Part D: Reporting on the ongoing work of the Accountability Framework for Special Education committees.**

1. Each AFSE (Accountability Framework for Special Education) Committee meets several times a year to review set goals and works to implement these goals over the timeline of goal implementation.
2. The following section highlights of the work of each committee. Factors that impact the work of these committees are the number of students with the identified exceptionality that are impacted in the work of the committee and the longevity of the committee.
3. The following section of the report attempts to highlight some of the work of the committee and/or some of the findings by exceptionality. For specific details, please refer to the corresponding appendices.
4. Each appendix template outlines the work of the committee for 2016-17 and the plan for this current year.

### **a) Autism (Appendix F)**

- Initially Stuart Shankar's 5 domain model of self-regulation, biological; emotional; social; prosocial; cognitive was discussed as a resource to help develop strategies that could be shared across the system;
- Classroom strategies for self-regulation focusing on rigidity and flexibility were investigated
- The two-year PD plan delivering a 3-day Autism workshop focusing on ABA principals, educational practices, communication, sensory and understanding behaviour will be completed 2017/18. The focus of the PD has been on Kindergarten and Special Education elementary schools and one teacher in every elementary school in Kindergarten and Special Education have been invited to attend this PD. The expectation is that the information from the workshop be shared with the staff at the school in order to build capacity.

- The following PD opportunities were offered to support staff throughout the year: ABA Training for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD); Communication and Autism: Effective Communication Strategies for the Classroom Setting; Understanding & Addressing Challenging Behaviours of Students with ASD. This was well received and will continue in 2017/18.
- Ministry sponsored Autism certificate courses for educators through the Geneva Centre was offered. Interest in this certification continues to be high, as a result this will continue in 2017/18.

#### **b) Behaviour (Appendix G)**

- Staff who provide support in all 19 Behavioural Intensive Support Programs (ISPs) have been trained in *Stop Now And Plan (SNAP)*. Implementation has been monitored by the Behaviour ISP Assessment and Programing teacher and supported through the Child Development Institute. CDI has indicated that the programs are operating with fidelity. Four additional trainings were provided four Behavioural ISP staff (2 for teachers and 2 for CYWs).
- The number of students who utilize SNAP skills has increased as indicated in report cards.
- JUMP Math, the Lexia Reading Programme and Assistive technology are being used in each of the 19 Behaviour ISPs. EQUAO scores are insufficient to measure progress but report cards and IPRC reports indicate academic progress for most students.
- Levels of integration for students have increased which could lead to increased demission rates.

#### **c) Blind/Low Vision (BLV) (Appendix H)**

- Classroom teachers are able to deliver the regular curriculum with accommodations for the learner who is visually impaired.

- Classroom teachers are able to engage the learner who is visually impaired using the strategies and materials provided by Vision Program personnel.
- Students have developed greater confidence in their daily classroom interactions.

**d) Deaf/ Hard of Hearing (D/HH) (Appendix I)**

- D/HH teachers participated in an online survey to explore and examine usage of Hearing Assistance Technology.
- D/HH students participated in a survey to explore and examine usage of Hearing Assistance Technology.
- Provided appropriate professional development for parents and teachers who work with D/HH students in regular and ISP classes, and other Board staff.
- Establish a pilot program at one elementary school and two high schools that encourages use of Hearing Assistance Technology in elementary to track student usage in secondary

**e) Giftedness (Appendix J)**

- PD presentation on *Supporting the emotional health of students with Giftedness: How to recognize depression/anxiety and how to help* in December 2016; Supporting regular classroom teachers by offering a bank of IEP Accommodation comments for Gifted students.
- Organization and self-regulation skills are have shown a slight increase.
- Increase the percentage of students with Giftedness whose Self-Regulation and Organizational skills are rated as “excellent” on their Provincial Report Card.

**f) Language Impairment (LI) (Appendix K)**

- Speech and Language staff presented 4 modules of *ABC and Beyond* to 5 kindergarten teacher and Early Childhood Educator teams. Attendees rated the usefulness of each session on a 5 point scale with 1 being “not useful” and 5 being “very useful”, as follows, *Turn Book Reading into a Conversation*, - 4.6; *Make New Words Sparkle*, - 4.75; *Foster the Development of Print Knowledge* - 4.8; and *Build Phonological Awareness*, 5.
- Thirty-six students participated in SKIPPA (Senior Kindergarten intervention program for phonemic awareness). On pre- and post-testing, students increased by 22% their knowledge of the number of phonemes and 100% in number of words on the SKIPPA Word Assessment Tool.
- Goal for 2017-18: Administer functional speaking and listening measure in Fall 2017 and Spring of 2018 to LI- ISP teachers and classroom teachers of the LI students to explore the progress and the learning needs of students with LI so that teachers can increase their capacity to understand and refine instruction to improve student learning and achievement. Progress will be measured by perceptual data (e.g., surveys, interviews) and behavioural data (e.g., work samples, classroom observations). Survey results will inform goal setting for 2018/2019.

**g) Learning Disability (LD) (Appendix L)**

- Empower Reading Intervention (Decoding/Spelling Grade 2-5 and 6-8; Comprehension/ Vocabulary Grade 2-5): offered in 71 TCDSB elementary schools.
- Lexia Reading Intervention to support the learning of Decoding, Comprehension and Vocabulary: offered in 65 schools (73 Teachers and 5 APTs attended the October 2016 Lexia training).

- Teacher survey conducted in March 2017: Most teachers report that the program effectively supports learning decoding and comprehension, and student's self confidence in students with LD.

#### **h) Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) (Appendix M)**

- Collect resources and strategies to assist in supporting teachers who support students with this exceptionality.
- Identify best practices to support the MID population at the elementary and secondary school levels
- Develop a communication plan to disseminate information to staff working with MID populations.
- Committee is reviewing alternative learning skills and reporting mechanisms for this student population

#### **i) Multiple Exceptionalities and Developmental Delays (ME/DD) (Appendix N)**

- Feedback from a teacher collaborative inquiry suggests the focus should continue to be on functional literacy for students identified with DD-ME in ISP and having alignment across the system when developing the literacy skills for students in a DD-ME ISP.
- Two days of professional development for one DD-ME ISP teacher in every secondary school with an ISP class took place. Day one focused on functional literacy and day two focused on understanding challenging behaviours. Strategies presented were encouraged to be used in the classroom.
- 83% of the secondary schools attended the two days of professional development. All secondary schools with ISP classes have received the resource **Enhance: Functional Literacy Resource**.

## **Part E: Update on Implementation of Specific Special Education Programs**

### **1. Empower Update for 2016-17 (Appendix O)**

Empower Reading™ is an evidence-based reading intervention program, which was developed by the Learning Disabilities Research Program at the Hospital for Sick Children. This program is based on 25 years of research in Canada and the United States.

The TCDSB has continued to offer Empower as an intervention for students in grades 2-5 who have demonstrated significant difficulties in decoding and spelling. Since 2013-14, TCDSB has also offered both a decoding and spelling program for students in grades 6-8, as well as a program focused on comprehension and vocabulary for students in grades 2-5. In 2016-17, 470 students participated in the Gr. 2-5 decoding/spelling program, 47 students participated in the Gr.6-8 decoding/spelling program, and 125 students in the Gr.2-5 comprehension/vocabulary program. Currently (2017-18) TCDSB has 64 active locations/schools providing Empower with many locations offering multiple programs.

Results for students in 2-5 DS indicate that they made significant gains in decoding and word recognition (80%), blending and segmenting (90% correct by June).

The Running Record (TCDSB measure) demonstrated an increase from 1% at the beginning of the year to 47% of grade 2 students reading at grade level.

While most students improve on the Board and provincial measures, there is a proportion of students who will need further Special Education interventions; Empower teachers suggest that these students are often identified as LI, sometimes as LD. Most students need reinforcement after Empower.

### **2. Lexia Update for 2016-17 (Appendix P)**

Lexia Reading is a web-based reading intervention, which focuses on:

- Foundational reading development for students pre-K to Grade 5, and
- Reading development for struggling readers in Grades 5-12.

This evidence-based individualized reading intervention provides explicit, systematic, structured practice on the essential reading skills of:

- Phonological Awareness,
- Phonics,
- Structural Analysis,
- Automaticity/Fluency,
- Vocabulary, and
- Comprehension

Students practice and learn these skills by interacting with the online program, as well as by receiving teacher-led Lexia lessons and paper-based practice activities. Students can access Lexia Reading from school, home, public library, etc.

TCDSB implements Lexia as a Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention to facilitate the development of reading skills for students. Through SBSLT endorsement, students are eligible for Lexia implementation if they are significantly below grade level in their reading skills, **AND** who are:

- identified as Exceptional (primarily LD or LI), **OR**
- assessed as LD or LI or referred for assessment, **OR**
- discussed by SBSLT and have an IEP

The Lexia Reading software also delivers norm-referenced performance data and analysis for each individual student, through the software application. Teachers use the data to track achievement and tailor instruction. See Appendix P for further details.

## **E. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This report is for the consideration of the Board.