

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING

AGENDA
May 8, 2024

George Wedge (Chair)
Easter Seals Ontario

Lori Mastrogioseppe
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

**Geoffrey Feldman
(Vice Chair)**
Ontario Disability Coalition

Tyler Munro
Inclusion Action in Ontario

Melanie Battaglia
Autism Ontario (Alternate)

Deborah Nightingale
Association for Bright Children

Michelle Cousins
Easter Seals Ontario (Alternate)

Ivona Novak
Community Representative

Richelle De Belchior
Community Representative

Ashley Pabon
Learning Disabilities Association

Jennifer Di Francesco
Center for ADHD Awareness

Marissa Seymour
Autism Ontario

Lisa Mason
Community Representative

TRUSTEES
Frank D'Amico
Angela Kennedy
Maria Rizzo



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.*

VISION

At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

Recording Secretary: Sophia Harris, 416-222-8282 Ext. 2293
Assistant Recording Secretary: Skeeter Hinds-Barnett, 416-222-8282 Ext. 2298
Assistant Recording Secretary: Sapphire Adaikpoh, 416-222-8282 Ext. 2295

Dr. Brendan Browne
Director of Education

Nancy Crawford
Chair of the Board

Terms of Reference for the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) shall have responsibility for advising on matters pertaining to the following:

- (a) Annual SEAC planning calendar;
- (b) Annual SEAC goals and committee evaluation;
- (c) Development and delivery of TCDSB Special Education programs and services;
- (d) TCDSB Special Education Plan;
- (e) Board Learning and Improvement Plan (BLIP) as it relates to Special Education programs, Services, and student achievement;
- (f) TCDSB budget process as it relates to Special Education; and
- (g) Public access and consultation regarding matters related to Special Education programs and services.

SEAC shall also make recommendations to Board pertaining to these matters, in order to improve the lives of students with Special Education Needs and their families.

N.B: The following goals were adopted for the 2023-2024 School Year:

1. Recommend the development of contingency plans to implement testing should schools close (as they did for Covid) and alternative be necessary. Include these plans in the Special Education Plan;
2. To review and discuss information made available to SEAC about Assessments and Testing used to identify and support Special Education Students;
3. To make time at each SEAC meeting for discussion about Special Education matters in which all members can participate;
4. To review the 2023-2024 goals of the Empower Program;
5. To review timelines of Psych-educational Assessments and how they are going to be handled;
6. How SEAC can support Special Education Students transitioning out of our educational system and entering the world;
7. To increase Committee membership;
8. Review policies that impact Special Education Students and make recommendations for revisions that might be helpful;
9. Review handbooks for parents and guardians to comment on changes that need to be made to assist Special Education Students; and
10. Continue to provide feedback to the Special Education Plan on a monthly basis.

Land Acknowledgement

The land we walk on belongs to the Creator. Earth does not belong to humanity but rather, humanity is part of the Earth. The land was created to be enjoyed by all living beings, a principle reflected in The Dish with One Spoon covenant. Taking only what we need to preserve our earth for future generations, leaving some for others as a sign of our respect and caring, and keeping it clean by revitalizing the land to sustain generations to come.

All Toronto Catholic District School Board properties are situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinabek, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Wendat peoples. We recognize that the land covered by Treaty 13 is held by the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also listen to the echoes of their prayers to the Creator, and respect the beauty of Mother Earth while striving to learn and draw wisdom from First Nations, Inuit and Métis traditions.

La reconnaissance des territoires

Les terres sur lesquelles nous marchons appartiennent au Créateur. La Terre n'appartient pas à l'humanité mais c'est plutôt l'humanité qui fait partie de la Terre. Les terres ont été créées pour que chaque être vivant puisse en profiter. Ce principe se reflète dans l'accord du « bol à une seule cuillère » qui vise à prendre seulement ce dont nous avons besoin afin de préserver notre terre pour les générations futures, en laisser suffisamment aux autres en guise de respect et de bienveillance, tout en la maintenant propre par sa revitalisation, en vue des générations à venir.

L'ensemble des propriétés du Toronto Catholic District School Board se situent sur les terres traditionnelles des peuples Anishinabés, de la Confédération de Haudenosaunis, et des peuples Wendats. Nous reconnaissons que le territoire ciblé dans le Traité 13 appartient à la Première Nation des Mississaugas de Credit. Nous écoutons également les échos de leurs prières envers le Créateur et le respect de la beauté de notre Terre nourricière, tout en nous efforçant d'apprendre et de nous référer à la sagesse issue des traditions des Premières Nations, Inuit et Métis.

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AGENDA

THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PUBLIC SESSION

George Wedge, Chair

Geoffrey Feldman, Vice Chair

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

7:00 P.M.

Pages

1. Opening Prayer
2. Land Acknowledgement
3. Roll Call and Apologies
4. Approval of the Agenda
5. Declarations of Interest
6. Approval and Signing of the Minutes of the Meeting held April 10, 2024 1 - 9
7. Delegations
8. Presentations
9. Notices of Motion
- 9.a From Jennifer Di Francesco, representative of Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC) regarding Record Keeping 10 - 11
10. Consent and Review
11. Annual Calendar Items

- 11.a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Annual Calendar (Draft) as of May 8, 2024 12 - 16
- 12. **Reports of Officials for Information by the Board/Other Committees**
 - 12.a Special Services Superintendent Update - May 2024 17 - 22
- 13. **Consideration of Motions For Which Previous Notice Has Been Given**
- 14. **Unfinished Business from Previous Meetings**
- 15. **Matters Deferred from last SEAC Meeting/Referred from Board**
- 16. **List of Communications**
- 17. **Association Reports**
- 18. **Inquiries and Miscellaneous**
- 19. **Pending List**
- 20. **Adjournment**

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MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE PUBLIC SESSION

HELD WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2024

PRESENT:

Trustees:

F. D'Amico – Virtual & In Person
A. Kennedy
M. Rizzo - Virtual

External Members:

G. Wedge, Chair
G. Feldman, Vice Chair
R. De Belchior - Virtual
L. Mason – Virtual
D. Nightingale
I. Novak – Virtual

Staff:

A. Della Mora
R. Putnam
C. Fernandes
M. Meehan
V. Cocco
A. Coke
D. Comacchio
M. Gendron
P. Klim-Conforti
R. Macchia

S. Hinds-Barnett, Acting Recording Secretary
O. Olatunji, Temporary Assistant

External Guest:

A. Robertson, Parliamentarian

3. **Roll Call and Apologies**

Apologies were extended on behalf of Jennifer Di Francesco and Tyler Munro. Lori Mastrogiuseppe, Ashley Pabon and Marissa Seymour were absent.

4. **Approval of the Agenda**

MOVED by Geoffrey Feldman, seconded by Deborah Nightingale, that the Agenda, as amended to include the following Inquiries, be approved:

Inquiries from Deborah Nightingale regarding:

18a) Policy for Missed School Work for Special Education Students; and

18b) Support for Individual Education Plan (IEP) Goals at the Home School when the Child Attends a Partial Withdrawal Class.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

5. **Declarations of Interest**

Trustee Kennedy declared a conflict of interest in Item 8a) 2023-2024 Special Education Envelope - R. Putnam, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer and Item 8b) 2024-2025 Budget Framework - R. Putnam, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, as she has family members who are employees of the Board. Trustee Kennedy indicated that she would neither participate in discussions regarding those Items nor vote.

6. **Approval and Signing of the Minutes**

MOVED by Geoffrey Feldman, seconded by Deborah Nightingale, that the Minutes of the Meeting held March 6, 2024, be approved.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

Trustee Kennedy recused herself from the horseshoe at 7:10 p.m. due to a Declaration of Interest in Items 8a and 8b, as earlier indicated.

8. Presentations

MOVED by Deborah Nightingale, seconded by Geoffrey Feldman, that Item 8a) be adopted as follows:

- 8a) 2023-2024 Special Education Envelope - R. Putnam, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer** received.

Trustee D'Amico disconnected virtually and joined the horseshoe at 7:13 p.m.

Trustee Rizzo joined the virtual meeting at 7:17 p.m.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

MOVED by Geoffrey Feldman, seconded by Deborah Nightingale, that Item 8b) be adopted as follows:

- 8b) 2024-2025 Budget Framework - R. Putnam, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer** received.

MOVED by Deborah Nightingale, seconded by Geoffrey Feldman, that debate on the item be extended by 15 minutes, as per the TCDSB's By-law, Article 12.6.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

The Chair declared a five-minute recess.

The meeting resumed with George Wedge in the Chair.

PRESENT (following recess):

Trustees: F. D'Amico – Virtual & In Person
A. Kennedy
M. Rizzo - Virtual

External Members: G. Wedge, Chair
G. Feldman, Vice Chair
M. Cousins - Virtual
R. De Belchior - Virtual
L. Mason – Virtual
D. Nightingale
I. Novak – Virtual

8. Presentations

MOVED by Geoffrey Feldman, seconded by Deborah Nightingale, that Item 8b) be adopted as follows:

8b) 2024-2025 Budget Framework - R. Putnam, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer received (continued...)

Lisa Mason left the virtual meeting at 8:14 p.m.

George Wedge relinquished the Chair to Geoffrey Feldman.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

George Wedge reassumed the Chair.

MOVED by Trustee Rizzo, seconded by Deborah Nightingale, that the Agenda be reopened.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

MOVED by Trustee Rizzo, seconded by Deborah Nightingale, that Item 8.5a) Special Education Budget Consideration be added to the Agenda, under a new Category 8.5 - Discussions and Motions Concerning the Budget.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

8.5 Discussions and Motions Regarding the Budget

MOVED by Deborah Nightingale, seconded by Trustee Frank D'Amico, that Item 8.5) be adopted as follows:

8.5a) **Special Education Budget Consideration**

WHEREAS: SEAC is responsible for advising the Board on the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) Budget process as it relates to Special Education.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to Board that the TCDSB not reduce the Special Education spending in 2024-2025 by any amount. SEAC specifically recommends that the Board does not cut Special Education Services by \$5.7 million in 2024-2025.

Michelle Cousins left the virtual meeting at 8: 28 p.m.

Lisa Mason returned to the virtual meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Trustee Rizzo left the virtual meeting at 8:32 p.m.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

Trustee Kennedy returned to the horseshoe at 8:33 p.m.

10. **Consent and Review**

The Chair reviewed the Order Page and the following Items were held:

- 12a) Special Services Superintendent Update – April 2024 – Trustee Kennedy;
- 12b) Student Achievement Plan: Toronto Catholic District School Board – Deborah Nightingale;

Inquiries from Deborah Nightingale regarding:

- 18a) Policy for Missed School Work for Special Education Students; and

- 18b) Support for Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals at the Home School when the Child Attends a Partial Withdrawal Class.

MOVED by Deborah Nightingale, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, that the Item not held be received.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

ITEM NOT HELD AS CAPTURED IN ABOVE MOTION

- 11a) Special Education Advisory Committee Annual Calendar (Draft) as of April 10, 2024

Trustee Rizzo returned to the virtual meeting at 8:40 p.m.

12. Reports of Officials for Information by the Board/Other Committees

MOVED by Trustee Kennedy, seconded by Deborah Nightingale, that Item 12a) be adopted as follows:

- 12a) Special Services Superintendent Update – April 2024** received.

On the vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

MOVED by Deborah Nightingale, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, that Item 12b) be adopted as follows:

- 12b) Student Achievement Plan: Toronto Catholic District School Board** received.

On the vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

18. Inquiries and Miscellaneous

MOVED by Trustee Kennedy, seconded by Geoffrey Feldman, that Item 18a) be adopted as follows:

- 18a) From Deborah Nightingale regarding Policy for Missed School Work for Special Education Students** received.

On the vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

MOVED by Deborah Nightingale, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, that Item 18b) be adopted as follows:

- 18b) From Deborah Nightingale regarding Individual Education Plan (IEP) Goals at the Home School when the Child Attends a Partial Withdrawal Class** received.

On the vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

20. Adjournment

MOVED by Geoffrey Feldman, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, that the meeting be adjourned.

On the Vote being taken, the Motion was declared

CARRIED

SECRETARY

CHAIR

To: Special Education Advisory Committee

From: Jennifer Di Francesco

Subject: Record Keeping

MOVED BY: Jennifer Di Francesco

WHEREAS: Parents can find navigating the maze to get their child(ren) special educational help very daunting. Parents are usually faced with speaking to multiple people at school or at the Board and having to recite the conversations repeatedly. This can create frustration and resentment that their child(ren)s story is not already being captured and kept for future reference by and for teachers/staff/administrators at the school or Board level.

WHEREAS: It is not fair to expect that all parents have the means or ability to keep their own records and parents expect that the school and/or Board maintain a consistent and elevated level of record keeping that helps all parties involved know what is always happening with the child(ren).

WHEREAS: Not keeping proper records can also lead to a child(ren) missing opportunities or not getting on lists for assessments/programs that could potentially help them in their educational journey, especially children that require Special Education resources.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommends to the Board of Trustees that parental or TCDSB (Toronto Catholic District School Board) teacher/staff/administrator correspondence with teacher/staff/administrators at the school or Board level, whether the correspondence be through phone conversations, emails, at all and any meetings and face to face be noted on the child(ren)s file for future reference for all party's involved.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommends to the Board of Trustees that the current policy or guidelines surrounding record keeping be

looked at and that staff come back to Board with a breakdown of what is not working, recommendations on how to improve the current system and what will be implemented to resolve this systemic issue.

Jennifer Di Francesco
CADDAC Representative

SEAC Annual Calendar

Month	Annual Activities/Topics	Board Events/Deadlines
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of SEAC Calendar - S.O. Updates - Association Reports (if any) - Develop or review SEAC annual Agenda/Goals - Special Education Plan Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FASD Awareness Day – September 9
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Special Education Plan Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies o The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process and Appeals o Education and Other Assessments o Individual Education Plans (IEP) - Review of SEAC Calendar - S.O. Updates - Association Reports (if any) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autism Awareness (Canada) - Child Abuse Prevention Awareness - Learning Disabilities Awareness - World Mental Health Day (October 10) - EQAO Preliminary Results for Gr. 3 and 6 and OSSLT - Reports on Student Numbers of Elementary and Secondary School Students to be submitted to the Ministry of Education - Engagement and Governance Supports Discussion Guide
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Special Education Plan Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Roles and Responsibilities o Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities o Provincial and Demonstration schools in Ontario o Transportation for Students with Special Education Needs - Review of SEAC Calendar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Down Syndrome Awareness (first week) - EQAO Results for Gr. 3, 6, 9 (math), and Gr. 10 (OSSLT) - Engagement and Governance Supports Discussion Guide

SEAC Annual Calendar

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>S.O. Updates</i> - <i>Association Reports (if any)</i> - <i>Professional Learning Plan</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>ONSIS report on identified students</i> - <i>Year End for School Board Financial Statements</i> - <i>Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP)</i>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Special Education Plan Review:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>The Board's Consultation Process</i> ○ <i>Coordination of Services with Other Ministries or Agencies</i> ○ <i>Special Education Plan Checklist</i> - <i>Review of SEAC Calendar</i> - <i>S.O. Updates</i> - <i>Association Reports (if any)</i> - <i>SEAC Elections (Inaugural)</i> - <i>SEAC Elections: Chair & vice-Chair (Annual)</i> - <i>SEAC Mass and Social</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3)</i> - <i>Human Rights Day (December 10)</i> - <i>Independent review of assessment and reporting</i>
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Special Education Plan Review:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>The Board's General Model for Special Education</i> ○ <i>Special Education Placements Provided by the Board</i> - <i>Review of Draft SEAC Calendar</i> - <i>S.O. Updates</i> - <i>Association Reports (if any)</i> - <i>Review of Policy: S.P.01 Special Education Programs and Services (next review January 2023)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Bell Let's Talk Day (late January)</i> - <i>Grade 9 EQAO Testing takes place in Secondary Schools</i> - <i>Long Term Accommodation Program Plan (ongoing)</i>

SEAC Annual Calendar

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Review of Policy: A.23 Special Education Advisory Committee (next review January 2024)</i> - <i>Priority Budget Setting Discussion</i> - <i>Annual Safe Schools Report</i> 	
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Special Education Plan Review:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Special Education Staff</i> o <i>Staff Development</i> - <i>Review of SEAC Calendar</i> - <i>S.O. Updates</i> - <i>Association Reports (if any)</i> - <i>Annual Accessibility Report</i> - <i>Multi-year Accessibility Plan/AODA-Updates</i> - <i>Mental Health Annual Report</i> - <i>AFSS Report: Exceptionality Frameworks-Goals & Outcomes, EQAO Student Achievement Data (for various exceptionalities as appropriate)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Psychology Awareness Month</i> - <i>New term begins in Secondary semestered Schools</i> - <i>Report Cards are distributed (Elementary and Secondary)</i> - <i>Parent-Teacher Conferences</i>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Special Education Plan Review:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>The Parents' Guide to Special Education</i> o <i>Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings</i> o <i>The Board's Special Education Advisory Committee</i> - <i>Review of SEAC Calendar</i> - <i>S.O. Updates</i> - <i>Association Reports (if any)</i> - <i>Safe Schools Committee Update</i> - <i>Mental Health Advisory Council Update</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Easter Seals Awareness Month</i> - <i>World Down Syndrome Day – March 21</i> - <i>National Social Work Week (1st week)</i> - <i>CYW & EA Appreciation Day (first Monday)</i> - <i>Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)</i>

SEAC Annual Calendar

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Budget Approval Updates</i> 	
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Special Education Plan Review:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Multi-Year Accessibility Plan</i> o <i>Protocols for Partnership with External Agencies</i> - <i>Review of SEAC Calendar</i> - <i>S.O. Updates</i> - <i>Association Reports (if any)</i> - <i>Financial Report as at January, 2024 (GSNs)</i> - <i>Graduation Statistics for Students with Special Education Needs Update</i> - <i>Update to Special Education Programs for 2024-2025</i> - <i>Budget Approval Updates</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Autism Awareness Day – April 2</i> - <i>ONSIS report on identified students</i>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Special Education Plan Review:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Specialized Equipment</i> o <i>Special Education Board Improvement and Equity Plan Overview</i> - <i>Review of SEAC Calendar</i> - <i>S.O. Updates</i> - <i>Association Reports (if any)</i> - <i>March 31st Special Education student count</i> - <i>Grants for Student Needs (GSN) 2024-2025</i> - <i>Budget Approval Updates</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Children’s Mental Health Week (first week)</i> - <i>Speech, Language & Hearing Awareness</i> - <i>Megan’s Walk</i> - <i>Budget Consultation</i> - <i>EQAO Assessment</i>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Review of SEAC Calendar</i> - <i>S.O. Updates</i> - <i>Association Reports (if any)</i> - <i>Budget approval update</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>World Sickle Cell Day – June 19</i> - <i>National Deaf Blind Awareness</i> - <i>EQAO Grade 3 and 6 Testing</i>

SEAC Annual Calendar

	- <i>Develop draft SEAC Goals for next school year</i>	
July		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>School Board Submits to the Ministry a balanced Budget for the following year</i> - <i>Annual Special Education Plan Checklist and Plan updates to the Ministry of Education</i>
August		



SPECIAL SERVICES

SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE

MAY 2024



UPCOMING PARENT ENGAGEMENT SERIES



May 15, 2024 – Supporting Communication Through Play
May 23, 2024 – Supporting Your Child Through Anxiety

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

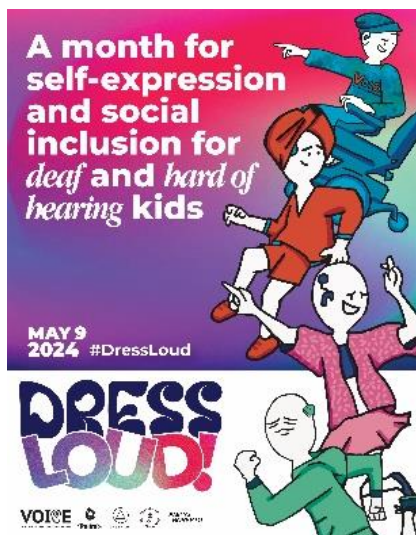
May is Speech, Language and Hearing Awareness Month.

A **tip sheet** with communication and well being strategies was provided to kindergarten teachers and principals to share with families via their school newsletters.

The Speech & Language Department created a **new resource**, *How to Create Meaningful Communication Opportunities at Home & School*. The handout includes a link to short videos demonstrating strategies for families to use with their child to develop their communication skills. SLPs will share this resource with families and Kindergarten teams at *LEAP into Learning* information sessions this spring.

Speech-Language Pathologists will host a **webinar** for parents of kindergarten and primary students as part of the Special Services Parent Engagement Series on May 15th at 7 pm. The topic is **Supporting Communication through Play**. The invitation was shared online, with school principals and with early years educators.

DEAF/HARD OF HEARING



A number of TCDSB schools will participate in the **VOICE 2024 Dress Loud Day** on May 9th.

Dress Loud Day is an event supported by VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, a national parent organization. On May 9th, students and staff are encouraged to dress in their wackiest, loudest and wildest clothing to raise awareness for children with hearing loss. D/HH itinerant teachers provided participating schools with educational posters and lesson plans from VOICE to help support the learning that day.

The Deaf/Hard of Hearing department's preschool team will host the **Surrey Place intake team** on May 15th in the morning at St. Bruno/St. Raymond. Surrey Place staff will visit our D/HH ISP classes. TCDSB D/HH staff will share our intake process with the Surrey place team and discuss how both TCDSB and Surrey Place can work together to best support children who are D/HH when they register at school.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

During the last month, the Mental Health team has supported the system with the following events:

1. During the April 8th PD day, all schools engaged in professional development focused on promoting student mental health among others. Topics included: *Supporting Student Behaviours*, *Suicide Prevention & Life Promotion*, and *Resources to Support Staff and Student Mental Health and Well-Being*. Schools also engaged in an activity from SMHO's daily Social Emotional Learning resource: [*Faith and Wellness*](#).
2. In collaboration with the HPE curriculum lead, we facilitated two full-day professional learning sessions for educators who teach the K-6 Health curriculum. One more session is scheduled in May. The focus is on teaching curriculum expectations related to mental health literacy and healthy relationships using resources from School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) and the Canadian Centre for Child Protection.
3. We participated in the Safe Schools Spring Symposiums for Elementary and Secondary student leadership teams, engaging the students in interactive learning about *Personal Boundaries for Healthy Relationships*.
4. Mental Health Action Team symposiums for both Elementary and Secondary leadership teams will take place April 29th and May 1st. We are collaborating with Toronto Public Health and other performers and speakers who will use spoken word, juggling, jeopardy, and break dancing to promote positive student mental health. Teams will also have an opportunity to learn about the various mental health promotion activities happening in schools across the system.

SOCIAL WORK

This month the social work department welcomed author, speaker and founder of Filipino Talks, Jennilee Austria-Bonifacio. Jennilee provided an overview of the Filipino experience in Canada and provided tips to share with all school staff to ensure our Filipino students and families feel understood and supported.





TIPS & ACTIVITIES

for communication and emotional well-being

Children with communication difficulties have a hard time expressing their feelings and may struggle with anxiety. These strategies may help your child become more aware of how to communicate in the moment, and will also support the development of their vocabulary and reasoning skills.

Present Moment



Talk with your child about the present moment. Point out sounds you hear, things you see or feel and use descriptive words.

**"I see the bright light of the sun."
"I feel the cool wind on my face."**

Positive Words



Encourage your child to use positive words to describe themselves.

**"I am a good listener with my sister."
"I am helpful when I wash the dishes."**

Gratitude



Help your child identify things for which they are grateful and talk about "why".

**"I am grateful for my dog
because he cuddles with me."
"I am grateful for my toy car
because it goes fast."**

Emotions



Support your child to identify and label emotions they may be feeling. Use descriptive words.

**"When I feel angry, I feel heavy
and my heart beats very fast."
"When I am happy,
I feel light."**

HOW TO CREATE MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES

When students are non-speaking...

When students are minimally verbal, we need to consider what they need in order to communicate.

- Identify motivators!
- Control the environment to encourage the student to initiate communication to gain access to what they want!

These strategies are referred to as... **COMMUNICATION
TEMPTATIONS**



How?

BE THE BLOCKER

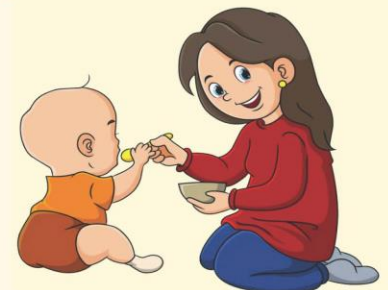
- Place motivating items out of reach.
- Put toys in containers that are hard to open so the child will need to ask for help!
- Use toys that are difficult to operate so the child will need to ask for help!
- Occasionally interrupt and stop the activity to get the child's attention and ask if they want more.



How?

BE THE KEEPER

- Offer snack items bit by bit so the child will ask for more!
- Show the child an item that they like and wait for them to ask for it!
- Give Choices!



How?

BE THE JOKER

- Pretend to forget an important step in the game!
- Give the child something that doesn't belong so that they will correct you!
- Use a familiar object incorrectly for the same reason.



SEE THESE STRATEGIES IN ACTION!

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TCDSB 2024 (416) 222-8282 Ext. #2261





Special Services Parent Engagement Series

The Speech & Language Department
Presents a Webinar on:

Supporting Communication Through Play

*Presenters: Marieke Favrod

Jessica Leech

Isabelle Giuliani

In this Webinar families will learn about:

- types of play, speech, language, and literacy skills
- what regulation is and how it supports communication
- toys & play scenarios to build communication skills

Wednesday, May 15, 2024 7:00p.m.

REGISTER





SPECIAL SERVICES PARENT/GUARDIAN WEBINAR

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD THROUGH ANXIETY

WEDNESDAY, MAY 23, 2024 @ 7-8PM

[**REGISTER HERE**](#)

You will receive the zoom link closer to the day of the event

- What is anxiety?
- Signs and symptoms of anxiety
- What parents/guardians can do
- Resources and supports



Brought to you by the TCDSB Mental Health Team

Dr. Marie-Josée Gendron
Chief of Mental Health Strategy
& Staff Well-Being



Melissa Hanlon MSW, RSW
Mental Health Lead