DDSB
Ignite Learning

Inclusive Student Services

Special Education Plan

2025–2026

Inclusive
STUDENT SERVICES

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THE BOARD'S CONSULTATION PROCESS

SECTION A – Standard 1

Standard 1: The Board's Consultation Process

The purpose of the standard is to provide details of the consultation process to the Ministry and to the public.

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) values collaboration with students, families, community and education partners. We welcome input into our Inclusive Student Services - Special Education Plan at any time through:

- The Inclusive Student Services Department by emailing InclusiveStudentServices@ddsb.ca or by calling 905-666-6371 to connect with a member of the team.
- Local school team(s).
- The DDSB's website General.Inquiry@ddsb.ca or 905-666-5500.
- The DDSB's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

SEAC formally reviews the Inclusive Student Services Special Education Plan annually, and throughout the year as the need arises. SEAC members share information and input from their respective associations/agencies and provide feedback. Input from SEAC was received and all feedback was reviewed and included in the report where the suggestions aligned with the Ministry of Education *Standards for School Board's Special Education Plans*.

Inclusive Student Services in the DDSB

Inclusive Student Services provides support for students, families and school teams on inclusion, accommodation and specialized special education and mental health supports.

Information about Inclusive Student Services in the DDSB can be found online: Inclusive Student Services

THE BOARD'S GENERAL MODEL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

SECTION B – Standard 2

Standard 2: The Board's General Model for Special Education

The purpose of the standard is to provide information on the Board's guiding principles, philosophy, and service delivery model for the provision of Special Education programs and services.

DDSB Commitments to Indigenous and Human Rights

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) recognizes Indigenous rights are distinct. In the exercise of those rights, Indigenous staff and students shall not be subjected to actions with the aim or effect of depriving these distinct rights.

The DDSB is committed to providing learning and working environments that centre human rights and equity and are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, inclusive, accessible, and free from all forms of discrimination, oppression, and harm.

Upholding DDSB Commitments and Student Rights

The DDSB has a legal responsibility to provide education to students and to provide safe learning and working environments for all students and staff. The DDSB is committed to upholding students' rights to:

- Meaningfully access educational services without discrimination and to be treated with dignity and respect
- Equitable educational experiences, opportunities, and outcomes
- Inclusive and accessible services, programs, and environments

The DDSB's Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy and related procedures provide direction and guidance and set out roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, proactive preventative actions, and transparent processes to support these commitments.

The DDSB recognizes that protecting and upholding Indigenous rights and human rights (including centering dignity and meeting the duty to accommodate under the Ontario Human Rights Code) are necessary to support:

- Students' sense of safety, inclusion, well-being, engagement, and belonging
- A culture of care where students are respected, valued, and are successful and thrive

The research shows that these are the preconditions for successful learning and set the foundation for positive school climates and well-being for all students.

The DDSB strives to meet its responsibilities through:

- Legislative compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the Education Act, and related legislation and regulations
- Ministry of Education strategies, directives, and policy and program memoranda
- DDSB policies and procedures

- Alignment with the DDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan
- Proactive/preventative, inclusive and responsive strategies, initiatives, structures, services, supports, and actions.

Accessibility Policy

In January 2025, the Board of Trustees passed a new Accessibility Policy. The policy is intended, alongside DDSB's Accessibility Procedure and Human Rights Policy and Procedures, to support upholding legislated responsibilities and commitments as outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP), Accessibility Plan, Inclusive Student Services Special Education Plan, and related initiatives. The policy development process included feedback collected through a consultative process with relevant staff, unions and federations, and committees.

The Accessibility Policy is expected to support the DDSB to:

1. Meet our commitments and responsibilities to promote accessibility and anti-ableism.
2. Disrupt ableist structures, policies, practices, and rules to enhance accessibility and address individual and systemic accessibility barriers based on ability/disability, neurodivergence, and intersectional discrimination in DDSB services and employment.
3. Uphold principles of dignity and respect
4. Maximize integration, independence, and participation for DDSB students, staff, and community members.

An Inclusive School System

As a district we acknowledge that systemic ableism and other forms of discrimination and oppression are deeply embedded within the education system and structures. This discriminates against, disadvantages, and causes harm to neurodivergent individuals and individuals with disabilities and other intersecting identities (for example, based on ancestry, race, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, creed/religion, socioeconomic status, etc.). It also contributes to and perpetuates disparities and disproportionate educational access, opportunities, experiences, and outcomes.

Our shared commitments and responsibilities to uphold Indigenous and human rights and to centre dignity and respect are essential principles of an inclusive public school system and are necessary to address systemic ableism.

We are working to uncover, name, challenge, disrupt and proactively prevent discriminatory biases, barriers, practices, and structures that impede achievement and well-being for all students. Our ongoing work includes actively addressing:

- Intersectional discrimination.
- Stigma and negative attitudes, stereotypes and assumptions based on neurodiversity, different abilities, and disabilities (including and not limited to assumptions about functional limitations, low expectations, learning disabilities, differences in behaviours, social interactions, cognitive processing and communication, etc.), and how this affects individual and organizational decision- making affecting students.
- Unique accessibility and other barriers (for example, attitudinal, physical, architectural, information/communications or technological barriers) for students with special education strengths and needs.

An inclusive model of special education is one that actively:

- Promotes well-being through identity-affirming approaches and practices.
- Supports all students so they are inspired to succeed.
- Increases awareness and understanding of the social model (versus medical and functional models) of disability and neurodiversity.
- Identifies, prevents, and addresses discriminatory barriers that may affect students' ability to learn and to fully participate in and contribute to society.

As a district, we recognize all students' talents, gifts, abilities, and accomplishments. We honour and affirm the unique, intersectional identities and rich lived experiences that each student and their family bring to our classrooms, schools, and communities.

The DDSB applies human rights, anti-discrimination, Universal Design for Learning, and accessibility principles, approaches, and actions in all aspects of its services and learning environments. In classrooms, the DDSB also uses culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy and differentiated instruction, assessment, and evaluation to support students in their learning.

Where barriers exist, the DDSB is committed to meeting its legal duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship so that students can meaningfully access educational services without discrimination.

All students, including neurodiverse students and students with different abilities and intersecting identities are at the centre of all planning.

Impact of Programs and Services

Inclusive Student Services (ISS) Impact Updates are monthly reports to community of various programs, services, and supports provided by the DDSB for students. ISS Impact Updates from the 2024-2025 school year have been included as Appendix A. ISS Impact Updates will continue through the 2025-2026 school year to provide information to reflect the impacts shared by students, families and team members. ISS Impact Updates can be found on ddsb.ca.

Special Education Programs

The DDSB is committed to fostering success and independence for each student by providing a range of pathways, programs, opportunities, and services that are responsive to individual identities (including intersecting identities), strengths and needs. Students with special education strengths and needs are supported in inclusive environments to develop to their potential.

The DDSB Inclusive Student Services - Special Education Plan has been designed to comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Education Act, and Regulations made under the Act. The DDSB's approach to special education and its special education delivery model are aligned with the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

Our ongoing commitment is to provide the structures and supports each student needs to nurture their growth and development in programs which respect dignity, maximize participation, and foster integration and independence as defined for each student based on their identity, strengths and needs. We work with parent(s)/guardian(s) and district staff to determine the placement that best addresses barriers and meets the student's individual needs, whether that is in a regular classroom, or for some students, in a special education class.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities. (2018), provides principles of accommodation which involve respect for dignity, individualization, integration, and full participation are expressed in the Guidelines. As set out in the Education Act and Regulations, the OHRC specifies that each student's needs are unique and must be considered individually and with confidentiality. The OHRC recommends first considering placement in the regular classroom before considering placement in a special education class. It is the OHRC's position that the duty to accommodate requires a necessity "to address barriers in education that would otherwise prevent students with disabilities from having equal opportunities, access and benefits" (Ontario Human Rights Commission: Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities).

The DDSB's approach is informed by and aligns with the OHRC's policy. The majority of students with special education strengths and needs are supported through placement in a regular classroom. For most students, a classroom teacher, with the support of the school's Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) and district staff, is able to provide individualized programming that supports students' success. A regular classroom is always an option that parent(s)/guardian(s) may consider. A regular classroom provides opportunity for the student to be with peers, while receiving personalized programming that is outlined in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). The regular class is considered the most inclusive of placements.

We place a strong emphasis on the inclusion of our students with special education strengths and needs, upholding human rights and the rights of the child, and providing meaningful, individualized integration opportunities for students accessing special education programs. It is our privilege to be part of the success for all students as we support their "Many Paths to Success".

Well-Being and Mental Health Supports

2022-2025 Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan

Embedded in the DDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan (Appendix B) is our collective commitment to support the everyday mental health and well-being of students and staff. We commit to strengthening identity affirming practices. We strive to connect students to, from and through pathways for support. The Action Plan centres on:

- Learn to Understand: The promotion of mental health and well-being through everyday conversations and practices.
- Strengthen Practices: Strength-based Mental Health prevention and intervention.
- Connect to Pathways: Strong pathways to, from and through meaningful support for the mental health and well-being of every student that is identity-affirming and culturally relevant.

Examples include the development of a District-wide staff community of practice with a focus on sharing best practices and creating new knowledge to advance our work, the provision of Tier One mental health promotion specifically tailored for support-staff professional development, as well as focused social and emotional learning skills for classroom implementation.

Embedded within the 2025-2026 Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan are the following core commitments:

1) Development and launch of the next three-year (2025-2028) DDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan.
2) Aligned within the DDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan, continued facilitation and action learning from a series of student affinity groups (Black Student Associations, Indigenous Student Circles, Gender and Sexuality Alliances, and Students with Special Learning Needs) listening circles to develop a shared understanding of what belonging, and a sense of community

means to students, and develop staff skills to support and honour students as unique individuals.

Mental Health Supports

Thinking in tiers is common in education and is useful when thinking about the continuum of supports available to support student mental health and well-being.

- Tier 1 is the mental health promotion work done by all staff to create the everyday conditions that foster mentally healthy classrooms and schools for all students.
- Tier 2 focuses on early identification and intervention for those students who may need additional support; and
- Tier 3 focuses on more intensive assessment and intervention services.

Many DDSB teams support everyday conditions for well-being (Tier 1) through to services when individual students need a greater level of support (Tier 2 and 3).

Child and Youth Support Workers focus on Tier 1 strategies and the implementation of social emotional learning, positive mental health promotion, prevention and early identification. Speech Language Pathologist in addition to individual student programming supports, help educators shape inclusive classrooms as communication is a key foundation for connection and belonging.

A focus on connection and belonging is the foundation to the DDSB Attendance and Engagement Strategy (Appendix C). School teams, through to consultation and service engaged with the Social Work team, centre individual students to promote well-being, positive school attendance and engagement in learning.

Social Work and Psychological Services Staff provide individual and group-based identify-affirming mental health interventions, school-level consultation, and crisis/traumatic event responses that centre student, caregiver, and community needs.

Teams continue to evolve our service models in support of identity-affirming practices and responsive to where students express support needs. As example, during the 2025-2026 school year, Psychological Services and Social Work staff will continue to provide Black Excellence Made Evident (BEME) and Project AFFIRM (Appendix F).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SECTION B – Standard 3

Standard 3: Roles and Responsibilities

The purpose of the standard is to provide the public with information on roles and responsibilities in the area of Special Education. All are required to comply with and uphold the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Human Rights Code.

The DDSB has a responsibility to provide a safe environment for all students and staff, ensure Indigenous rights and human rights (including centering dignity and respect and the duty to accommodate) are the foundations of the work, and it is the legal responsibility of the DDSB to provide education to students.

Roles and Responsibilities Outlined by the Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education defines roles and responsibilities in elementary and secondary education in several key areas: legislative and policy framework; school system management; funding; programs and curriculum. The roles and responsibilities within special education are outlined below:

The Ministry of Education:

- defines, through the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda, the legal obligations of school boards regarding the provision of special education programs and services, and prescribes the categories and definitions of exceptionality.
- ensures that school boards provide appropriate special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils.
- establishes the funding for special education through the structure of the funding model. The model consists of the Foundation Grant, the Special Education Grant, and other special purpose grants.
- requires school boards to report on their expenditures for special education.
- sets province-wide standards for curriculum and reporting of achievement.
- requires school boards to maintain special education reports, review them annually, and submit amendments to the Ministry.
- requires school boards to establish Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs)
- establishes Special Education Tribunals to hear disputes between parents and school boards regarding the identification and placement of exceptional pupils.
- establishes a provincial Advisory Council on Special Education to advise the Minister of Education on matters related to special education programs and services.
- operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind, or who have severe learning disabilities.

The district school board or school authority:

- establishes school board policy and practices that comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda.
- monitors school compliance with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda
- requires staff to comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda.
- provides appropriately qualified staff to provide programs and services for the exceptional pupils of the board.

- obtains the appropriate funding and reports on the expenditures for special education.
- develops and maintains a special education report that is amended from time to time to meet the current needs of the exceptional pupils of the board.
- reviews the report annually and submits amendments to the Minister of Education
- provides statistical reports to the Ministry as required and as requested.
- prepares a parent guide to provide parent(s)/guardian(s) with information about special education programs, services, and procedures.
- establishes one or more Individual Placement and Review Committee to identify exceptional pupils and determine appropriate placements for them.
- establishes a Special Education Advisory Committee
- provides professional development to staff on special education.

The Special Education Advisory Committee:

- makes recommendations to the board with respect to any matter affecting the establishment, development, and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the board.
- participates in the board's annual review of its special education report.
- participates in the board's annual budget process as it relates to special education.
- reviews the financial statements of the board as they relate to special education.
- provides information to parents, as requested.

The school principal:

- carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda, and through board policies.
- communicates Ministry of Education and school board expectations to staff
- ensures that appropriately qualified staff are assigned to teach special education classes.
- communicates board policies and procedures about special education to staff, students, and parents.
- ensures that the identification and placement of exceptional pupils, through an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC), is done according to the procedures outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and board policies.
- consults with parents and with school board staff to determine the most appropriate program for exceptional pupils.
- ensures the development, implementation, and review of a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), including a transition plan, according to provincial requirements.
- ensures that parents are consulted in the development of their child's IEP and that they are provided with a copy of the IEP.
- ensures the delivery of the program as set out in the IEP.
- ensures that appropriate assessments are requested if necessary and that parental consent is obtained.

The teacher:

- carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda.
- follows board policies and procedures regarding special education.

- maintains up-to-date knowledge of special education practices.
- where appropriate, works with special education staff and parents to develop the IEP for an exceptional pupil.
- communicates the student's progress to parents.
- works with other school board staff to review and update the student's IEP.

The special education teacher, in addition to the responsibilities listed above under "the teacher":

- holds qualifications, in accordance with Regulation 298, to teach special education.
- monitors the student's progress with reference to the IEP, and modifies the program as necessary.
- assists in providing educational assessments for exceptional pupils.

The parent/guardian:

- becomes familiar with and informed about board policies and procedures in areas that affect the child.
- participates in IPRCs, parent-teacher conferences, and other relevant school activities.
- participates in the development of the IEP.
- becomes acquainted with the school staff working with the student.
- supports the student at home.
- works with the school principal and teachers to solve problems.
- is responsible for the student's attendance at school.

The student:

- complies with the requirements as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda.
- complies with board policies and procedures.
- participates in IPRCs, parent-teacher conferences, and other activities, as appropriate.

In addition, the DDSB's Indigenous Education Policy, Human Rights Policy, and related procedures (including the Human Rights Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities Framework) outline additional roles and responsibilities for all DDSB community members to contribute to safe, welcoming, respectful, inclusive, equitable, and accessible learning and working environments that are free from all forms of discrimination, oppression, and harm.

Our commitments, through every role in Inclusive Student Services (Special Education), have a foundation in optimizing the potential and achievement of every student. A brief summary, including leadership roles, is found here:

Table 1 – Summary of Inclusive Student Services Roles and Responsibilities

CHILD AND YOUTH SUPPORT WORKERS	Child and Youth Support Workers work directly with school staff to implement Tier One Mental Health classroom and small group strategies, educational programming and support professional learning and skills development in the areas of social-emotional learning, and consultation on the goals established on part of the Positive School Climate team. The student centred, classroom based, whole school approach and role of the team, emphasizes an asset-based approach to building student and staff strengths which can include social emotional skills, related life skills, and can also include behaviour skills training, fostering acquisition of new skills and support for building relationships.
CLASSROOM SUPPORT STAFF	Classroom support staff professionals foster inclusion and support student well-being and learning as part of school teams. Roles include: • **Educational Assistants**, working as part of classroom teams, provide learning & well-being supports for students with special education strengths and programming needs. • **ASL Interpreters** facilitate and/or provide access to communication for students who are D/deaf/hard of hearing. • **Intervenors** facilitate or provide access to communication for students who are Deaf-Blind. • **Language Acquisition Support Worker** supports students in the early learning of ASL as a primary language.
MANAGER OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES	Working with Senior Managers and Clinical Leads, the Manager of Psychological Services co-leads and provides initiatives and ongoing training for staff, while centering commitments to disrupting barriers, structures and practices that impede the achievement and well-being of students and staff. The Manager of Psychological Services also carries out all of the functions and responsibilities of a Clinical Supervisor (consultation, assessment, series, professional learning, crisis response and clinical supervision), and ensures that these are delivered in a professionally responsible manner that promotes student well-being and meets the standards and guidelines of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.
MENTAL HEALTH LEAD	The Mental Health Lead works with system and school leaders to coordinate, develop and implement the Well-Being and Mental Health Action Plan, through a tiered model, in support of students and staff. The Mental Health Lead coordinates and leads board wide initiatives to promote well-being, mental health, reduce stigma and lead focus on increasing knowledge about mental health and well-being.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES STAFF	The Senior Manager Clinical Lead-Psychologist provides leadership to the Psychological Services team in the provision of service and programming that centres commitments to disrupting barriers, structures and practices that impede the achievement and well-being of students and staff. Staff provide five essential functions to support students in the DDSB: assessment, consultation, direct service, capacity building and crisis response, in partnership with colleagues from the Social Work team. Staff who are clinical supervisors of Psychological Services also provide clinical supervision, in accordance with the Standards and codes of ethics of the College of Psychologists of Ontario as one of their role functions. Staff work directly to support the academic achievement and well-being of students within the DDSB, and work within a collaborative framework with staff, parent(s)/guardian(s) and students.
SENIOR MANAGER CLINICAL LEAD PSYCHOLOGIST	The Senior Manager Clinical Lead-Psychologist is responsible for overseeing the professional services provided by Psychological Services staff. Within this scope, the Senior Manager Clinical Lead- Psychologist ensures that staff maintain professional standards and deliver current, evidence-based practices in assessment, consultation and direct services that centre commitments to disrupting barriers, structures and practices that impede the achievement and well-being of students and staff. The Senior Manager Clinical Lead-Psychologist also works with other Clinical Leads and Senior Administration to facilitate the integration of professional support services. As well, the Clinical Lead is responsible for coordinating capacity building professional development delivered by Psychological Service staff. Consultation to system and community-based programs and initiatives is provided when needed
SENIOR MANAGER CLINICAL LEAD SOCIAL WORK AND ATTENDANCE SERVICES	The Senior Manager Clinical Lead-Social Work is responsible for leading and overseeing the quality of Social Work and Attendance services carried out for referred students, and for the provision of direct services to students and parent(s)/guardian(s), as well as consultative support to school personnel and parent(s)/guardian(s) in order to address barriers that may impede success at school.
SENIOR MANAGER CLINICAL LEAD SPEECH LANGUAGE AND HEARING SERVICES	The Senior Manager Clinical Lead-Speech, Language and Hearing is responsible for the quality of speech, language and hearing services carried out for referred students and the provision of direct services to students, consultative support, and capacity building supports to school personnel and parent(s)/guardian(s) to assist students to access and use language to communicate and participate within the school system (through prevention, early intervention, and enhancement) and make academic progress.

SENIOR SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST (SLP)	Reporting to the Senior Manager, Clinical Lead – Speech, Language and Hearing, the Senior SLP, in addition to the duties of an SLP, is responsible for the onboarding of new staff, peer consultation and peer support and providing leadership and support for department and system level initiatives. This is a three year term-based leadership opportunity for a member of the SLP team. 2025-26 is the second year of three, for the inaugural term of this role.
SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER	Reporting to the Senior Manager, Clinical Lead- Social Work, the Senior Social Worker, in addition to the duties of a Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor, is responsible for the onboarding of new staff, peer consultations and peer support, providing leadership and support for various team and practice level initiatives as well as supporting District projects. In collaboration with the Senior Manager, Clinical Lead, the Senior Social Worker participates in the maintenance and/or development of community partnerships and initiatives. This role is a three-year term-based leadership opportunity for a member of the Social Work team.
SOCIAL WORKERS/ATTENDANCE COUNSELLORS	Under the supervision of the Senior Manager Clinical Lead-Social Worker, the Social Work/Attendance team provides both consultative and direct support to students and parent(s)/guardian(s). In the role of Social Worker, the team is responsible for providing social work assessment, brief counselling for students and their parent(s)/guardian(s), advocacy, coordination of services and facilitating referrals to community agencies. They provide consultation and make recommendations to school staff, parent(s)/guardian(s) and department colleagues. The team also provides support in the role of the Attendance Counsellor.
SPECIAL EDUCATION FACILITATOR	Special Education Facilitators are centrally assigned teachers, guided through the leadership of the System Leads –and the Superintendent of Inclusive Student Services. Special Education Facilitators may have portfolio responsibilities to support a Family of Schools or Innovative (Assistive) Technology. Facilitators support school staff in meeting the needs of students with special education strengths and needs, provide guidance and professional collaboration. Facilitators also liaise with schools and parent(s)/guardian(s), assisting all stakeholders in shaping programming and considerations of most appropriate program and placement for individual students.
TEACHERS OF STUDENTS: DEAF HARD OF HEARING BLIND LOW VISION	Teachers of Students Deaf Hard of Hearing (ToDHH) and Teachers of Students Blind Low Vision (ToBLV) are centrally assigned and provide both consultative and direct service for students with hearing and vision accommodation needs and exceptionalities. These specialist teachers work collaboratively with school staff to meet the needs of students, provide programming and specialized equipment resources.

	Initiated for September 2024, each of these teams has a dedicated, leadership secondment, Lead ToDHH and Lead ToBLV, to help support the development and implementation of services and on-going training for staff within and across teams.
SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS (SLPs)	Under the supervision of the Senior Manager Clinical Lead-Speech, Language and Hearing, the SLPs provide both consultative and direct support of oral and written language, including Augmentative/Alternative Communication supports for non-verbal students. In collaboration with families and school teams, SLPs support the academic success and social emotional well-being of students through a variety of services, including assessments, collaboration, training, professional development and connecting with community agencies.
SYSTEM LEAD – INCLUSIVE STUDENT SERVICES	The role of the System Leads – Inclusive Student Services, as centrally assigned Principals, support students, directly reporting to the Superintendent of Inclusive Student Services, by providing leadership of special education programs, supports and department staff. System Leads work collaboratively with other System Leads, departments, Facilitators, Speech-Language, Centrally Assigned Teachers, Social Work, Psychological Services and school-based special education staff to ensure coordination of services for students with special education strengths and needs. This includes supporting IEP development, providing in-service opportunities and provision of resources to staff in developing universal design for learning and differentiated programming including the infusion of technology for students with special education strengths and needs.
THE SUPERINTENDENT INCLUSIVE STUDENT SERVICES (SPECIAL EDUCATION)	The Superintendent of Inclusive Student Services leads coordination of all special education, mental health and day treatment partnership programs and services, including the development and implementation of curriculum and new programs. In addition, ensuring that policies and procedures are developed and followed in accordance with The Education Act, the regulations and Durham District School Board priorities.
TRANSITION AND WORK EDUCATION COORDINATORS	Transition and Work Education Coordinators support students with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities, and their parent(s)/guardian(s), in preparing for post-secondary pathways (work, school & community). Coordinated planning includes building staff knowledge in support of integrated transition planning and building relationships with service-based community partners. Transition and Work Education Coordinators support work education experiences for students building work readiness skills within their secondary learning programs.

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Psychological Services

We are here to help!

Psychological Services team members work with students, caregivers, educators, and with colleagues from across the Durham District School Board (DDSB) to promote student well-being and achievement.

We believe in the fundamental worth of students, their families, and their broader communities. Understanding that relationships are essential to well-being, trust, and a sense of belonging, we offer services that are rooted in anti-oppression. We understand that we are always on the path of learning. We are committed to respecting student voice, the contexts in which learners and their adults live, as well as the dignity of their lived experiences. We embrace a strength-based approach to optimize student potential and we strive to promote safe, welcoming communities where well-being is centered.

Our services include:

- Consultation, with the goal of improving students' learning and social experiences at school;
- Child and adolescent mental health (assessments and interventions);
- Psychological assessment for children and adolescents to effectively link individuals' strengths and needs with supports at school;
- Safety planning and crisis-based response for students and school communities;
- Professional learning support related to student well-being and achievement (e.g., accommodation)

How We Serve

Members of the Psychological Services team may work individually with students, their caregivers, and/or school-based team members. We also work as part of multi-disciplinary Inclusive Student Services Teams. Our work often intersects with the professional expertise including, but not limited to, Instructional Facilitators, Speech Language Pathologists, and Social Workers.

How to Access Psychological Services

Our services are referral based and provided in accordance with the professional standards and ethics of the College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario. To access Psychological Services, consider starting with a conversation with your child's Principal, Special Education Resource Teacher, or Guidance Counsellor. We can also provide mental health support to students if they or their caregivers make a request through the Connect with our Mental Health Team button on the DDSB website.

Consent and Privacy

Psychological Services team members are regulated by the College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario (CPBAO), and the Standards of Professional Conduct and ethical guidelines set out by both the CPBAO and (for staff who are members) the College of Regulated Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO). Our services are provided only with informed consent.

The practices of all Psychological Services staff are governed by regulations set out by the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA). As such, we collect only personal information that is needed to provide services for which consent has been granted.

All personnel are trained on matters relating to privacy and confidentiality. Personal information is not disclosed without knowledge or expressed consent. Under the regulations, there are exceptions to maintaining confidentiality, and Psychological Services staff members will explain these to you before you agree to our provision of any services. Services are voluntary. Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

Inclusive Student Services

Psychological Services is a part of Inclusive Student Services within the DDSB. Our services are delivered within the framework of the district's Inclusive Student Services and Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plans, as well as the Indigenous Education and Human Rights Policies of the DDSB. We are committed to providing services for students within a supportive environments that centre their identities and facilitates their achievement of goals and potential.

More Information

If you would like further information about Psychological Services, please contact one of the following professionals at your school:

- **Principal or Vice-Principal**
- **Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT)/Guidance Team (secondary)**
- **The member from Psychological Services assigned to your school**
- **Manager of Psychological Services, or**
- **Senior Manager and Clinical Lead of Psychological Services.**

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STUDENT SERVICES

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Social Work Services

Who are we?

Members of the DDSB Social Work Services team all hold a Master of Social Work degree and are registered with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers. Social Workers engages with students, families/caregivers, and staff throughout DDSB schools.

What do we do?

Social Workers provide voluntary, consent based, student-centred services from equity and identity affirming perspectives which are aligned with relevant legislation, DDSB policies, and college requirements. Social Work Services supports student mental health and wellbeing, student/school engagement, and attendance needs. **We recognize that students have unique lived experiences and narratives about the things that cause them stress. These may include but are not limited to:**

- emerging or intensifying mental health needs,
- experiences of interpersonal and systemic racism and oppression,
- a lack of belonging and sense of safety,
- harassment, discrimination, and bullying,
- barriers to engagement leading to school avoidance,
- family and community concerns,
- and various psychosocial needs.

These stressors intersect in a way that may impact students' mental health, well-being, and sense of safety, influencing how they may experience school and personal success.

DDSB Social Workers offer trauma informed, student-centred services, that focus on intrinsic and self-motivated goals rooted in student direction and choice. We often include and work with families/caregivers, school staff, and other people in the student's circle depending on the unique circumstances of the young person, and in line with the student's consent to do so.

Our services include:

- **Providing staff and system consultations to foster individual student well-being and success, as well as supporting schoolwide initiatives/strategies that promote mentally healthy and identity-affirming schools,**
- **Delivering one-to-one direct and group social work services with students to support mental health, such as skill building, assertive communication, safety, and other student directed goals,**
- **Engagement and attendance services; identifying and addressing barriers to student engagement and attendance in collaboration with student, family/caregiver, and schools,**
- **Connecting families and students with community services based on their identified needs and goals,**
- **Advocacy for students in schools and in the community,**
- **Providing crisis intervention and traumatic incident response/support for students and school communities,**
- **Offering targeted classroom/group interventions,**
- **Facilitating staff and system capacity building.**

Informed Consent is required to proceed with any services and must be obtained by Social Work Services. Informed consent may be obtained from parent/guardian, and youth may also be able to provide their own informed consent to services. Our work with students and their caregivers/parents is governed by legislation and college requirements pertaining to privacy and confidentiality *(PHIPA, MFIPA, HCCA, CYFSA)*.

How to connect with Social Work Services

Social Work Services can be accessed in a variety of ways.

Student's teacher or preferred adult:

- through school Administration (Principal, Vice Principal),
- through Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT), Guidance,
- or by using the "connect with our mental health team" button on the DDSB's website ddsb.ca/en/family-and-community-support/mental-health

DDSB
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Speech and Language Services

THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

"Language is the basis for thinking, communicating, and learning. Students need language skills to comprehend ideas and information, to interact socially, to inquire into areas of interest and study, and to express themselves clearly and demonstrate their learning."

Ontario Ministry of Education, The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Language, 2023

Who are we?

Speech-Language Pathologists (S-LPs) are part of the Durham District School Board's (DDSB) Inclusive Student Services. Our team has specialized training in communication, speech, language, and literacy. We work with students, families, educators, and professionals to create inclusive and accessible learning environments. All S-LPs have a master's degree and are registered with the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO).

What do we do?

S-LPs respect and honour each student's unique identity, lived experiences, and ways of communicating. S-LPs support students' academic, social, and emotional success through:

- **Assessments** – Evaluating speech, language, and communication skills using various assessment methods that respect each student's development, home language, and culture.
- **Collaboration** – Partnering with educators, support staff, families, and other professionals to set goals and strategies that make learning accessible.
- **Training & Support** – Teaching and modeling ways to enhance communication skills for all, including Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) users.
- **Workshops** – Providing learning opportunities for parents, educators, and community partners.
- **Community Connections** – Coordinating with community agencies and making referrals when needed (e.g., Grandview Kids School-Based Rehabilitation Services).

Who We Support

We work with students from kindergarten to Grade 12 to support:

- **Understanding spoken language, written text, and/or picture communication symbols.**
- **Expressing themselves through speech, writing, and other communication methods.**
- **Developing communication skills for social interactions.**

While early intervention is a priority, we support students of all ages.

Accessing Our Services

- **Services can be requested by parents/guardians, students, school staff, or community agencies (with consent) through the school's Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT).**
- **Parental/guardian informed consent is required before services begin.**

Consent & Privacy

We follow the ethical guidelines of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO) and comply with the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) to ensure your child's privacy.

How to connect with Speech and Language Services

For more information, contact the Senior Manager and Clinical Lead of Speech-Language and Hearing Services:

1-800-265-3968 ext. 6378 or 905-666-6378

DDSB Speech and Language Services

Inclusive
STUDENT SERVICES

EARLY IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

SECTION B – Standard 4

Standard 4: Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies

The purpose of the standard is to provide details of the board's early identification procedures and intervention strategies to the ministry and to the public.

Guiding Principles

The Durham District School Board has procedures to identify each child's level of development, learning abilities and educational programming needs. As per Ministry PPM 11, programs are in place to ensure that educational programs are designed to accommodate these needs and to facilitate each child's growth and development.

The DDSB uses a systematic approach to providing high-quality, evidence-based assessment and instruction and appropriate supports that respond to students' individual strengths, interests, and needs. It is based on frequent monitoring of student progress and the use of assessment data, focusing on learning levels and input from students and their parent(s)/guardian(s), to recognize when students are experiencing learning challenges and to plan for increasing the learning supports that may be needed to address individual student needs while always building from their strengths and where they are. This tiered approach can be used to address academic, physical, communication and behavioural needs. The nature, intensity, and duration of supports may be decided by teachers individually or in collaboration with a school team, always on the basis of evidence derived from monitoring student achievement. (Learning for All Kindergarten - Grade 12)

The Durham District School Board recognizes the importance of the first contact parent(s)/guardian(s) have with the school system. It is the goal of each school to provide a welcoming orientation for all students and their families entering school for the first time, including those who may have differing needs.

The Right to Read Inquiry Report includes recommendation for yearly evidence-based screening of students in their early years of schooling (Kindergarten to Grade 2) in word-reading accuracy and fluency. Information from the Ministry of Education and our continued learning as a district will inform our planning for implementation of this commitment and impact our early intervention and assessment planning from what is currently reflected in this plan.

Early Identification Process

Once a child who might need additional support has been registered, the school and parent(s)/guardian(s) work with the Inclusive Student Services resource staff to understand potential barriers, the child's strengths, abilities, and needs, and discuss and plan for supports, programs and services that will help the child experience the most successful school entry. An Inclusive Student Services Supplemental Registration Package may be completed to share relevant information that will help with identifying program options.

Strong partnerships exist with agencies serving pre-school children. Discussions may be held before a child begins school to help understand the needs of the student to support a smooth transition into school.

For a student with additional support needs, in collaboration with parent/caregivers, the process typically involves:

- considering any other identity based or intersectional needs
- a contact with pre-school providers
- information sharing with parental/guardian consent
- resource staff visits to the pre-school or childcare
- meetings with parent(s)/guardian(s) and any involved advocates/consultative staff/stakeholders involved with the child
- formation of an entry plan including consideration for accessibility, required equipment, class match and other supports
- visits for students and parent(s)/guardian(s) to the new site
- in-service workshops as required for the staff who provide services, supports and programs for the student

The board supports early recognition and a tiered approach to those supports by providing in-service opportunities and resources currently used in classrooms such as the following for classroom teachers, special education staff and school administration such as:

- Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction
- Professional Resources and Instruction for Math Educations PRIME
- Acadience
- Gap closing strategies
- Structured teaching strategies

It is possible that some children may be referred to an Identification, Placement, Review Committee (IPRC) for identification, but meaningful inclusion in early years classrooms provides access to stimulating peer interaction opportunities, inquiry-based learning and a language-rich environment.

> Kindergarten educators are the key educators of children with special education strengths and needs. They have a responsibility to help all children learn, and they work collaboratively with special education teachers, where appropriate, to achieve this goal. They commit to assisting every child to prepare for living with the highest degree of independence possible. (p.97 *The Kindergarten Program*)

Please refer to the Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education, Appendix G, for details regarding policies/procedures for informing parent(s)/guardian(s) that their child may require an IPRC.

The Educator's Role in Early Identification

The educator makes professional observations of the student in various settings, co-ordinates the information that is available from those who are involved and works collaboratively to determine appropriate services, programs and supports. The educator will discuss additional supports that might be needed with administration, the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) and the Inclusive Student Services Team (where appropriate). An intervention plan might be put in place, as outlined in the Supporting Many Paths to Success document (see following page).

The Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Role in Early Identification

The parent(s)/guardian(s) shares observations based on interactions in the home and outside the school setting. The parent/guardian may choose to provide any assessments about their child that adds to the overall understanding of their child's strengths, abilities, interests and needs.

Supporting Many Paths

The following Supporting Many Paths to Success document provides an overview to families and school teams on the process of accommodation including consideration of Individual, Placement, Review Committee process.

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SPECIAL EDUCATION

Supporting Many Paths to Success

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STUDENT SERVICES

STEP 1 Teacher Assesses Strengths and Needs of Student

NOTE: Steps 1 - 4 MUST precede the *Consent for Service*

1. Recognizes a learning gap, unique pattern of strength/need or significant concern;
2. Communicates with parent(s)/guardian(s), principal, and Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT);
3. Accommodates program to meet student needs;
4. Evaluates the effectiveness of accommodations/ interventions;
5. Student Summary created in PowerSchool (PSP).

If accommodations/interventions meet the student's needs

- continue with selected strategies;
- monitor progress interventions meetings, in-school team meetings.

If accommodations/interventions do not yet meet the student's needs

- meet with parents and SERT;
- discuss observations, data collected, patterns/trends;
- continue classroom assessment and begin intervention checklist;
- develop plan involving accommodations and develop a home-support plan;
- implement new strategies/interventions and evaluate;
- continue classroom assessment and intervention;
- add to Student Summary created in PSP.

MOVE ON TO STEP 2

STEP 2 The Special Education Resource Teacher

1. Will observe the student and collect data pertaining to strengths and needs and interests;
2. Will create a plan of action based on the observation results and set a date to evaluate progress;
3. May provide and coordinate more direct support to the teacher and student through a variety of approaches;
4. Share plan of action with parent(s)/guardian(s).

If accommodations/interventions meet the student's needs

- continue with current accommodations and strategies and interventions;
- document all accommodations/interventions and evaluate;
- maintain on-going assessment and evaluation;
- update Student Summary and continue to gather documentation.

If accommodations/interventions do not yet meet the student's needs

- SERT activates Special Education Team using Student Smmary and informs parent(s)/guardians(s).

MOVE ON TO STEP 3

STEP 3 In-School Team

1. Teacher and SERT present classroom observations and/or assessment results to in-school team and outline current accommodations;
2. Team brainstorms strategies/suggestions including community partners/services;
3. Team collaboratively updates the action plan;
4. Update parent(s)/guardian(s) - SERT and teacher discuss program accommodations and interventions with parent(s)/guardian(s).

If accommodations/interventions meet the student's needs

- ensure ongoing communication with parent(s)/guardian(s);
- document success of the recommendations within the action plan.

If accommodations/interventions do not yet meet the student's needs

- assess implemented accommodations/interventions;
- develop further revisions/changes to the action plan;
- set a timeline to monitor and review accommodations/interventions and schedule next meeting.

MOVE ON TO STEP 4

STEP 4 Pre-Referral Consultation

1. Pre-Referral consultation occurs with the Family of Schools Special Education Team to determine appropriate services;
2. Academic Assessment may be considered at this time for further information of student needs;
3. No identifying information is shared at this point.

NOTE: Steps 1 - 4 MUST precede the *Consent for Service*

If accommodations/interventions meet the student's needs

- record accommodations for further reference;
- continue with on-going assessment, accommodations, intervention and evaluation;
- continue to involve school resource personnel as needed.

If accommodations/interventions do not yet meet the student's needs

- obtain parental consent for school-based assessment by SERT;
- discuss with parents possible special education support services;
- obtain signed consent for services on PSP;
- give parent(s)/guardians(s) a copy of the "Protecting Personal Health Information" pamphlet.

MOVE ON TO STEP 5

STEP 5 ISS Referral Submitted

1. SERT verifies that appropriate forms and documentation are completed and sent to Special Education Support staff;
2. Informed Consent by Service Professional.
   - Special Education support staff provide communication to parent(s)/guardian(s) to secure informed consent;
   - Special Education support staff ensure that the parent(s)/ guardian(s) are aware of the nature of services to be provided, appropriate timelines and confidentiality.
3. Support from Special Education Services
   - Special Education support staff may visit classroom, observe and provide further assessment, program accommodation, strategies and materials as required;
   - SERT continues to update teacher and administration;
   - Special Education support staff involvement may be consultative and/or involve direct student support.
4. Determine if IPRC is warranted at this time.

If accommodations/interventions meet the student's needs

- document changes to program;
- report card reflects progress;
- on-going assessment and evaluation;
- continue information sharing with parent(s)/guardian(s) and school/ Special Education staff.

If accommodations/interventions do not yet meet the student's needs

- set up a Care Conference with team and parent(s)/guardian(s).

MOVE ON TO STEP 6

STEP 6 Care Conference

1. Special Education Parent Guide provided to parent(s)/ guardian(s);
2. Parent(s)/guardian(s), teacher, SERT, Administrator attend a meeting to discuss concerns/next steps.

If additional programming/interventions meet student's needs

- no IPRC at this time; continue to monitor.

If following the care conference and all parties are in agreement

- hold an initial meeting - Identification, Placement, Review Committee (IPRC);
- on-going monitoring and development of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) by school staff, in conjunction with parent(s)/guardian(s), community and relevant support staff.

Acknowledge: Ministry of Education

THE IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC) PROCESS AND APPEALS

SECTION B – Standard 5

Standard 5: The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process and Appeals

The purpose of the Standard is to provide details of the board's IPRC process to the Ministry and to the public.

The DDSB Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education IPRC includes emphasis on the importance of ongoing parent/guardian voice in program and pathway planning. Intentional language such as a shift made from 'case conference' to 'care conference' helps centre individual students, well-being and learning, and helps humanize processes and connections.

Consultation and collaboration on pathway and placement considerations are essential to precede an IPRC meeting being convened. The DDSB Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education IPRC can be found in Appendix G. A supplemental resource, a presentation with recorded audio, was launched in Winter 2025 to help increase access to information about the IPRC process and is found on ddsb.ca.

Regulation 181/98 requires that each board establishes one or more Committee(s) for the identification, placement and review of exceptional students.

As of April 2025, 13,127 students have active Individual Education Plans (IEPs) outlining their learning goals and strategies based on formal Identification, Placement and Review Committee decisions. Aligned with our commitment of Regular Class placement being most inclusive, 10,352 of these students access through Regular Class placement.

Inclusive Student Services support approximately 15,000 students annually, encompassing those with IEPs and/or receiving services such as Psychological Services, Social Work, Speech-Language Pathology, and specialized programming (e.g., Services for students Blind Low Vision, Services for students D/deaf hard of hearing and Transition Coordinators).

The following procedures are based on Regulation 181/98 and outline the process school principals are to follow. In the Durham District School Board, IPRCs are led by school teams and may include district staff. The Committee may meet in-person or secure virtual platform (currently using MS Teams); based on parent/guardian preference.

Referrals: A principal refers the student to an IPRC either upon written notification to the parent(s)/guardian(s); or upon written request of parent(s)/guardians(s).

In the Durham District School Board in the 2024-2025 school year, a total of 6,875 referrals (new or reopened) were made in addition to consents for services with continuity from previous year. There were 13,963 reviews and 5 appeals were filed with the district as of May 12, 2025.

Table 2 - At the IPRC Meeting

At the IPRC Meeting					
Principal/Designate	**Referring Teacher(s)**	**Special Education Resource Teacher**	**Inclusive Student Services**	**Parent(s)/ Legal Guardian(s)**	**Student**
• Chairs the meeting; Explains the role of the Committee; • Invites each person in attendance with knowledge of the student to present information. • Considers information relevant to the student's interests, strengths and needs	• Presents all relevant information that supports identification(or not)	• Presents all Relevant information that supports identification (or not)	• May be invited to attend and review any recent assessments and; • Acts as a resource to assist in the interpretation of reports from other agencies. • Translator or Interpreter, if required	• Shares any available reports with Committee; • Provides any further information • Asks questions.	• Participates in IPRCs as appropriate
At the IPRC Meeting, the Committee May Decide to:					
• Recommend identification or decide that an identification is not required; • Recommend placement; • Defer decision if the Committee requires more information.					
After the IPRC Meeting					
Principal/Designate • Provides one copy of the Statement of Decision to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student who is 16 years or older; • Places one copy of the Statement of Decision in the Ontario Student Record (OSR); • Within 30 days of IPRC, provides one copy of IEP to the parents(s)/guardian(s) and the student who is 16 years or older; • Places one copy of the IEP in the OSR For Parent(s)/Guardian(s): If you disagree with the IPRC decision, you are able, within 15 calendar days of receiving the decision, request in writing an additional meeting to re-evaluate the decision of the IPRC. If after the second meeting to re-evaluate the IPRC decision you still disagree, you may indicate an appeal of the decision. Notification is made in writing to the Superintendent of Education – Inclusive Student Services and must be made within 15 calendar days. Further information is available within the DDSB Parent/Guardian Guide to IPRC.					

EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS

SECTION B – Standard 6

Standard 6: Educational and Other Assessments

The purpose of the standard is to provide details of the board's assessment policies and procedures and to make parent(s)/guardian(s) aware of the types of assessment tools used by district teams, the ways in which assessments support programming for students, duty bearer responsibilities and the process by which assessment results may be used to inform Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) decisions.

The DDSB recognizes potential biases and barriers in assessment tools and the potential for bias of those facilitating and/or analyzing the assessments results. In keeping with our commitments to Indigenous rights, human rights, and equity, the DDSB considers students' identities, strengths and needs when conducting assessments and when making related programming recommendations, plans and decisions.

The purpose of assessment is to better learn how children and youth learn. The information gathered is used to inform educational programing for students and is completed in collaboration with parent(s)/guardian(s) and where appropriate includes student voice. Educators are supported in the use of assessment strategies used through a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) lens.

The process of assessment is dynamic and ongoing to:

- help to identify strengths, abilities and potential educational, learning program needs
- answer specific questions or concerns
- assist in planning effective programming, including accommodations
- determine next steps in programming adjustments responsive to individual student
- help parent(s)/guardian(s) formulate further understanding of the child's learning potential
- support staffing resource allocation considerations (e.g., Functional Vision Assessment for potential allocation of Teacher of Blind Low Vision and/or Intervenor support)
- help support programming to maximize participation, learning, and well-being.

The development of a Student Learning Summary is a result of ongoing gathering of information that allows for a continuum of intervention.

Parent/Guardian Consent

Informed and written consent from parent(s)/guardian(s) for students under 18 years of age is obtained for all referrals for formal assessments and clinical services and access to the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR). Information to be reviewed or shared may include, but is not limited to, that which is contained in the OSR. This information is obtained and used only for the improvement of instruction and other education of the student in accordance with the Education Act, (R.S.O. 1990. S.266(2)) and is collected, transmitted, retained and disposed of confidentially in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (R.S.O. 1990 c. M. 56).

Consent for Sharing Information and Protection of Privacy

All information is collected, stored, and shared in accordance with the Education Act, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), Municipal Freedom of Information and

Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) and other legislation that governs the use of personal information. A separate consent form, Consent to the Disclosure, Transmittal and/or Examination of Records or Information, must be signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) or capable student to share information with outside agencies and/or service providers.

Classroom Literacy Assessments

In accordance with Policy/Program Memorandum #168: Reading Instruction and Early Reading Screening, all DDSB schools continue early reading screenings for students.

The chosen screener is Acadience Reading K-6, a widely utilized tool across Ontario. This tool supports our commitment to ensuring students' academic success by monitoring their foundational reading skills development. The primary objectives include individualizing program planning for students who may require additional support, guiding tailored instructional strategies, and enhancing literacy outcomes.

Acadience Reading K-6 serves various purposes, including identifying students at risk of reading difficulties, aiding teachers in pinpointing areas requiring instructional reinforcement, monitoring progress, and evaluating instructional interventions.

The Ministry of Education requires all students in Year 2 of Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 to undergo early reading screening twice per school year. The second screening is only mandatory for students who did not meet the benchmark in the first screening. Early reading screening complements, rather than replaces, a repertoire of classroom-based assessments.

Communication of Assessment Information

Upon completion of an assessment, SERTs, Speech-Language Pathologists, Audiologists, Psychologists, Psychological Associates, and/or Psychometrists, discuss the results with the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s). A written confidential report is prepared for parent(s)/guardian(s) which, subject to client consent for release of information, a copy of may be placed in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR). A copy of the report is held in the central files.

For Psychological Services, the communication of a diagnosis is a controlled act under the Registered Health Professions Act (RHPA), 1991. The Act requires that diagnoses (e.g., learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, etc.) be formulated and communicated directly by a Licensed Psychological practitioner (i.e., Psychologist, Psychological Associate).

The following are some commonly used assessment tools employed by DDSB staff to assist in understanding how students learn and engage with school:

Table 3 - Commonly Used Assessment Tools

Understanding Student Strengths and Programming Needs	Assessment Facilitated by:	Assessment Tools (these are commonly used assessment tools, but not an exhaustive list)	Average Wait Time for Assessment
Understanding student strengths and next steps in learning in language and numeracy	Classroom Teacher	Early Numeracy Observation Tool (ENOT) Leaps and Bounds Nelson Math Pre- Assessment Ontario Writing Acadience Universal Screener Education Perfect Screeners on the Literacy Launch Pad Classroom-Based Assessment (Conversation, Observations and Products) Lexia Math Up STEP Assessment for Multi-Language Learners (MLL)	Assessment is on-going within the classroom
Program not yet meeting student's learning needs; broader understanding helpful in supporting programming decisions and supports. **Behavioural concerns that may impact learning**	Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT)	Key Math Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (KTEA) Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA)	3 to 6 months Efforts to conduct FBA in a timely manner, prioritizing safety concerns
Social, behavioural, cognitive, or mental health concerns that impact upon the student's learning or school functioning and have not been responsive to school-based interventions.	Psychologists, Psychological Associates, Psychometrists	Tools chosen by staff are suited to the assessment focus and may vary accordingly. Direct observations and/or dynamic assessments supplement the use of formal assessment tools.	Efforts to conduct formal assessments in a timely manner. Balance of need for assessment with priorities for other service functions, in collaboration with school staff and parent/guardians.
Concerns regarding communication (expressive or receptive) and auditory and/or visual access that are not responsive to universal classroom intervention **Learning gaps, in the area of language**	Speech Language Pathologist, Teacher of Deaf Hard of Hearing Teacher of Blind Low Vision	Informal observations and assessments Collaborative/integrated service assessments. Wide range of formal assessments relative to the presenting programming concern	Complete priority assessments within the school year.

Student experiences that impact student learning, school engagement, and functioning at school: emotional challenges, crisis, family or relationship challenge, mental health concerns.	Social Worker	Assessment based on information from student, and/or the parent(s)/guardian(s). Classroom observation Information from school supports and education staff review of school records with consent Contact with community agencies Use of mental health and well-being tools	Student usually seen within a week from time of referral for initial consultation

SPECIALIZED HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

SECTION B – Standard 7

Standard 7: Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings

The purpose of the standard is to provide details of the board's specialized health support services to the Ministry and to the public.

The provision of health support services to students in school settings is governed by the Ministry Education Policy/Program Memorandum 81. This policy document outlines the shared responsibility for the provision of health support services amongst the Ministries of Education, Health, Long-Term Care, and Children, Community and Social Services. At the time of publishing the DDSB Special Education Plan for 2023-2024, the Ministry of Education had gathered consultation on proposed revision to PPM81 but no further communication has been received. If changes are made at the provincial level impacting Specialized Heath Support Services in School Settings, the Inclusive Student Services team, in consultation with district senior leadership team, will revise to reflect any changes to service responsibilities or access.

The expectations of the Ministry of Education are that all school boards develop and maintain policies to support students who have asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, or are at risk for anaphylaxis are set in PPM 161 – Supporting Children and Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions in Schools. These are medical conditions referred to as prevalent medical conditions and have the potential to result in a medical incident or emergency.

The Durham DSB has the following related procedures:

- Supporting Children and Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions in Schools: Anaphylaxis
- Supporting Children and Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions in Schools: Asthma
- Supporting Children and Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions in Schools: Diabetes
- Supporting Children and Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions in School: Epilepsy.

All four procedures for students with prevalent medical conditions require that schools create a Plan of Care in conjunction with parent(s)/guardian(s), the student, and the appropriate medical practitioner to support each presenting student.

Administration of prescribed medication to students during the school day is addressed under the board's Policy and Procedure regarding Administration of Prescriptive Oral Medication. Inquiries can be made through the Principal/Vice-Principal.

Eligibility Criteria for School Health Support Services

The eligibility criteria for the provision of School Health Support Services is as follows:

1. The person must be enrolled as a pupil at a school or be receiving satisfactory instruction at home in accordance with clause 21(2) (a) of the *Education Act*.
2. The person must require the services
   (i) in order to be able to attend school, participate in school routines and receive instruction,
   (ii) in order to be able to receive satisfactory instruction at home in accordance with clause 21(2) (a) of the *Education Act*.
3. The person must be an insured person under the *Health Insurance Act*.
4. The school or home in which the service is to be provided must have the physical features necessary to enable the service to be provided.

5. The risk that a service provider who provides the service to the person who requires it, will experience
   (i) must not be significant, or
   (ii) if it is significant, the service provider must be able to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk so that it is no longer significant

In Durham Region, School Based Rehabilitation Services are provided through GrandviewKids, the local Children's Treatment Centre.

School Health Support Services and the board are as follows:

Table 4 - School Health Support Services

Specialized Health Support Service	Agency or position of person who performs the service in school setting	Eligibility criteria for students to receive the service	Procedures for resolving disputes about eligibility and level of support
Nursing	Ministry of Health: local	Referral from Health	Ministry of Health: local
Occupational therapy	Ministry of Health: GrandviewKids	Referral and Assessment	GrandviewKids
Physiotherapy	Ministry of Health: GrandviewKids	Referral and Assessment	GrandviewKids
Speech therapy	Ministry of Health: GrandviewKids - School- Based Rehab Services	Referral by school or other agency for speech disorders	GrandviewKids School-Based Rehab Services, board SLP and Clinical Lead SLP as needed
Catheterization (clean and intermittent)	Ministry of Education/board - EA	Direction from a doctor	Principal and/or System Lead – Inclusive Student
Catheterization (sterile and intermittent)	Ministry of Health: local	Ministry of Health: local	Ministry of Health: local
Suctioning: Shallow (oral or nasal suction surface)	Ministry of Education/ School Staff- EA	Direction from doctor	Principal and/or System Lead – Inclusive Student Services
Suctioning: Deep	Ministry of Health: local	Ministry of Health: local	Ministry of Health: local
Lifting, positioning, feeding and toileting	Ministry of Education/ School Staff - EA	Direction from doctor, therapist	Principal and/or System Lead – Inclusive Student Services
G tube feeding	Ministry of Health: local	Ministry of Health	Ministry of Health: local

Please note: Chart includes information available up to May 2024.
Updates will be made and posted online as changes to Health Services are made in Ontario.

CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS OF EXCEPTIONALTIES

SECTION B – Standard 8

Standard 8: Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities

The purpose of the standard is to make information on the Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities available to the public, including parent(s)/guardian(s) and community associations.

In an actioned commitment to anti-ableism, we affirm disability and neurodiversity as vital expressions of human diversity that enrich our learning and working communities. Drawing on Dr. Gillian Parekh's work in Addressing Ableism in Education, this commitment includes challenging the limitations of the medical model of exceptionalities by embracing inclusive, identity-affirming approaches that recognize neurodiverse learners and colleagues as assets—bringing unique perspectives, strengths, and contributions.

As a district, we are committed to addressing ableism, shifting practices to an asset-based approach to inclusion and challenging medical models which focus on diagnosis and/or deficit. As a district, we acknowledge and commit to the work that must be done to make these shifts.

The Education Act identifies five categories of exceptionalities for exceptional students:

- **Behaviour**
- **Communication** (Autism, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Language Impairment, Speech Impairment, Learning Disability)
- **Intellectual** (Giftedness, Mild Intellectual Disability, Developmental Disability)
- **Physical** (Physical Disability, Blind and Low Vision)
- **Multiple**

Further information about the five categories of exceptionalities, and their subcategories (listed above in parenthesis), can be found in the Ministry of Education resource:

Special Education in Ontario, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Resource Guide (2024)

SPECIAL EDUCATION PLACEMENTS PROVIDED BY THE BOARD

SECTION B – Standard 9

Standard 9: Special Education Placements

The purpose of the standard is to make information about Special Education Placement in the Durham District School Board available to the public, including parent(s)/guardian(s) and community associations.

The DDSB is committed to all students and to providing services and learning environments that are safe, welcoming, respectful, inclusive, equitable and accessible, and free from discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code. In partnership with parent(s)/guardian(s), the DDSB considers the student's identity and individual learning strengths and needs. The DDSB provides a range of differentiated placements, programs, interventions and individualized accommodation to maximize participation, integration and independence, enable meaningful access to education, and support student success.

Students' needs can be met through a variety of programs, placements and class types within the DDSB. We strive to help every student meet their full potential, while fostering the highest level of independence possible. We work with parent(s)/guardian(s) and board staff to determine the placement that best meets the student's needs, whether that is in a regular classroom, or for some students, in a special education placement program. We place a strong emphasis on the inclusion of students with special education strengths and needs. All placements are reviewed on an annual basis at Identification Placement Review Committee (IPRC) meetings to determine placement for the following year.

The majority of students with special education strengths and needs, access learning through a regular classroom placement. For most students, a classroom teacher, with the support of the school's Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) and board staff, is able to provide individualized programming to support student success. A regular classroom is always an option that parent(s)/guardian(s) may consider. A regular classroom allows the student to be with their peers, while receiving personalized programming that is outlined in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). The regular class is considered the most inclusive of placements.

Our ongoing commitment is to provide the structures and supports each student needs to foster their growth and development in programs which foster integration and independence as defined for each student based on their interests, strengths and needs. We continue to learn and grow to uphold our commitments to Indigenous rights, human rights, equity and inclusion.

Transition Planning

From the first day of school to graduation or completion, our District embeds transition planning into every stage of a student's journey, recognizing that successful navigation of both small daily shifts and major educational milestones is essential to equitable student success. This includes, for students with complex programming needs, early start to transition planning for first entry to school and, through Integrated Transition Planning (Appendix H), long-term planning for life beyond secondary.

From the DDSB Transition Guide (Appendix I), "Flexible approaches, consultation with families/caregivers to consider students' individual identities, needs and circumstances that

impact transitions, need to be considered in focusing scope and implementing transition strategies and supports for individual students. Collaboration and ongoing communication are essential to exploring options. Our shared commitment is to keep students at the centre of special education programming and service planning including transition supports. Collaboration with families and caregivers is foundational to decision making to individualize the planning for each student." (DDSB Transition Guide, p.2)

Integrated Transition Planning

In a commitment to supporting achievement, well-being and pathways within School Learning Plans, how we plan for, support and celebrate students whose achievement is other than an OSSD is important.

Integrated Transition Planning begins at age 14 for youth with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities. Early planning is key to ensuring that the students, and their families/caregivers:

- are centred in planning (goals/hopes)
- have access to information and
- that supports such as DSO (Developmental Services Ontario) application requirements such as recent assessment are planned.

The DDSB Life Beyond High School - Transition Planning –Guide (Appendix H) , launched during the 2024-2025 school year, offers a comprehensive overview of key milestones for transitional-aged youth with developmental and intellectual disabilities. This resource features a timeline, sectioned by age from 14-21 years old, with each section detailing important transition milestones. Each milestone includes a brief description, its significance, eligibility criteria, and guidance on how to access related services.

The 'Transition Planning – Getting Started' resource serves as an all-in-one guide for parents, caregivers and guardians. It provides essential information on transition planning, helping facilitate a smooth transition to community supports and services for when their child exits school at age 21. Further this resource will enhance school teams' knowledge and capacity on key transition milestones.

The IPRC Placement Decision

Before the IPRC considers placement of the student in a special education class, Regulation 181/98 requires the committee consider placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services. If, after considering all of the information presented, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a regular class would meet the student's needs and is consistent with parent(s) or guardian(s) preferences, the committee will decide in favour of placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services.

Placement Options

Regular Class with Indirect Support

The student is placed in a regular class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialized consultative services.

Regular Class with Resource Assistance

The student is placed in the 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.

Regular Class with Withdrawal Assistance

The student is placed in the regular class and receives instruction outside of the classroom for less than 50 percent of the school day, from a qualified special education teacher.

A Special Education Class with Partial Integration

The student is placed by IPRC in a special education class, where the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for at least 50 percent of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.

A Special Education Class Full Time

The student is placed by IPRC in a special education class, where the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for the entire school day.

The type of support referenced within the IPRC placement categories is specific to a teacher with special education, additional course, qualifications. The placement type does not refer to the provision or type of classroom support staff, for example, support from an educational assistant, that may be part of a student's program.

In the Durham District School Board Regular Class with Withdrawal Assistance and Regular Class with Resource Assistance are utilized for the relatively small number of students accessing direct teaching by Itinerant (teachers with specialized certifications working in multiple schools) for students who are Blind/Low Vision or Deaf/Hard of Hearing.

Specific to special education class placements, teacher and educational assistant support that is the foundation for the program can be found within the individual program brochures found within this plan and through the DDSB website.

Regular Classroom Placements

There are many strategies available within the Durham District School Board to support the inclusion of students with special education strengths and needs in regular grade placements.

The majority of students with special education strengths and needs access programming in a regular classroom. For most students, a classroom teacher, with support of the school's Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) and board staff, is able to provide individualized programming to support student success in a classroom environment with their peers. The board's practice is that, whenever possible, special learning needs are supported within the home school and within a regular class placement. The regular class placement is considered the most inclusive of placements.

Principals are responsible for creating an inclusive school climate supportive of exceptional students that honours and values their diverse, unique and intersecting identities. Developing a climate of dignity, respect, understanding and acceptance throughout the school, providing support and training for teachers and educational assistants and creating a culture of collaboration are essential components of successful inclusion.

Included here are examples of the ways in which a student can be integrated into the regular classroom with the support of the school community.

Collaboration Strategies:

1. Create a school-wide culture of collaboration and inclusion:
    - uphold UNDRIP, the Human Rights Code and commitments and duty-bearer responsibilities as defined in the DDSB Indigenous Education and Human Rights Policies and procedures
    - develop a vision for enhancing inclusion and addressing ableism
    - model inclusive practices and clarify expectations for the staff
    - Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction
    - provide support
    - create/maintain positive attitudes and optimism regarding change and developing practices to address ableism, prevent barriers and accommodate the individual needs of all learners.
2. Develop programs that affirm and value neurodiversity, differing abilities and diverse, intersecting identities that each student brings. Programs will focus on a student's strengths using them to address areas of growth and engage students through areas of interest.
3. Encourage school-based responsibility:
    - school establishes a team responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring a successful inclusion plan.

4. Encourage collaboration between the special education team and regular mainstream grade teachers.
5. Encourage a variety of instructional strategies that focus on Universal Design of Learning (UDL) and accessibility principles and provide in-service for teachers to develop and learn strategies.
6. Access appropriate members of the Inclusive Student Services team to support student's programming needs. Note: Parent/guardian and/or student consent required
7. Provide time for planning, sharing promising practices, success, challenges and debriefing to support ongoing learning.

Special Education Class Placements

Some students require a higher level of support, more intensive intervention and specialized services to support student success. For those students, parent(s)/guardian(s) may be offered an opportunity to explore the option of a Special Education Class placement for their child. In the DDSB we provide seven special education class types that have clearly defined outcomes for student success and are designed to meet the needs of students with specific learning profiles.

Program types include:

a. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program (currently under review/not active placement for 2025/2026)
b. Developmental Program
c. Gifted Class (elementary only)
d. Practical Learning Program
e. School Support Program
f. Structured Learning Class Program
g. Transition to Work Program

The following chart provides a breakdown of Special Education classes across the district for the 2025–2026 school year, organized by program type to support planning and service delivery.

Table 5 – DDSB 2025-26 Special Education Class Programs

DDSB 2025-2026 Special Education Class Programs			
Program Type	System Total 2025-26	Max. Roster Per Class	Total Program Seats
Developmental Program	22	6	132
Gifted Program - Elementary	39	25	975
Practical Learning Program	93	10	930
School Support Program - Elementary	47	10	470
School Support Program - Secondary	20	12	240
Structured Learning Class	13	6	78
Transition to Work Program	5	12	60
Totals	239		2885

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is kept informed on a regular basis by the System Leads (District Principals), Senior Managers & Clinical Leads and Superintendent of Inclusive Student Services about the range of available placements for students with special education strengths and needs. The input from SEAC is important in reviewing program types based on student needs and improving strategies for inclusion.

Consultation occurs during monthly SEAC meetings, Board meetings and Administrative Council liaison.

The following pages provide information about the Special Education Classes for the 2025-2026 school year inclusive of our information about Special Education in the DDSB.

More detailed information on each special education class type can be found online Special Education Placement Programs

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program

The publication date of the 2025-2026 Inclusive Student Services Special Education Plan, fell within the consultation phase for an action research initiative about Deaf and Hard of Hearing programs and services. The research project is undertaken, in partnership with university faculty research collaborators, to better understand the experience and programming needs of students who are Deaf and/or Hard of Hearing to inform decisions about services and student programming.

Traditionally, reviews of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Programs have focused on service delivery, administrative process, and staffing requirement. Our project goal has been to create a tool/process to gather information about the degree to which the programming, curriculum and pedagogy is accessible to deaf and hard of hearing children and develop finer grain data that provides indicators of progress in language development, literacy skills and overall academic progress.

The lead researchers are led by Dr. Joanna Weber, Canada Research Council Chair (Tier 2) in Deaf Education, Assistant Professor for the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta, and Director of Western Canadian Centre for Deaf Studies, and Dr. Joanna Cannon, University of British Columbia. The Researchers will be in Durham Region, May 20-23, 2025, to engage directly with students, families and educators through interviews and focus groups.

Results of the study will be shared publicly, including with the Special Education Advisory Committee, in fall of 2025 to inform program and service planning.

Elementary Gifted Placement Class

Accommodations for intellectually gifted students are outlined in their Individual Education Plan (IEP). These plans are created with input from the student and their parents or caregivers. Accommodations may include opportunities to connect with other gifted learners

and participate in academic competitions.

Before considering a special education class placement, the DDSB prioritizes placing students in regular classes with appropriate special education services, in line with the Education Act - Regulation 181/98.

Placement Options**:** Both regular class and Special Education Gifted Class placements are available for students identified as intellectually gifted through the assessment process.

Programming supports for all students with an exceptionality Intellectual (Gifted) and related processes will be further reviewed during the 2025-2026 school year. As a district, we have publicly recognized that our current practices related to the Special Education Placement (Gifted) do not fully align with our District's commitments to equity, inclusion, and the standardized IPRC process applied to other exceptionalities. In response, the District is undertaking further examination to ensure that services for students identified as Intellectually Gifted through the IPRC process reflect inclusive values and equitable access. This includes exploring options related to supports that prioritize community connection and individualized supports, including examination of the placement program, while addressing historical overrepresentation in self-contained programs.

DDSB
Ignite Learning

SPECIAL EDUCATION
in the Durham District School Board

MANY PATHS TO Success

Inclusive
STUDENT SERVICES

Spring 2024

How do we serve our students?

Students' needs can be met through a variety of programs, placements and class types within the DDSB. We strive to help every student meet their full potential, while fostering the highest level of independence possible for each student. We work with parents/guardians and board staff to determine the placement that best meets the student's needs, whether that is in a regular classroom, or for some students, in a special education class.

We place a strong emphasis on the inclusion of our students with special needs, providing meaningful, individualized integration opportunities for students accessing special education programs.

Our Mission

The Durham District School Board is committed to fostering success and independence for each student by providing a range of pathways, programs, opportunities and services. Students with special education strengths and needs are supported in inclusive environments that enable them to develop to their own full potential.

For more information, please contact the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) at your school.

Regular Class Placement

PLACEMENT DESCRIPTION

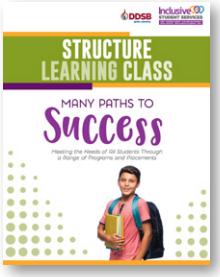
The regular class is considered the most inclusive of placements. The majority of students with special education needs access programming in a regular classroom. For most students, a classroom teacher, with support of the school's Special Education Resource Teacher and board staff, is able to provide individualized programming that allows the student to meet with success in a classroom environment with their peers

The Board endeavours to meet the needs of all students in the most enabling environment. The Board's practice, consistent with the Ministry direction is that, wherever possible, special learning needs are addressed within the home school and regular class placement.

Special Education Class Placements

Some students require a higher level of support, more intensive intervention and specialized services in order to meet with success. For those students, parents and guardians may be offered an opportunity to explore a Special Education Class placement for their child. In the DDSB we provide seven class types that meet the needs of students with a specific learning profile and that have clearly defined outcomes of student success.

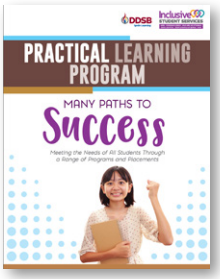
For more information on individual programs search **DDSB Inclusive Student Services**, or click on the photo beside each of the program descriptions.



STRUCTURED LEARNING CLASS
Special Education Class with Partial Integration

The Structured Learning Class (SLC) provides intensive support for students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who are working on Ontario or Alternative curriculum expectations. Teaching strategies based on Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), ie. Structured Teaching TEACCH©, data collection, positive reinforcement and generalization, are utilized to develop skills in a variety of domains including but not limited to: communication, self-regulation, and social skills.

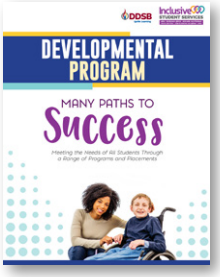
Maximum of six students.



PRACTICAL LEARNING PROGRAM
Special Education Class with Partial Integration or Special Education Full-time

The Practical Learning Program provides intensive support while teaching and reinforcing essential skills that foster independence in activities of daily living. This program is suited for students who may have intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and/or autism.

Maximum of ten students.

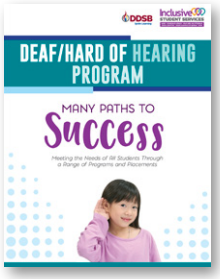


DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM
Full-time Special Education Program

The Developmental Program provides an intensive support program for students who have significant physical, intellectual or developmental disabilities. Students accessing the Developmental Program may also be medically fragile and/or require significant sensory support. The program also includes integrated community supports embedded within programming.

Maximum of six students.

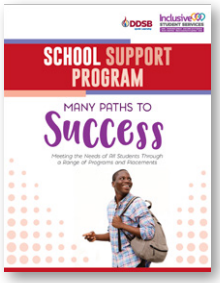
DEAF/HARD OF HEARING PROGRAM
Special Education Class with Partial Integration



The Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program provides intensive support for students whose primary concern is speech and language related to their hearing loss. The program provides instruction in Ontario Curriculum as well as receptive and expressive language, auditory management and self-advocacy. Total communication is the focus for the program. Necessary spoken and visual supports are provided to develop receptive and expressive language and access curriculum.

Class maximum of twelve students.

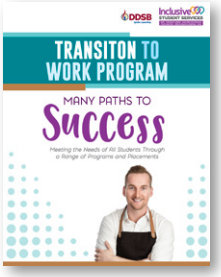
SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAM
Special Education Class with Partial Integration



The School Support Program provides an opportunity for an intensive support placement for the development of core curriculum and executive functioning (learning skills) for students within/near their community school. The goal of the program is to foster independence and integration.

Elementary: Maximum of ten students
Secondary: Maximum of twelve students

TRANSITION TO WORK PROGRAM
Self Contained Special Education Program



The Transition to Work Program is designed to bridge between school and successful adult living by providing experiences in various work environments. The goal of the program is to develop employability skills and foster independence to support students with special needs to become productive workers with a goal of leading to meaningful employment. Through this program placement, students with special education needs can learn, practice, and refine productivity skills and social skills that are essential to participating in meaningful employment, learning more about themselves and the world of work.

Maximum of twelve students.

GIFTED PROGRAM

The Gifted Program provides differentiated support for learners who are intellectually gifted. As a self-contained classroom program at the elementary level, the program provides students to learn with and from other students with similar or higher intellectual aptitude. Based on the Ontario Curriculum, the program paces in breadth and depth of the learners with a focus on creative and complex ways of thinking.

Elementary: Maximum of 25 students
Secondary: Access through individual course selection

The Durham DDSB core priorities are all reflected in Inclusive programming which promotes student growth and achievement. Student independence is fostered through a gradual release of responsibility model. This framework provides the and support needed to set a student on a path to their own level of independence. Independence allows for a growth of a student's voice which includes knowing who they are, what they want or need and making positive choices that affect their life.

A MODEL FOR SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

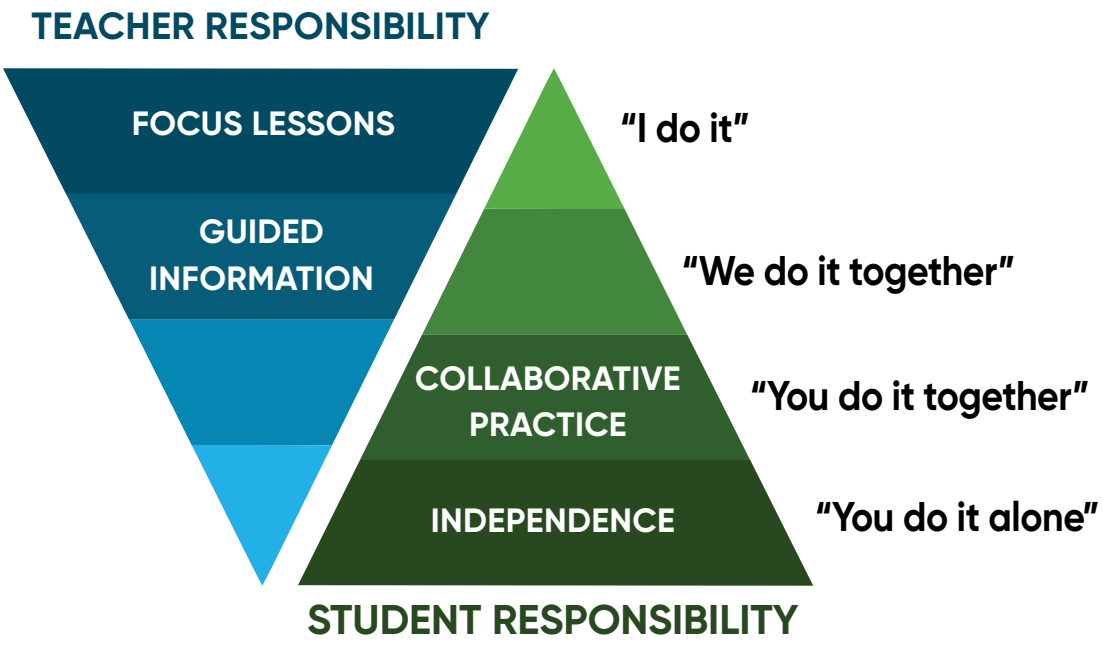


Image from the resource "Fostering Student Independence – An Educator's Guide" co-created by the Durham District School Board and partner boards.

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INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEPs) AND TRANSITION PLANNING

SECTION B – Standard 10

Standard 10: Individual Education Plans and Transition Planning

The purpose of the standard is to inform the Ministry and the public about the ways in which the board is complying with the Ministry requirement for the implementation of Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Implementing the Ministry of Education's Standards for IEPs

As per Regulation 181/98, all students in the DDSB who are identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) have an IEP.

An IEP is a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by an individual student to support equitable access to programming. An IEP is based on the student's strengths and needs as identified through appropriate assessments. The IEP identifies accommodations and/or modified expectations from the Ontario Curriculum and/or alternative expectations that comprise a student's program. An IEP also includes special education services needed to assist the student in achieving their learning goals. The IEP is a working document; revisions or updates are part of a cycle of continuous assessment and monitoring. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are consulted in the development of the IEP and are informed of any changes to the plan throughout the school year.

The implementation of the IEP is led and monitored by the principal in each school and appropriate Inclusive Student Services team members (district staff) who have access to IEPs to ensure consistency and accountability.

In addition, an IEP may be developed for a student who has not been formally identified as exceptional, but who requires a special education program and/or services. In these cases, an IEP is required when the student regularly requires accommodations for instructional or assessment purposes and requires the use of Special Equipment Amount (SEA) equipment but is not identified through IPRC. It is important to note that accommodations for students are part of inclusive programming and an IEP is not required to implement.

As per PPM 156, a transition plan is provided for each student who is identified. The Transition Plan template is built into the IEP software to ensure it is completed each year for each student. Teams within the DDSB work collaboratively with the student (as appropriate), parent(s)/guardian(s), professional service staff involved with the student and relevant community agencies to develop and implement transition plans. The DDSB Transition Guide (Appendix I) provides school teams with guidance on transition planning. Additional resources have also been shared with Special Education Resource Teachers (SERT)s that are available from our SEAC partner organizations including, for example, Easter Seals and Autism Ontario.

Resolution of Disputes Related to the IEP

The collaborative process is key to successful programming for students; therefore, every effort is made to resolve differences through the joint efforts of parent(s)/guardian(s) and school staff. Differences of opinion around the content of the IEP are mediated at the school level. The Special Education Resource Teachers (SERT) and Special Education Instructional Facilitators are available to assist with this process should it be necessary. In the event of unresolved concerns, parent(s)/guardian(s) and school staff work with the System Lead and/or the Superintendent of Inclusive Student Services to address concerns.

Results of the Ministry of Education's IEP Review

No Ministry review was conducted in the 2024-2025 school year.

PROVINCIAL AND DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS IN ONTARIO

SECTION B – Standard 11

Standard 11: Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario

The purpose of this standard is to provide the public with information about the Provincial and Demonstration Schools that are operated for students who are deaf, blind, or deafblind, or who have severe learning disabilities, which may include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Provincial Schools and Demonstration Schools

Provincial Schools and Provincial Demonstration Schools are operated by the Ministry of Education and are accessed through an application process that is initiated collaboratively between parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student's school. Provincial and Demonstration Schools provide alternative education placement and educational supports for students who are deaf, blind, deafblind or who have severe learning disabilities. Admittance to a Provincial School is determined by the Provincial Schools Admission Committee in accordance with the requirements set out in Regulation 296.

Provincial Schools provide lodging at Deaf and Blind Day Programs at Sir James Whitney School only. Transportation to Provincial Schools for students is provided by school boards. Busing is provided and shared with the Durham Catholic District School Board. When necessary, an attendant will be provided, and this cost will also be shared between the Durham Catholic District School Board and Durham District School Board.

All students require an Identification Placement and Review (IPRC) meeting conducted at the child's local school board. Programs at provincial schools are tailored to the needs of the individual students and:

- are delivered by specially trained teachers
- follow the Ontario curriculum and alternative expectations as outlined in the Individual Education Plans (IEP)
- offer a full range of programs at both elementary and secondary level.

Additionally, Provincial Schools provide resource and outreach services. These programs include consultation, workshops, on-line learning and early intervention programs. A referral process is in place for deaf, blind or deafblind students to be seen by resource consultants.

Provincial Schools for The Blind and Deaf

W. Ross Macdonald School (English) is located in Brantford and Centre Jules-Léger (French) in Ottawa provide an alternative placement for blind, low vision and deafblind students. Programs at Provincial Schools are designed to help blind or low vision or deafblind students to develop independent learning, living skills and self-sufficiency.

W. Ross Macdonald also provides:

- a provincial resource centre for blind, low vision and deafblind students
- support to local school boards through consultation and the provision of special learning materials (eg. Braille materials, audiotapes, and larger print materials)
- direct support to pre-school deafblind children and their families.

Provincial Schools for the Deaf

The following Provincial Schools offer services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students:

Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf in Belleville (serving eastern Ontario), Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf in Milton (serving central and northern Ontario), Robarts School for the Deaf in London (serving western Ontario), Centre Jules-Léger in Ottawa (serving francophone students and families throughout Ontario). These schools provide alternative placement for deaf students from kindergarten through secondary. Programs provide opportunities to acquire and develop language, literacy, numeracy, and inquiry skills in American Sign Language (ASL) and English or French and:

- provide rich and supportive bilingual/bicultural education environments which facilitate learning and social development through American Sign Language (ASL) and English or French
- develop appreciation of various cultures including ASL culture.

Demonstration Schools for Students with Learning Disabilities

The Provincial Demonstration Schools provide lodging programs during the week and travel home on weekends for about 150 students with learning disabilities. There are four demonstration schools in Ontario. The language of instruction at the Amethyst (London), Sagonaska (Belleville) and Trillium (Milton) is English; at Centre Jules-Léger, instruction is in French. The length of stay at the Provincial Demonstration Schools is one year in a highly specialized and resourced special program. Since Provincial Demonstration Schools are to act as a resource to school boards rather than to function as a separate education system, every effort is made to help the student return to the school in their local community as soon as possible. Transition planning with the community school board is key to this process.

Statistics on the number of Durham District School Board students who are currently attending Provincial and Demonstration Schools:

Table 6 - Statistics on DDSB Students Currently Attending Provincial and Demonstration Schools

Sagonaska	4
Trillium	0
Sir James Whitney	6
W. Ross MacDonald	8 – 6 blind low vision, 2 deafblind
Centre Jules-Léger	0

Provincial Demonstration Schools

Table 7 - List of Provincial Demonstration Schools and Contact Information

Amethyst School (Western and Northwestern areas of the province.)	1090 Highbury Ave., London, Ontario N5Y 4V9	Phone #: (519)453-4408 Fax #: (519)453-7943
Sagonaska School (Eastern and Northeastern areas of the province.)	350 Dundas St. W. Belleville, Ontario K8P 1B2	Phone #: (613)967-2830 Fax #: (613)967-2482
Trillium School (Central and Mid-northern areas of the province.)	347 Ontario St. S. Milton, Ontario L9T	Phone #: (905)878-8428 Fax #: (905)878-7540
Centre Jules-Léger (Central Jules-Léger provides French language programs and services for French- speaking students with severe learning disabilities across	281 Avenue Lanark Ottawa, Ontario K1V 6A6	Phone #: (613)761-9300 Fax #: (613)761-9301 ATS #: (613)761-9302

Provincial Schools

Table 8 - List of Provincial Schools and Contact Information

The Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf (Serves central and northern Ontario.)	255 Ontario St. S. Milton, Ontario L9T	Phone #: (905)878-2851 Fax #: (905)878-1354
The Robarts School for the Deaf (Serves western Ontario.)	1090 Highbury Ave., London, Ontario N5Y 4V9	Phone #: (519)453-4400 Fax #: (519)453-7943
The Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf (Serves eastern Ontario.)	350 Dundas St. W. Belleville, Ontario K8P 1B2	Phone #: (613)967-2823 Fax #: (613)967-2857
W. Ross Macdonald School for the Blind (serves all of Ontario)	350 Brant Avenue Brantford,	Phone #: (519)759-0730 Toll Free: 1-866-618-9092

SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF

SECTION B - Standard 12

Standard 12: Special Education Staff

The purpose of the standard is to provide specific details on board staff to the Ministry and to the public.

Table 9 Special Education Staff

Special Education Role	2024/25	2025/26	Staff Qualifications/Required
School Based Staff			
Special Education Resource Teachers*	200.5	202.5	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Special Education Class Teachers*	284.0	284.0	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Educational Assistants – EAI*	914.0	914.4	Secondary School Diploma
Educational Assistants – EAII*	26.0	26.0	College Certificate/CYW or Equivalent
Language Acquisition Support Worker	1.0	1.0	Lived experience within the Deaf community, Fluency in ASL/SLIC Level 4
Inclusive Student Services Department Staff			
Senior Manager and Clinical Lead Psychological Services	1.0	1.0	Doctorate of Psychology
Manager of Psychological Services	0.0	1.0	Doctorate of Psychology
Senior Manager and Clinical Lead Social Work and Attendance Services	1.0	1.0	Masters of Social Work
Senior Manager and Clinical Lead Speech Language and Hearing Services	1.0	1.0	Masters of Speech Language
System Leads – Inclusive Student Services	2.0	3.0	Special Education Specialist and/or Ontario Principals Council Special Education for Administrators (SEAQP), PQP2
Inclusive Technology Trainers (SEA)	2.5	2.5	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Interpreters	8.0	10.0	Completion of Accredited Interpreter Training

Intervenors	10.0	8.0	Completion of Accredited Intervenor Training
Itinerant Teachers – Hearing Resource	7.0	7.0	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Itinerant Teachers – Vision Resource	5.0	5.0	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Instructional Facilitators - Seconded Teachers	14.5	14.5	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Psychological Associates	5.4	5.4	Masters of Psychology, Licensed with CPO
Psychologists/Clinical Supervisors	4.0	4.0	Doctorate of Psychology, Licensed with CPO
Psychometrists (incl. RBAs)	23.8	23.8	Masters of Psychology
Senior Social Worker	1.0	1.0	Masters of Social Work
Social Worker/Attendance Counsellors	26.0	26.0	Masters of Social Work
Senior Speech Language Pathologist	1.0	1.0	Masters of Speech Language Pathology
Speech Language Pathologists	26.0	26.0	Masters of Speech Language Pathology
Child and Youth Support Workers	7.0	7.0	College Certificate/CYW or Equivalent
Work Education & Transition Coordinators	2.0	2.0	Completion of related post- secondary program
Superintendent of Inclusive and Equitable Education – Inclusive Student Services, ECPP, Mental Health & Well-Being	1.0	1.0	Masters of Education, SOQP
Education Community Partner Programs (ECPP) and Care and Treatment Education Programs (CTEP) Staffing			
ECPP/CTEP Classroom Teachers	50.0	50.0	B.Ed, Inclusive Education or Special Education AQ preferred.
ECPP/CTEP Administrators	2.0	2.0	PQP2
Resource Staff - Contract			
Audiologist	1.0	1.0	Masters Degree - Audiology
Orientation and Mobility Personnel	0.5	0.5	Degree & Certificate in Orientation and Mobility

*Includes additional funding such as Student Support Funding supported positions

PROFESSIONAL (STAFF) DEVELOPMENT

SECTION B – Standard 13

Standard 13: Professional (Staff) Development

The purpose of the standard is to provide details of the board's professional development plans to the Ministry and to the public.

Foundations for Professional Learning at the DDSB

Meaningful interdepartmental and interdisciplinary collaboration that centres Indigenous rights, human rights, and equity in our planning and facilitating of professional learning are critical foundations to upholding our responsibilities to our students and community.

To address ableism, we need to uncover, name, challenge and disrupt biases, barriers, structures and practices that impede the achievement and well-being of our learners, especially those who are discriminated against and disadvantaged in and by our systems and structures. It is through an examination of our practices that we will ensure that we better serve all our learners and support our staff.

All professional learning will reinforce and support our individual and shared organizational duty bearer roles and responsibilities under the Human Rights Policy and procedures to:

- promote and protect human rights (including centering dignity and respect, upholding the rights of the child and acting in the best interest of the child in ways that are not discriminatory and that prevent harm)
- identify, prevent and address human rights barriers and harm in schools/classrooms, curriculum, learning/training, operational and employment policies, procedures, processes, practices, workplaces, etc.
- respond to and address barriers and issues that rights holders experience, including accommodating human rights related needs
- learn about human rights principles and how they apply in our day-to-day jobs
- address human rights issues and complaints and correct discrimination.

To support this work, professional learning will integrate and apply the principles and requirements of:

- the Indigenous Education Policy and procedures
- the Human Rights Policy, procedures, and accountability framework
- the Anti-Oppression strategy and the 2SLGBTQIA+ Compendium of Action to support students, staff and families
- Inclusive Design, Universal Design for Learning, accessibility and differentiated instruction, assessment and evaluation
- Positive School Climates
- Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy
- Compendium of Action for Black Student Success 2.0.

Inclusive design and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) are key foundations for learning. Professional learning takes place in a number of formats and with multiple entry points for staff. These include working alongside educators within classrooms through an applied practice coaching model, large group delivery of professional learning, and ongoing networked learning of professionals using the Critically Conscious Practitioner Inquiry (CPPI) model.

In addition, professional learning will also consider Student Census, student achievement data, School Climate and Workforce Census data to better understand and address barriers, disparities, and disproportionate experiences, opportunities and outcomes for students and staff.

Professional Learning to Support Shifts Towards Anti-Oppressive Practices

Meaningful collaboration, focusing on Indigenous rights, and human rights and equity are essential for planning and facilitating professional learning. These approaches help us uphold our responsibilities to students and the community.

To address ableism, we must identify, challenge, and disrupt biases, barriers, structures, and practices that hinder the achievement and well-being of learners, especially those who experience systemic discrimination and disadvantage.

By examining our practices, we can better serve all learners. Professional learning reinforces our roles and responsibilities, both individually and organizationally. Engaging in learning throughout the school year connects us to students' experiences in growing knowledge and skills and support continuous reflection on and improvement of services for students. Inclusive Student Services staff have access to professional learning opportunities provided, both job-embedded and session based, within the DDSB and external to the board.

With a focus on learning at all levels of the organization, the overall goal of the Inclusive Student Services professional learning plan is to support classroom educators, school leaders (Administrators and Special Education Resource Teachers), support staff, and Inclusive Student Services staff to provide them with the information, materials, and skills necessary to implement and support differentiated programming for students with special education strengths and needs. Student learning is the core of all programs within the DDSB. It is important that, as our students grow, so do the professionals supporting their programs and services.

Supporting Staff Well-Being in the Care for Students

Care for staff well-being is embedded in both the DDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan and Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan. The following is shared as an example of professional learning engaged in June 2025 in setting foundations for the 2025/2026 school year;

Staying Steady in Complex Caring Work, professional learning for professionals in classroom support staff roles (ASL Interpreter, Educational Assistant and Intervenor), is an example of how these commitments have been actioned responsive to staff feedback. The information fliers for these sessions, tailored to staff working in elementary and secondary schools, follows within this section of the Plan. **Staying Steady in Complex and Caring Work** is a session focused on staff well-being as we recognize the link between staff well-being and conditions for learning for students. Hosted at sites across the district, Françoise Mathieu from TEND Academy guided a session that gave opportunity to pause, take stock, and connect with practical. The session explored realistic strategies to protect energy

without stepping away from care for students. Françoise's message, livestreamed to the sites, was wrapped by a welcome and guided reflective close by team members supporting students in mental health related roles.

Supporting School Teams

Regular communications such as the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) e-Bulletin (Appendix J), help support staff with information related to supports and services for students as well as professional learning.

Within Team Mentoring

Inclusive Student Services teams have a variety of in-team structures to provide team members with consultation and mentorship. For example:

- Clinical Supervisors within Psychological Services provide 1:1 and small group consultation. Clinical Supervisors meet regularly as a group together with the Senior Manager and Clinical Lead and Manager of Psychological Services for collaborative revision of processes, emergent service trends and resources considerations.
- New for this school year Lead roles for Teachers of the Blind Low Vision and Teachers of Deaf Hard of Hearing, five-year leadership secondment roles, were introduced to concretely structure mentorship for educators new to the team inclusive of in-school opportunities for student program planning. This augments similar roles, Senior Social Worker and Senior Speech Language Pathologist (new September 2024) as part of our team structures.

Focused Working Groups

The Speech Language (S-LP) working groups, as example:

• Reviewed and updated the team's low-tech and mid-tech Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) tools and created a resource loaning library for S-LPs so that they can borrow and trial a variety of AAC tools with students in the classroom.

• Current assessment tools have been reviewed and outdated tests have been purged. New assessment tools, which are more strengths-based, dynamic and neuro-affirmative, are being trialed. Following the trial, feedback will be provided to the whole group to determine next steps.

Collaborations and Community

Inclusive Student Services and Innovation teams recently collaborated with GrandviewKids for the first inaugural IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility) conference. The IDEA conference was a dynamic day of sessions on a wide-range of topics supporting learning for those in the department and professionals school roles including Special Education Resource Teachers and school administrators.

Mental health service providing teams, including Social Work and Psychological Services, participated in learning sessions with provincial and national leaders in identity-affirmative system planning and anti-discrimination. We thank leaders including Fae Johnstone, Executive Director of Wisdom2Action, and Nicole Bonnie, Equity Consultant, for facilitating discussions that helped us strengthen our understandings and skills.

The following reflections highlight some of the learning and the related impacts to both professional growth, service shifts and direct links to supports for students.

"*I have learned so much in my first year as a SERT. The learning curve was steep... Having an Administrator to work alongside, collaboratively plan with and encourage me has been one of the most beneficial things that has helped me this year. Each member of the ISS team has shared their knowledge of their own field to help build perspective, assist with programming, and further my understanding of various learning needs. Finally, being able to collaborate with colleagues to understand processes, navigate meetings, and share opinions has been immeasurable.*" - First Year Special Education Resource Teacher

"*I had the opportunity to attend a PD at the Geneva Center for Autism where I was able to attend a variety of workshops centering autistic voices as well as training on Trauma Informed Practices for Speech Language Pathologists... I came away with new perspectives, and concrete tools to create more supportive and inclusive learning environments for the students that I support. This learning reframed how I think about students' perspectives and voice that ultimately helps me to support relationship building, connection and environments that foster a sense of value and belonging for all learners...*" - Autism Resource Team Member/Speech Language Pathologist

"*...Several speech and language pathologists had the opportunity to attend the virtual PD Trauma-Lens to Speech Language Pathology Practice offered by Anna Rupert (Dr.PH-student) and Chiara Frigeni (M.Ed., RP) from the George Hull Centre for Children and Families. This may be the most impactful PD of any I have attended to date. Interacting with our students, their families, and often many others using trauma-informed approaches is critical to build trust, create a safe and supportive environment, and help individuals establish meaningful connections... This PD provided a thorough look into what trauma might look like in different individuals, the cerebral structures affected when exposed to trauma, and how these changes might present themselves in terms of behaviour, interpersonal abilities, and academic performance.*" - Speech Language Pathologist

"...T*he training addressed the critical need to shift away from a deficit-based model and our implicit biases towards a more compassionate, holistic approach when we are working with students and their families, whether it be an assessment, intervention, or programming support*..." - Speech Language Pathologist

"*The training with Fae and Nicole specifically helped highlight the impact language has when working to support individuals/students/families. It was insightful to see how the way we approach these conversations are so connected to the relationship that also gets built between us as social workers and the people we work alongside...*" - Social Worker

Join us for a morning focused on your well-being.

June 6th

Staying Steady in Complex, Caring Work

Real Tools to Stay Grounded

Professional Development for **ELEMENTARY** Classroom Support Staff

Educational Assistants, ASL Interpreters, and Intervenors

Françoise Mathieu from TEND Academy will guide us through a session that gives opportunity to pause, take stock, and connect with practical tools to help you stay steady in the middle of it all. We will explore realistic strategies to protect your energy without stepping away from your care. Françoise's message, livestreamed to the sites, will be wrapped by a welcome and guided reflective close by team members supporting students in mental health related roles.

MORNING 9:00 – 11:30am • MyPD Course Code #50192

Hosted at sites across the district. Register through MyPD for one of the host sites.
Registration required for all permanent and LTA team members in role of: ASL Interpreter, Educational Assistant or Intervenor.

AJAX

SCHOOL LIBRARY	MyPD#
Bolton C Falby PS	44388
Eagle Ridge PS	44389
Rosemary Brown PS	44396
Terry Fox PS	44397

OSHAWA

SCHOOL LIBRARY	MyPD#
Elsie MacGill PS	44390
Glen Street PS	44391
Jeanne Sauvé PS	44392
Village Union PS	44398

PICKERING

SCHOOL LIBRARY	MyPD#
Biidaasige Mandamin PS	44409
Frenchman's Bay PS	44387

NORTH

SCHOOL LIBRARY	MyPD#
R.H. Cornish PS	44395

WHITBY

SCHOOL LIBRARY	MyPD#
John Dryden PS	44393
Julie Payette PS	44394
Whitby Shores PS	44399

AFTERNOON

Focus on Transition Planning

An opportunity, through preplanning and agreement with your Principal and/or Senior Manager, to prepare supports related to student transitions.

*Registration by Site / Each Site Max 50 Participants

DDSB Ignite Learning

Join us for a morning focused on your well-being.

June 26th

Staying Steady in Complex, Caring Work

Real Tools to Stay Grounded

Professional Development for **SECONDARY** Classroom Support Staff

Educational Assistants, ASL Interpreters, and Intervenors

Françoise Mathieu from TEND Academy will guide us through a session that gives opportunity to pause, take stock, and connect with practical tools to help you stay steady in the middle of it all. We will explore realistic strategies to protect your energy without stepping away from your care. Françoise's message, livestreamed to the sites, will be wrapped by a welcome and guided reflective close by team members supporting students in mental health related roles.

MORNING 9:00 – 11:30am • MyPD Course Code #50193

Hosted at sites across the district. Register through MyPD for one of the host sites.
Registration required for all permanent and LTA team members in role of: ASL Interpreter, Educational Assistant or Intervenor.

SCHOOL LIBRARY	MyPD#
Eastdale CVI	44400
R.S. McLaughlin CVI	44401
Pickering HS	44402
Pine Ridge SS	44403
Sinclair SS	44404
Uxbridge SS	44405

*Registration by Site / Each Site Max 50 Participants

AFTERNOON

Focus on Transition Planning

An opportunity, through preplanning and agreement with your Principal and/or Senior Manager, to prepare supports related to student transitions.

DDSB
Ignite Learning

SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT ALLOCATION (SEA)

SECTION B – Standard 14

Standard 14: Equipment

The purpose of this standard is to inform the Ministry, board staff members and other professionals, and parent(s)/caregiver(s) about the provision of individualized equipment for some students with special education strengths and needs.

The Durham District School Board is committed to ensuring that students with special education interests, strengths and needs have the personalized equipment necessary to access their educational programs. Student equipment needs are identified through the Inclusive Student Services school team or our School Based Rehabilitation Services partner GrandviewKids. Recommendations are received from board professional personnel and community professional practitioners. Professional assessments can come from:

- Audiologist
- Optometrist/Ophthalmologist
- Occupational Therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Psychologist
- Psychological Associate
- Speech-Language Pathologist
- Specialist Teachers of Students who are Blind/Low Vision, Deafblind or Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Physician
- Other regulated health professionals as appropriate.

There are two types of Specialized Equipment Allocation* (SEA) claims:

- SEA Per Pupil Amount (computer hardware, software and related equipment)
- SEA Claims-based Amounts (i.e., lifts, Braille, furniture, sensory equipment, etc.).

A SEA recommendation is completed by School-based Rehabilitation Services clinicians and/or board clinical staff who submit applications on behalf of the student. All SEA recommendations are uploaded into our central database with accompanying support documentation to be reviewed by the board's System Lead of Inclusive Student Services identified as the SEA Authorizer, for approval and processing. Trials for computer technology are conducted to illustrate a significant discrepancy between performance with and without such equipment. Sometimes, other equipment may be trialed by a clinician to determine if it meets student needs in advance of filing a SEA recommendation.

The Ministry of Education allocates to school boards, SEA revenue generated from the SEA per Pupil Amount and SEA Claims-based Amounts for expenses exceeding $5000.

The board is responsible for SEA approved equipment costs equal to and less than $5000. The DDSB outlines for staff the SEA Claim processes. Included in the documentation are:

- the process for submitting claims;

- the roles and responsibilities of individuals submitting claims;
- meeting the claim requirement;
- processing the order;
- care and safety of the equipment and
- ensuring equipment maintenance.

Funding was updated and retitled to Specialized Equipment Allocation (SEA) for the start of the 2024-2025 school year. Changes to the funding structure are reflected in this Plan. The Ministry of Education directives for SEA are posted publicly by the Ministry of Education annually.

ACCESSIBILITY OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS

SECTION B – Standard 15

Standard 15: Accessibility

The purpose of the standard is to provide details on the Ignite Accessibility, Multi-Year Accessibility Plan previously submitted to the Ministry.

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) commits to protect, uphold and promote human rights and to prevent discrimination and discriminatory barriers in all DDSB learning and working environments. Protecting, upholding and promoting human rights are necessary to meet the mandate of the DDSB and to create and foster a culture of care where students and employees can thrive and have a sense of safety, well-being, engagement and belonging. The DDSB is committed to the principles and practices of accessibility and inclusion to foster full community participation and integration and address ableism.

The Durham District School Boards DDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2022-2026) that informs our next steps for growing inclusion and accessibility. The Action Plan goes beyond school buildings and includes recommendations to enhance accessibility in key areas across the organization. The plan outlines the intentions of the Board to meet its obligations under the AODA and aligns with the Ontario Human Rights Code. The DDSB undertakes to continually improve accessibility and to provide equitable access for all in accordance with the AODA.

The DDSB is committed to meeting its procedural and substantive duty to accommodate under the Ontario Human Rights Code to the point of undue hardship to support students' right to meaningfully access education without discrimination. This includes collaboratively exploring accommodation options and providing appropriate individualized accommodations that respect dignity and maximize integration and participation.

Existing schools are renovated to improve accessibility during all renovation projects and as required to meet student needs for access. In the event that an existing facility cannot accommodate the needs of student(s), the DDSB is committed to providing alternate accommodations to meet student needs. New construction incorporates AODA requirements, principles of universal design and meets government accessibility standards. DDSB includes a number of features to promote accessibility such as: interior signage includes Braille, elevator access to upper levels, contrasting colour nosing strip at every stair tread, level entry at all entrances/exits, power door operators at front door and on universal washrooms, barrier free washrooms, barrier free drinking fountains and strobe fire alarm lights.

Inclusive Student Services works closely with other departments to meet the needs of individual students through implementations of accommodations and goals outlined in Individual Education Plans. Planning is also underway on learning and professional development to enhance awareness and understanding of ableism and accessibility barriers.

TRANSPORTATION

SECTION B – Standard 16

Standard 16: Transportation

The purpose of this standard is to provide details of the board's transportation policies to the Ministry and to the public.

Independent or family-guided student travel (e.g., walking, rolling) to and from school is prioritized where it is safe and practical. Durham Student Transportation Services, in collaboration with the Durham District School Board, assesses the best mode of transportation, where applicable, for each student based on their strengths and needs, while promoting independence and inclusion.
Accessible transportation is planned on an individual basis to support each student based on the least restrictive and most inclusive plan for transitions between home and school. Transportation planning is reviewed on an ongoing basis (minimum annually or upon changes to the skills and accommodation considerations) of a student. Requests for accessible transportation require substantiation of accommodation needs within a student's programming that are supported with documentation provided by a registered health professional when health / medically related.

When transportation is provided by the School Board and Durham Student Transportation Services, it is considered an extension of the school day and supports our goal of fostering independence. Activities during bus rides may be integrated into the student's learning program and recorded in their Individual Education Plan, similar to other classroom activities.

Fostering Independence

Positive experiences during transportation times goes beyond the movement from one location to another. For students utilizing student transportation, planning is an essential aspect of a holistic, student-centered educational strategy. This strategy includes establishing a structured framework that prioritizes safety, inclusion, and the cultivation of life skills. Intentional planning of transportation skills, building independence as individually defined for the student, is an essential element for student development; we foster an environment conducive to growth, making it a key part of a student's educational journey.

Assessing a student's readiness for bus independence, setting incremental goals, and designing systematic educational experiences tailored to individual skill development help facilitate transitions and prepare students for real-world challenges. Effective transitional planning for bus independence outlines the necessary daily, short-term, and long-term changes in programs and pathways, detailing the actions required now and in the future to achieve the highest level of self-reliance.

Durham Student Transportation Services (DSTS) is fully supportive of an integrated student transportation system for all students. As with all students, self-propelling (e.g. walking, rolling, etc.) to school is the first option where it is safe and practical to do so. Students with special education strengths and needs may be transported on traditional buses and specialized transportation will be utilized in situations where, due to the nature of the exceptionality, accommodation needs or safety concerns that cannot be mitigated, appropriate alternative accessible transportation is required because the features of the vehicle are more suitable to the student's needs.

Durham Student Transportation Services may make specialized transportation arrangements for students who have been approved, such as:

- Having a documented approved physical, mental or emotional exceptionality that prevents them from safely getting to and from their designated school.
- Placement in a specialized program or contained classroom may qualify the student.

Students accessing programming through Education, Community Partnership Programs (ECPP/Grove School) may be entitled to transportation. Parent(s)/guardian(s) can connect with agency staff who will speak to Grove School administration.

Students attending Provincial Schools will be set up on transportation that is coordinated centrally in conjunction with the Ministry of Education. The Provincial school will be able to provide further details for students that are staying in residence.

The following safety procedures are in place:

- All school bus drivers must be provided First Aid Training and are trained as well on the proper use of an EpiPen.
- School buses are equipped with a two-way radio and contact with the Operator's main dispatcher is maintained at all times during scheduled runs. School Principals or a designate complete bus safety documentation to ensure school bus drivers and Durham Student Transportation Services are aware of students that require any special care or strategies for a safe school bus ride.
- Students are issued a DSTS Transportation Card that they scan when boarding and exiting the bus. Each bus is equipped with mTransport technology to adhere to the route schedule and bus manifest in mTransport.

SEAC
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SECTION C

The Board's Special Education Advisory Committee

The purpose of this standard is to provide details of the operation of the board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) to the Ministry and to give members of the public information to which they are entitled.

In accordance with Education Act Regulation 464/97, every district school board shall establish a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

The DDSB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is committed to working in partnership with the staff and resources of the board to assure quality educational services for all students.

The roles and responsibilities of SEAC are as follows:

- make recommendations to the board with respect to any matter affecting the establishment, development, and delivery of Special Education programs and services for exceptional students within the board;
- participate in the board's annual review of its Special Education Plan;
- participate in the development of the board's annual budget for Special Education; and
- review the financial statements of the board as they relate to Special Education

In Durham, our Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) helps the Board protect the rights of students with special learning needs. SEAC provides information, advice and assistance to parent(s)/guardian(s) whose children may require additional support. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may contact their child(ren)'s school(s) or members of SEAC if seeking further information.

"I am honoured to support parents to advocate for their child and help them navigate the system. Connections come in many ways and can include conversation, discussion role play or connection to understand their experience." sensRAneb, Autism Ontario Durham Region

Information about SEAC is made available to families and the community in a number of ways. These include, but are not limited to: publication and annual update to the SEAC brochure, inclusion of SEAC in the Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education, SEAC webpage on the DDSB website and through social media updates. Information includes members' names, affiliation and how to make contact.

The DDSB SEAC Obligations and Expectations document provides further details about SEAC and guidelines for how the Committee works together.

The DDSB SEAC Brochure is included in this section for information regarding:

- names and affiliations of members
- meeting times, place, format
- nomination process
- members' contact information
- SEAC meeting overview

Meetings are held monthly from September to June. SEAC meetings are available to the public through livestreaming currently accessed through the DDSB YouTube channel.

- Meeting dates are published on the DDSB electronic calendar and promoted using DDSB social media accounts. Meetings usually occur on the first Thursday of the month.

As a bi-annual commitment, SEAC will next survey parent(s)/caregiver(s) in Spring 2025 to help inform the work of the committee and the district. The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) will use results from a parent/caregiver survey (May/June 2025) to inform actions supporting family engagement and consultation to the district on areas of strengths and improvement including communication.

"As a SEAC representative, one of my most fulfilling roles is using my lived experience to help other families navigate the system and advocate effectively for their children."
Eva – SEAC Chair and Member for Association for Bright Children (ABC)

SEAC

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DDSB
Ignite Learning

What is SEAC?

Under Ontario's Education Act, every student is entitled to a program which meets their needs. In Durham, our Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) helps the Board protect the rights of students with special learning needs. SEAC provides information, advice and assistance to parents/guardians whose children may require additional support. SEAC advises and makes recommendations to the Board concerning the establishment and development of special education programs and services.

Who Are Exceptional Students?

Exceptional Students are those whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that the student needs a specialized placement or support as identified by the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.)
The mission of the Durham District School Board's Special Education program is to provide a range of programs, placements and services for students with special needs in a supportive environment which enables them to develop to their full potential. Our on-going commitment is to provide the structures and support each student needs to foster their growth and development in programs which promote integration and independence as defined for each student based on their strengths and needs.

What happens at a SEAC Meeting?

SEAC meetings are a forum for SEAC members to provide advice and discussion of Board programs and support services for exceptional pupils.
Meetings follow a formal format including:

- Review of Minutes
- Presentations
- Current issues and initiatives in Special Education
- Committee Reports by members
- Board Reports: a) Trustees b) Staff
- Correspondence and questions

You are welcome to attend!

New for the 2023-2024 school year: Members of the public who wish to attend SEAC meetings in person are required to pre-register as space is limited. To pre-register, visit SEAC Calendar - Agendas and Minutes and select the meeting date you wish to attend. A short registration form will be available for completion. Once pre-registration capacity has been reached, the form will be closed, and public observation will be available through the livestream only.

The Committee meets at:
DDSB Education Centre
400 Taunton Road East, Whitby
6:30 p.m. (usually the 1st Thursday of the month)

The committee is composed of member representatives from:

- Association for Bright Children (ABC)
- Autism Ontario – Durham Chapter
- Durham District School Board (Trustees)
- Durham Down Syndrome Association
- Easter Seals Ontario
- GrandviewKids' Family Advisory Council
- Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region
- Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC)
- Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support
- Members at Large Elizabeth Daniel and Jessica Wells

Association for Bright Children (ABC)

This association helps parents advocate for their bright and gifted children. In co-operation with the Durham District School Board, ABC's Durham Chapter provides information and support to member and non-member parents.

Contact:
Eva Kyriakides (SEAC Chair)
bill.eva.k@rogers.com
abcontario.ca

Autism Ontario-Durham Chapter

Autism Ontario is dedicated to increasing public awareness about autism and the day-to-day issues faced by individuals with autism, their families, and the professionals with whom they interact. The association and its chapters share common goals of providing information and education, supporting research, and advocating for programs and services for the autism community.

Contact:
sensaRAneb Burrell
anactiveparent@hotmail.com
Autismontario.com

Durham Down Syndrome Association

This is an organization of parents, professionals and others striving to improve the quality of life for those with Down Syndrome. While seeking to broaden public awareness, this association serves as a support to new families and as a resource to parents/guardians for information regarding facilities and programs available for persons with Down Syndrome.

Contact:
Tara Culley
SEAC@ddsa.ca
ddsa.ca

Easter Seals Ontario

Easter Seals Ontario provides programs and services to children and youth with physical disabilities across Ontario to help them achieve greater independence, accessibility and integration.

Contact:
Allyson Earner
allyson.earner@ontariotechu.ca
easterseals.org

GrandviewKids' Family Advisory Council

The GrandviewKids' Family Advisory Council (FAC) is a group of parents and caregivers who volunteer to help improve the planning and delivery of services at GrandviewKids. They provide guidance on system-level issues that impact many families and contribute to program and service design at the Centre.

Contact:
Seana Haley
seanahaley@gmail.com

Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region

The Learning Disabilities Association Durham Region's mission is to advocate, support and educate the Durham community about learning disabilities and to enable persons with learning disabilities to reach their full potential.
To achieve this we provide:

- Monthly Speaker Series for all
- Resource Facilitation for all
- Advocacy Support for members
- Public Awareness Activities

Contact:
Rowin Jarvis
rowin@ldadr.on.ca
ldadr.on.ca

Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC)

Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC) is a provincial parent organization providing advocacy for children, youth and young adults who are blind or have low vision.

Contact:
Charmain Brown
charmainbrown@hotmail.com

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support

Established in 2020, the Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support supports Black caregivers of children and adults with disability, providing families with a safe place to network, build connections, problem-solve, share resources and to become less isolated. We believe that "it takes a village" to meet the needs of our families and our focus is to educate them on their rights and responsibilities, to enlighten them about the services available to them and to empower them to be strong advocates for their loved ones.

Contact:
Jenn McLaughlin
SawubonaACS.org

Members at Large:

Elizabeth Daniel:
jason_liz@sympatico.ca
My role as member at large is to organize information that is presented and be available to interact with anyone who feels a non-affiliated partner is a good representative, or is looking for a basic starting point in connecting to information and resources. I have flexibility in providing advocacy work to reflect who or what is top priority at any given time. I hope to bring strong communication skills, personal and professional background to the table and provide valuable feedback in shaping the progression of special education services.

Jessica Wells
jessica.carol.wells@gmail.com
My role as a member at large is to contribute to meaningful discussions and work collaboratively with fellow committee members to enhance support for students with special needs and their families. I am passionate about the success of all children. My experience as a mother and a professional have provided me with insight into the challenges and opportunities within the special education system.

Durham District School Board:
905-666-5500
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ddsb.ca

Michelle Arseneaullt ,Trustee: 905-391-4201

Donna Edwards, Trustee: 905-426-7045

Kelly Miller, Trustee: 905-706-3817

If you would like more information on the Special Education Advisory Committee or Special Education Services in Durham, please call your local school.

Inclusive
STUDENT SERVICES

DDSB
Ignite Learning

COORDINATION OF SERVICES WITH OTHER MINISTRIES

SECTION D

Coordination of Services with Other Ministries: Education and Community Partnership Programs (ECPP)

The purpose of the standard is to provide the Ministry and the public with details of the board's strategies to ensure smooth transitions for students with special education strengths and needs who are entering or leaving a school.

The responsibility for ensuring successful admission or transfer of students from one program to another is collaboratively shared by all staff involved with the student at school and board levels with input from parent(s)/guardian(s).

Education and Community Partnership Programs (ECPP)

Education and Community Partnership Programs are an integrated part of Ontario's education system. Education and Community Partnership Programs provide critical support to meet the needs of children and youth who cannot attend school due to their primary need for care, treatment and/or rehabilitation services and facilitate transitions to future educational success.

ECPPs are voluntary collaborative partnerships between Ontario district school boards and government-approved facilities such as children's mental health agencies, hospitals or youth detention centres. District school boards provide the educational component ("Education Program") while facilities provide the care and/or treatment or rehabilitation ("ECPP Services"). Children and youth in these programs may have:

- one or more exceptionality and represent the highest needs with the exceptionality
- physical or mental health needs requiring them to be hospitalized
- be in conflict with the law or at risk of being in conflict with the law
- possible or diagnosed mental health or psychiatric needs
- severe emotional and behavioural needs and/or
- addictions

Resource: Ministry of Education - Guidelines for Approval and Provision of an Education and Community Partnership Program (ECPP)

Education and Community Partnership Programs in the Durham District School Board (DDSB)

Under the school title of Grove School, the DDSB has been a committed lead educational partner for Education Community Partnership Programs (formerly Care, Treatment, Custody and Corrections, programs).

Grove School provides a school name and structure for DDSB teachers to provide education programs from Kindergarten to Grade 12 for clients of government approved Education and Community Partnership Programs within Durham Region. Grove School programs are based on a collaborative model with community agencies and facilities. Grove has many voluntary collaborative partnerships with children's mental health agencies, hospitals or youth detention centres, which incorporate all aspects of agency and community support, establish clear educational and behavioural goals, and maintain effective classroom time providing treatment or rehabilitation and academic support. Classes are located across Durham Region either on site at a DDSB school or in a separate, segregated location. All ECPP classes enable students to

attend school with the support and treatment offered by an agency or facility.
ECPPs are only for children and youth who cannot attend schools because of their primary need for care, treatment and/or rehabilitation services.

DDSB Education Community Partnership Programs (Grove School) currently supports (May 1, 2025), in collaboration with thirteen agency partners, fifty individual classroom programs within twenty-four sites across the Durham Region. Grove School is among the largest education commitments to the ECPP model provincially.

To receive admission into an ECPP Program, the student is first referred to an agency by:

- a parent/guardian
- the courts
- child welfare
- a medical professional
- the school
- DDSB Professional Support Services

The student must be accepted and become a full-time resident or client of the facility's residential and/or Day Treatment program. Once the referral has been accepted by the agency or facility, their staff complete a Grove School registration form. The client/student is placed on the Grove School register and admitted to the classroom.

A student who is registered in a school hosting an ECPP Program may access the agency or facility classroom on a 'reverse' basis. The host school Principal must make the referral and the agency must approve the placement based upon suitability factors. Accessing the ECPP Program in this manner does not require a change in student registration and the student remains on the host school's register.

DDSB community partnership agreements include requirements for the partner organization to uphold the Human Rights Code, in alignment with the principles of the DDSB Indigenous Education Policy, Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy and responsibilities of all staff as duty bearers.

Supporting Transitions from Education and Community Partnership Programs

Effective planning is especially important for children and youth transitioning out of Education Programs. Effective transition planning support improves the continuity of education and programs and services for children and youth. Gradual integration and reintegration, where appropriate, is an element of the transition planning (e.g. phased integration back to the community day school). Transition plans should be developed by multidisciplinary teams to support a seamless transition out of the ECPP.

The appropriate assessment should occur upon exit from the Education Program to confirm or inform the transition plan for the child or youth. The teacher or designate at the next school setting should have access to information about the child or youth's education and accommodation needs (where applicable) and, as appropriate, attend a multi-disciplinary transition planning meeting.

Complete student records, including achievement of elementary curriculum expectations, secondary credits earned and documentation regarding work completed toward secondary credits, will be inserted into the OSR for the child or youth upon exiting an Education Program. The transition plan should be stored in the OSR folder.

The child or youth is supported by the Education Program staff during the transition period into the appropriate school or post-secondary setting through informal liaison, if possible and appropriate. Until this transition period is completed, the child or youth should remain on the register of the Education Program. If circumstances change and the child or youth should be impacted negatively by the move into program during the transition period, the child or youth may return to the Education Program**.** The Ministry of Education will not concurrently fund the same student on two registers.

The agency or facility initiates the child or youth's exit from an ECP program. Generally, there are three ways a student ceases to be in an Education Program:

- A negotiable and planned move when the student is deemed ready to move on to a community school setting
- A non-negotiable, unplanned move (e.g. court ordered)
- An unplanned move (e.g. the student or parent/guardian unilaterally decides to leave the agency or facility treatment program).

SUBMISSION and AVAILABILITY of PLAN

SECTION E

2024-25 Special Education Plan Checklist *To be replaced with 2025-26 Checklist, provided by Ministry

Please submit to your regional office by July 31, 2024

Table 10 Ministry Provided Checklist

District School Board/School Authority: **Durham District School Board**		
Compliance with *Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans (2000)* reproduced in full in *Special Education in Ontario Kindergarten to Grade 12 Policy and Resource Guide (2017)*	**Report on the provision of Special Education Programs and Services 2023-24**	**Amendments to the 2024-25 Special Education Plan**
Special Education Programs and Services		
Model for Special Education	X	X
Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process	X	X
Special Education Placements Provided by the Board		
Individual Education Plans (IEP)		
Special Education Staff	X	X
Specialized Equipment		X
Transportation for Students with Special Education Needs	X	
Transition Planning		
Roles and Responsibilities	X	
Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities		
Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario	X	X
The Board's Consultation Process	X	
The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)	X	X
Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies	X	X
Educational and Other Assessments	X	X
Coordination of Services with Other Ministries or Agencies	X	
Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings	X	
Staff Development		X
Accessibility (AODA)	X	X
Parent/Caregiver Guide to Special Education IPRC	X	X
Where programs and services have not been provided as outlined in the 2023-24 Special Education Plan, please provide a description of the variance:		

Additional Information:	
Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies for Provision of Services by Regulated Health Professionals, Regulated Social Service Professionals, and Paraprofessionals (PPM 149) posted on school board website.	X
Special education is included in our ongoing self-improvement with respect to the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement.	X

Document:	**Format:**	**Please indicate the URL of the document on your website**
Special Education Plan	X Board Website X Electronic file X Paper Copy	Inclusive Student Services - Special Education Plan
Parent Guide to Special Education	X Board Website X Electronic file	Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) (ddsb.ca)
Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies for Provision of Services by Regulated Health Professionals, Regulated Social Service Professionals, and Paraprofessionals (PPM 149)	X Board Website X Electronic file	Partnership Agreements - DDSB

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) Inclusive Student Services Special Education Plan (the Plan) for 2024-2025 was presented to the Board of Trustees on June 3, 2024. The Plan was approved through motion of the Board of Trustees on June 17, 2024.

Name of Director of Education: Camille Wiliams-Taylor

Signature of Director of Education: June 18, 2024

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Additional Information Available Online Through the DDSB Website

Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies, refer to link below:

Protocol for Collaboration Agreement with External Agencies (PPM 149)

Durham District School Board (DDSB)

Inclusive Student Services

Impact Update

DDSB Ignite Learning

2024-2025 • Issue 1

Informed Consent

Informed Consent for Clinical Services via Inclusive Student Services Staff

With the adoption of DDSB's Human Rights Policy and Indigenous Education Policy, we are invited to examine policies, practices and approaches to ensure that they align with relevant legislation as well as these foundational policies. Core within these policies is voice and choice in education and related services.

Informed consent is a requirement for services provided by Psychological Services, Social Work Services, and Speech and Language Services as part of Inclusive Student Services. These services are provided to help support student mental health, learning and pathways of access to community-based services.

> "I always feel good when students mention feeling a lot safer and more comfortable to open up and express themselves authentically knowing things are confidential and they also have choice over what they feel they can share on their own terms and knowing they are in control."
>
> –Social Worker

Informed consent means you are involved in a conversation with your service provider to support understanding of services offered, the benefits, risks and any alternative courses of action. This connection also provides an opportunity for you to clarify questions and/or concerns. Informed consent leads to the decision to engage or not engage in the service(s) offered.

Before any services are provided, regulated health professionals need to seek and obtain informed consent about the services offered to support a student. This means a conversation with the student, at age of consent, or parent/guardian. It is important that the client understands the services being offered, the anticipated benefit and any risk of participating in the services, and the service provider's obligation to maintain privacy and confidentiality.

When students are seeking direct mental health supports (e.g., counselling) that Social Work and Psychological Services staff provide, students are able to consent to their own service(s), provided that they understand what they are consenting to. While practitioners will continue to seek to involve and clarify permission from parent(s)/ guardian(s), in circumstances where a student wishes to independently initiate service from a member of Social Work and/or Psychological Services their informed consent (with some exceptions) will suffice. The involvement of parent(s)/guardian(s) continues to be foundational to the work we do, and an important component in the work with students. Other clinical services (e.g., assessment, consultation with school-based personnel) require the informed consent of parent(s)/guardian(s).

What is covered through informed consent?

For all our services provided through regulated health professionals, we provide competent services and information, based on assessment and evidence-based interventions. We may collect information from multiple sources, including the Ontario Student Record, academic documents, caregivers and educators who know your child well, and the student themselves. With written permission, we may contact or consult with other professionals who provide services to your child.

Regardless of which services we offer and are agreed to, you and your child have rights to privacy and confidentiality.

There are two key legislations related to informed consent:

Health Care Consent Act

This is the legislation that lays out the rules for how informed consent is obtained in any setting where there is a requirement to consent to treatment. Within the DDSB, that includes any services offered by members of Psychological Services, Speech Language Pathology and Audiology Services, and Social Work. (ontario.ca/laws/statute/96h02_)

"During planning for a significant transition, a parent/caregiver noted that she really appreciated understanding all of the ins and outs, and what information would be shared with the new school. She said that it made her feel better about this transition knowing that she can decide what information about her child is shared and only to those needing the information for planning."

–Psychological Services team member

"Families may have previous experiences with receiving professional services for their child privately or through a community agency. The delivery of these services may differ within the school setting. The informed consent process helps families to better understand the nature of services that their child will receive from school-based professional services and provides them with the opportunity to ask questions."

–Speech Language Pathologist

Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA)

This Act sets out rules for how personal health information is collected, used, and shared. Even though schools are not specifically healthcare settings, we do have many regulated health professionals within our Inclusive Student Services teams. When you provide consent to any services provided by a DDSB clinician, the rules they follow to keep your personal health information confidential are laid out in PHIPA. (ipc.on.ca)

Regulated Health Professionals in the DDSB support students aligned with the expectations of legislation, the district and governing professional organization:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO)
- Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW)
- The College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario (CPBAO)

For more information about the DDSB Inclusive Student Services Impact Update, please visit DDSB Inclusive Student Services.

Durham District School Board (DDSB)

Inclusive Student Services Impact Update

DDSB Ignite Learning

2024-2025 • Issue 2

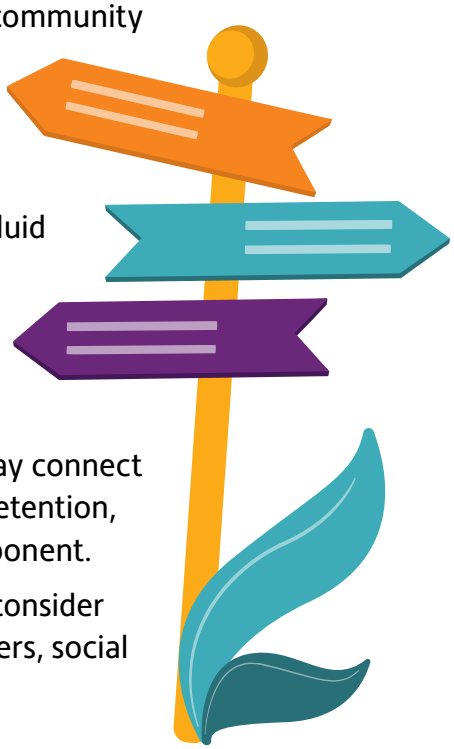
Integrated Transition Planning

In a commitment to supporting achievement, well-being and pathways within School Achievement Plans, how we plan for, support and celebrate students whose achievement is other than an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) is important.

Integrated Transition Planning begins at age 14 for youth with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities. Early planning is key to ensuring that students, and their families/caregivers:

- are centred in planning (goals/hopes);
- have access to information and;
- that supports such as Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) application requirements such as recent assessment are planned.

Transition planning is personalized for each student. All transition plans should include a range of considerations, both long and short-term. Long-term considerations may include the transition to postsecondary activities and services like day programs, while short-term considerations may lead to opportunities through their school and in the community before transitioning to post-secondary pathways.



Post-Secondary Pathways

Each student's pathway will look different shaped by students' unique strengths, needs, and vision for the future. Post-secondary pathways are fluid and change over time.

- Continuing Education: Students wanting to continue their education may look into modified college programs like Co-Operative Education through Community Integration (CICE).
- Employment: Students looking to follow the pathway to employment may connect with employment service providers for support with job searching and retention, employment readiness programs, or programs with a volunteering component.
- Community: Students wishing to explore community participation may consider connecting with community-based services such as day program providers, social groups, sports leagues, or other supported opportunities.

Importance of Families/Caregivers

Integrated Transition Planning is about future planning. Families and caregivers share the responsibility with school teams to initiate conversations on transition planning for their child. When families and caregivers take an active role in the development of their child's transition plan, there is a better chance the plan is successful and appropriate for the child's future. Families and caregivers hold a wealth of information on their student's unique strengths, needs, and vision for the future.

> "Having support as we navigate the transition to adult services and plan for life after high school really helps. I know I don't have to do everything alone."
>
> –Parent

Importance of School and District Support Team

Each student's classroom team is their first circle of care and support at school. Classroom teams include professionals in a variety of roles including Teachers, Educational Assistants and may include others, for example Intervenors and ASL Interpreters.

The school team is central in transition planning processes with students and families/caregivers. The team is also able to draw on the expertise of district staff to support Integrated Transition processes. Two examples:

Transition Coordinator Team members support school teams in developing Integrated Transition Plans for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities. This support is tailored to meet the unique needs and pathways of each student. Coordinated planning can include transition meetings with students, families, school teams and community partners. During the 2023-24 school year, 181 new referrals were made to Transition Coordinators. There are currently 315 students being supported by Transition Coordinators. Further, Transition Coordinators collaborate with key community partners across the region to ensure that relevant resources, programs and services supporting the transition to adult services are shared with students, families and school teams in a timely manner. The Transition Coordinator team maintains contact with over 50 services providers across Durham Region and Ontario.

> **"The Transition Coordinator knows of resources, how to access resources, and is another caring adult who our families can rely on. As well, I've been able to locate information for myself that lets me do a better job as a Practical Learning Program class teacher".**
>
> –Anderson C.V.I. Teacher

Psychological Services team members may provide assessments that support application to DSO. These assessments can occur anytime during the young person's school career, as they can also inform transitions that occur from class to class, grade to grade, and elementary to secondary school. This support is responsive to individual student needs and pathways; the number of assessments fluctuates year to year as a result. During the 2023-2024 school year, 27 assessments in support of DSO access were completed. At this time in 2024-2025, information is currently being reviewed based on 81 referrals. Consideration will be made for what information is already available as some students already have assessments considered current for purpose of programming and application and assessments will be confirmed for those requiring.

"Transition coordination has been seamlessly integrated into our annual planning to support both students and families on a yearly basis. Together, in combination with Guidance and Inclusive Student Services, transition coordination has taken student success and achievement to the next level!" –Eastdale C.V.I. Inclusive Student Services Team

Importance of Community Partners

Integrated Transition Planning plays an integral role in getting students and families connected with community partners. This is one of the first opportunities for families to familiarize and engage with community partners as they prepare for life beyond high school. When looking at student's pathways, this often includes direct support from community partners through their services. Engaging with community partners is essential for effective transition planning, helping families and caregivers understand the services available when students turn 18 or 21. Community partners provide comprehensive information on support and services available.

"The Transition Coordinator team is very passionate about their role and supporting teens with disabilities. That passion really shows up in their commitment to help all teens and parents—there hasn't been a question or request that they haven't been able to support us with."
–Melly's Workplace, Community Partner

"I would tell students and families to gather as much information as they can from the transition coordinator, take advantage of the meeting times they are offered and really use them as a resource and a guide to transitioning from children's services to adult services."
–Community Living Ajax Pickering Whitby, Community Partner

For more information about the DDSB Inclusive Student Services Impact Update, please visit DDSB Inclusive Student Services.

Durham District School Board (DDSB)

Inclusive Student Services Impact Update

DDSB Ignite Learning

2024-2025 • Issue 3

Practical Learning Program

The Practical Learning Program (PLP) provides intensive support while teaching and reinforcing essential skills that foster independence in activities of daily living. The program includes school and community-based opportunities for learning including workplace readiness skills. Each student's program is individualized for their unique pathway based on strengths, interests, and program support needs.

Practical Learning Program classes, in accordance with the Education Act s.181/98, have a maximum of ten students. This program is suited for students who may have intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and/or autism.

Currently in the DDSB, 845 students access learning and support through 93 Practical Learning Program classes (42 Elementary and 51 Secondary).

Program Focus

The Practical Learning Program provides intensive support while teaching and reinforcing essential skills that foster independence in activities of daily living.

- Development of communication skills;
- Functional literacy and numeracy skills (Ontario Curriculum Expectations or alternative expectations with a focus on functional reading, writing and mathematics skills);
- Life Management Skills (self-regulation, advocacy, self-awareness);
- Independent living skills (grocery shopping, cooking, community engagement, vocational skills);
- Work education opportunities which may be in-school or in-community experiences;
- Healthy Living Skills (physical health and safety, social skills and relationships);
- Integrated transition planning from year to year, particularly from secondary to post-secondary.

"We learn that it's important to get fresh air and that walking helps your mood."

"We learn to stick up for ourselves and others."

"It's like a second home and a second family."

"We learn to cook and do laundry."

"I like that you give me independence in the kitchen."

–Student quotes

Families and Caregivers

Families and caregivers are an essential part of the planning for student learning and well-being.

"The best decision I have ever made for my child's education was to join the Practical Learning Program (PLP). The educators in the program believe our children to be capable and have much to offer our society. When you start with this mindset you can only have positive growth, in all areas of development. The community that they build for our children not only within the PLP program but throughout the school community is truly inspiring. I see my child blossoming daily. I couldn't be more thankful." -Parent

The Classroom Team

Each Practical Learning Program team is based on a foundation of one teacher and two Educational Assistants. Additional support may be in place including support from community partnerships such as GrandviewKids and provision of School Based Rehabilitative Services (Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy supports). DDSB Inclusive Student Services team members are part of the classroom team supports and, through consent, are involved in the planning for individual students.

"The students in our Practical Learning Program classroom are a meaningful part of all the things that happen around them. They come into the classroom and know what they have to do because their schedule is in front of them. They know that they are a part of our community and are important to us... By the time they graduate, they have established a group of friends around them, they demonstrate confidence by sharing information to the class in whatever form they use to communicate and they feel valued." -Teacher

"In our Practical Learning Program classroom, students feel safe and comfortable to express themselves in whatever way they are able. In our classroom, a student who communicates with an iPad, modeled for another student how to say hello. He also had her repeat his name. He then followed up with, "Do you like to build sandcastles? The fact that we can target communication as a specific goal and spend quality time teaching communication to the students means that they will be able to use the skills and have a voice throughout their life". -Team Member

The Practical Learning Program—Classroom Environment

The environment within each Practical Learning Program classroom is designed to meet the diverse strengths and needs of students. Spaces and resources include, but are not limited to:

- Literacy and numeracy resources of high interest meeting students at their individual skills levels for growth;
- Access to a kitchenette for the development of meal preparation and clean up skills. Most programs utilize convection microwaves and are equipped with dishwashers to parallel equipment available through adult support programs;
- Access to laundry facilities;
- Sensory and/or multi-modal rooms available to students as a proactive means to promote self-regulation to assist students with sensory activities that promote their wellness and a return to their classroom learning.

"In our Practical Learning Program classroom, we practice self-regulation strategies daily. We have bean bag chairs, a tent, and rocking chairs to teach students different strategies to regulate."

–Teacher

For more information about the DDSB Inclusive Student Services Impact Update, please visit DDSB Inclusive Student Services.

Durham District School Board (DDSB)

Inclusive Student Services Impact Update

2024-2025 • Issue 4

Service Animals in Schools

DDSB has a long standing history of inclusion of certified service animals where students or staff use for accommodation and are the independent handlers.

"The term "service animal" refers to any animal that provides support to a person with a disability. Traditionally, service animals have been dogs, and dogs remain the most common species of service animal; however, other species may also provide services to individuals with disabilities. The types of functions performed by service animals are diverse, and may or may not include sensory, medical, therapeutic, and emotional support services." (Ministry of Education, Policy Program Memorandum (PPM) 163, ontario.ca)

Service animals are traditionally highly trained dogs (Guide Dog, Autism Support Dog, Hearing/Signal Dog, Mobility Assistance Dog, Seizure Response Dog) that assist individuals with various daily tasks.

Service animals help students move safely, be more independent, and support opportunities for participation and integration. Licensed organizations like the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides (LFCDG) and Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) Guide Dogs maintain high standards of training and care in supporting handler, family, and the service animal.

Students

Where students are supported by a Guide Dog/Service Dog at school, the student is the primary handler. The student handler must:

- demonstrate the ability to control the Guide Dog/Service Dog in accordance with the training received by the accrediting training organization;
- ensure the Guide Dog/Service Dog is always wearing a vest and leash or harness when the dog is not in its crate;
- ensure the Guide Dog/Service Dog's biological needs are addressed;
- transition and maintain at all times the Guide Dog/Service Dog on a leash, harness, mat and/or crate.

Service animals in schools raise awareness about disabilities and the importance of inclusion. This leads to greater understanding and helps foster inclusion within the school community.

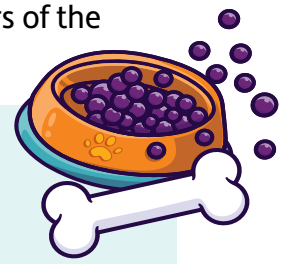
"We have a yellow lab trained by the LFCDG. He quickly became my son's best friend, attending school with him daily. Autism is isolating and can come with a high degree of anxiety. Our service dog provides a calming effect and physical de-escalation when my son is overwhelmed. My son's favourite part of having a service dog is "when he licks my face". I think that's gross, but who am I to come between a boy and his dog?" -Parent

Consideration and use of service animals in schools is aligned with the expectations of the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and Ministry of Education PPM 163. Each request for a service or support animal to be part of a student in school accommodation plan is reviewed on an individual basis considering the student's dignity, integration, independence, and disability-related learning needs.

The accommodation process is a shared responsibility and the DDSB will cooperatively engage with the student/parent/caregiver to consider accommodation options.

How Do I Know If There is a Service Animal Working at My Child's School?

Communication is shared with school staff and broader school community. Information is shared through the school newsletter and may include assemblies supported by the training organization. Standardized DDSB signage is placed on the entrance doors of the school to inform visitors of the service animal.



"(Service Animal)'s greatest impact is not just seen in (student handler)'s eyes, but in the eyes of all the students who feel their presence in the school. A sense of empathy and curiosity allows you to feel the good in people and their acceptance of individual differences."

-Parent and Educator

Transportation

If the student accesses transportation, Durham Student Transportation Services (DSTS) may add the service animal to the school bus roster.

Current DDSB Data (2024)

Accommodation for students is an ongoing process where programming is reviewed regularly to ensure it meets their evolving needs.

Currently, seven students are actively supported by working service dogs as part of their accommodations at school. During the previous calendar year, the DDSB received nine requests with seven approved and/or renewed for the school year and two declined/accommodations met in other ways to support student learning and well-being. Where a student is, for example, not yet able to be the primary handler for the service animal at school, other accommodations are put in place to meet student's programming needs and the DDSB remains committed to ongoing considerations for accommodation.

Multiple schools also welcome service animals, with parent/caregiver handlers, on the school grounds daily during pick up and drop off times.

"Having a Service Dog at school is like having a silent teacher for life skills—patience, responsibility, and inclusion. Their presence encourages children to think beyond themselves, fostering empathy and understanding in ways that traditional lessons sometimes cannot."

-Principal

For more information about the DDSB Inclusive Student Services Impact Update, please visit DDSB Inclusive Student Services.

Appendix A

Durham District School Board (DDSB)

Inclusive Student Services Impact Update

DDSB Ignite Learning

2024-2025 • Issue 5

Work Education

The purpose of Work Education is to build a wide range of skills while gaining a deepened understanding of personal interests and skill sets. As a student's confidence increases and they demonstrate employability skills, the focus of their work education shifts to finding experiences aligned with their individual goals and interests.

Work Education is the supported learning and practical application of employability skills through experiences working in schools and community. As an integral part of transitioning to life beyond high school, students have the opportunity to gain skills navigating different social settings and navigating the workplace within a safe and supportive environment. Students hone their skills in areas such as communication, navigating environments outside of the classroom, as well as additional opportunities to practice following instructions and time management. The focused aim of this program is to instill, within each student, the confidence and skills for independence while preparing them for paid employment.

Most students who participate in Work Education are accessing learning through special education placement in a Practical Learning Program (PLP) or Transition to Work Program. Students have the opportunity to gain workplace experience within our schools and in community. Depending on the skill level of students, the types of placements may include in-school placements like recycling programs or creating their own school store, to accessing our centralized placements like the shredding site at Rosemary Brown P.S. and the DDSB Media Centre, as well as working in the community at local businesses in areas of retail, service, and hospitality.

Currently, there are 39 students attending a work placement from the PLP, and 50 students from the Transition to Work Program accessing work experiences.

"This program helps us get work experience. It helps some of us get part time jobs. Also, it has really helped me to be independent and even take the city bus on my own."

-Student

Examples of how students' progress from in-class opportunities through to community-based work placements:

Work Education Continuum Examples			
Employment Industries	**Stage 1: In-Class**	**Stage 2: In-School**	**Stage 3: Community Based Placements**
Retail	Create learning scenarios to practice skills such as stocking shelves, hanging and folding clothes, preparing items for sale, and social scenarios.	Example: Creating a school store	Example: Retail experience at clothing stores, hobby stores, hardware stores, food banks and grocery stores
Food Service	Create learning activities related to food preparation, table setting, serving, social scenarios, and may access specialized training such as the Safe Food Handling Course.	Example: Working in the school cafeteria, participating in the school's culinary program	Example: Fast food and dine-in restaurants, grocery store bakeries and deli counters
Caretaking	Create learning opportunities for sweeping, dusting, cleaning tables, disposal of recycling, maintaining public spaces and social scenarios.	Example: Working with the custodial team at school	Example: Custodial work at community centres, schools, and malls
Office	Create learning experiences through document filing, answering phones, sorting classroom supplies, inputting spreadsheet data, shredding, creating presentations, photocopying and social scenarios.	Example: Supporting school secretaries in the office, creating a photocopying business for teachers	Example: Office spaces such as dentist and doctors offices, corporate office spaces

"Work education is both inspiring and rewarding seeing the progress of the students as they become more self-confident and independent. This program is vital because it introduces the students to professional relationships outside of the classroom that closely resemble the real world of work. The skills that are nurtured in the program include workplace safety, goal setting, job expectations, independence through work and navigating public transit."

-Educational Assistant

Skill Highlight: Transit Training

The Work Education Program as a whole for students in Practical Learning Programs as well as the Transition to Work Program, also receive a special opportunity to build an integral life skill through transit training. As participants within the Work Education Program, when appropriate, students will have the opportunity to gain experience taking public transit. Emphasis is placed on utilization of Durham Regional Transit to get to and from placements building the opportunity for schools to incorporate transit training as a part of students' learning goals. Students are encouraged to be involved in the route planning process as well as gain understanding of accessibility features and proper protocols when riding public transit.

Over the course of the Work Education Program students have transitioned into paid and or volunteer employment, as well as using the program as a stepping stone for readiness before entering into a post-secondary program.
For example, pathways for students who graduated in June 2024 included:

- 13 students achieved paid employment positions.
- 2 students went on to post-secondary education.
- 2 students moved on to community supports.

Currently, within the 2024-2025 school year, two students have been hired for paid employment as a direct result of their work education placement and demonstration of skills to their employer.

"This program has helped me to get a great work placement, it has helped me with bus training and this program has helped me to gain responsibility and experience. This program has also helped me with getting a part time job, because of all my experience and help making a portfolio."

-Student

"My favourite part of having students participating within the Work Education Program is working with the students to see how they grow and mature while providing them with the tools to achieve their goals."

-Educator

For more information about the DDSB Inclusive Student Services Impact Update, please visit DDSB Inclusive Student Services.

Appendix A

Durham District School Board (DDSB)

Inclusive Student Services Impact Update

DDSB Ignite Learning

2024-2025 • Issue 6

Blind and Low Vision Student Supports

Intervention for a child or young person who is blind or visually impaired is based on the degree to which that individual can access, assimilate, and respond to the wealth of sensory information encountered through daily experience *(Ferrell, 2011 Canadian National Standards Document 2017)*. Individualized programming is designed for each student through the Expanded Core Curriculum and is delivered through an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with the aim of building to the strengths of each student.

Students who are blind or visually impaired are supported by a team including classroom educators, Teachers of the Blind and Low Vision (TOBLV) and may include support from Education Assistants (EAs) and/or an Orientation and Mobility Specialist particularly around transitions (e.g., school and/or semester changes).

TOBLV are qualified instructors who provide educational service across a variety of settings to students in their school environment. In working with families, staff and school teams, the TOBLV build educator knowledge and understanding of the strengths and needs of each student. They are responsible to directly teach the Expanded Core Curriculum to those who meet Ministry criteria of Blind/Low Vision exceptionality. Typical instructional and support services have been determined in research to be critical in mitigating the impact of visual impairment on learning and development *(Holbrook, Kamei-Hannan, & McCarthy, 2017, Canadian National Standards 2017)*.

"The DDSB and the Vision Resource team have done nothing but support me in all my endeavors, ambitions and aspirations. With all that I was taught and with all the support I have received throughout my youth, I know that I have the skills to continue to succeed throughout adulthood—and for that, I couldn't be more grateful."

–Student

Who We Are

Currently, the DDSB vision department is compiled of five TOBLV, one Teacher of the Deaf/Blind, two Braille Transcriptionists, one Orientation and Mobility Instructor, and ten EAs Supporting Vision. This team of DDSB staff members offer various program support to 82 students (2024/2025 school year) across the DDSB.

"The amazing vision resource teacher not only took the time to explain the complexities of Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) she also provided a bounty of valuable ideas and resources. So much so that we have incorporated many of these into our daily program; used by all of our students... and has changed the way that we present new learning..."

–Educator

What We Do

One of the direct roles of TOBLV is to teach and deliver the Expanded Core Curriculum. This curriculum is composed of nine categories of experiences and concepts casually and incidentally learned by sighted students that need to be systematically and sequentially taught to learners who are visually impaired. These areas include:

Compensatory Skills: These include skills like braille, tactile symbols, and sign language, which are essential for learning academic content.

Sensory Efficiency: These skills help students make the best use of their senses, including functional vision, hearing, touch, taste, and smell.

Assistive Technology Skills: This includes the use of computers and other electronic devices such as Braillers, magnification devices and notetakers that help students function independently in school, at home, and in the workplace.

Independent Living Skills: These are the daily tasks necessary for independent living and include areas such as personal hygiene, food preparation, and money management skills.

Career Education: Prepares students for the workforce by exploring career options and teaching job-related skills.

Recreation and Leisure Skills: Encourages students to explore and enjoy leisure activities, promoting a balanced lifestyle. Here, students are introduced to hobbies and interests they may find enjoyment in.

Self-Determination: These skills enable students to advocate for themselves, make informed decisions, and set personal goals.

Social Interaction Skills: Visual impairments can limit the ability to learn social cues through observation, this area provides explicit instruction in social behaviors and interactions.

Orientation and Mobility Skills: Focuses on helping students navigate their environment safely and independently, using tools like white canes or monoculars. In older ages, it could include instruction working with a guide dog.

"I learned simple things that became second nature that really improved my independence. I learned to how to read and write in both print and braille, and type on a keyboard before many my age could. I learned how to use assistive technology to my advantage in my daily life, and I learned at a young age to navigate my immediate environment with ease. I learned how to advocate for my own needs when I need support, both in my post-secondary education, and throughout my career. A skill that can never be underestimated when you have a relatively invisible disability."

–Student

"From teaching me Braille at a young age to making sure my textbooks were always put into a format I could read, to conversations about life skills, everything was amazing. If I didn't have the support of the vision department, I wouldn't be where I am today. Now, thanks to the help of my vision itinerants and educational assistance, I am a braille user and have been trained in multiple different types of assistive technology. I have gone on to work with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) and provide resources to people with sight loss." –Student

"We're very happy with the support from vision services. It has been invaluable and we can't imagine what his school experience would've been like without their hard work and dedication. We have seen him learn and benefit tremendously from the care they've all taken with his overall growth. We are convinced his self-confidence has been boosted tremendously."

–Parent/Caregiver

"The DDSB's Blind/Low Vision program staff have been such an important part of my son's development as both a student and a member of his community. Their dedication, expertise, and genuine care for his academic, social, and independence needs impresses me as both a parent and an educator myself. Having a unique set of needs, my son's education requires out of the box creative thinking that his teachers and educational assistants have excelled at. Strong school to home communication has been so important for me to know how to best help meet my son's needs as a parent. I appreciate the role that all of my son's special educators have helped provide for him!"

–Parent/Caregiver

"Working with vision resource teachers and EAs in the classroom has a profound impact on students and educators. These specialists bring unique knowledge and a skill set that ensures our visually impaired students have access to all educational opportunities ensuring their success. Students thrive because of this team of professionals who utilize a range of inclusive strategies which ensures students feel supported, valued, and empowered in their educational pursuits. Collaborating with our vision resource team fosters our commitment to inclusivity, thus creating a dynamic classroom where all students have the opportunity to thrive."

–Educator

For more information about the DDSB Inclusive Student Services Impact Update, please visit DDSB Inclusive Student Services.

Appendix A

Durham District School Board (DDSB)

Inclusive Student Services Impact Update

DDSB Ignite Learning

2024-2025 • Issue 7

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Student Services

Students Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Hearing loss can affect one or both ears and can range from mild to profound levels. All hearing loss can impact a student's academic, social-emotional, and communication development. Hearing loss is determined by a clinical audiologist and documented on an audiogram during a hearing test.

Students who are D/deaf or hard of hearing require specific programming and/or support in the classroom. Students may:

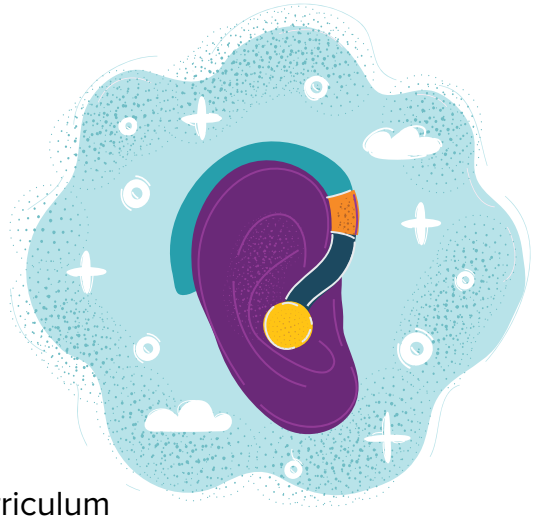
- Exhibit a need for amplification,
- Have hearing loss which affects acquisition of language and academic accommodations,
- Have delayed speech and language development, and/or
- Require alternative form of communication.

Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TODHH)—Who We Are

The DDSB employs nine educators supporting Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, nine ASL/English Interpreters, nine Deaf Blind Intervenors, and one Language Acquisition Support Worker (LASW). Together, this team offers services to over 250 students through school district Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services.

A referral to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services is made through the school's Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) when parent(s)/guardian(s) provide an audiogram from their audiologist.

> ***"Having a TODHH has made a huge difference in my life. Ever since I was little, I've had amazing teachers who made sure I had everything I needed to learn and feel confident. They've shown me that my hearing loss doesn't define what I can do, and because of them, I know I can succeed."***
>
> –Grade 10 student



What We Do

Students who are D/deaf and Hard of Hearing are diverse, encompassing a wide range of abilities, learning styles, and communication abilities. TODHH provide services to students to support language development, social, emotional and/or communication access. TODHH provide opportunities for specialized instruction in areas unique to deafness and reduced hearing from the expanded core curriculum (academic areas of reading, math, and writing), communication and language development, auditory and listening skill development, use of technology, self-determination and self-advocacy, social skills, deaf awareness, and transition (post secondary readiness, employment training, independent skills).

"...With the assistance of the Hearing Resource Teacher, I am able to support my students in a more personalized and effective way, ensuring they can fully access the curriculum. The availability of the Hearing Resource Teacher has been invaluable."

–Educator

Educational Audiologist

TODHH work alongside an Educational Audiologist, who reviews and evaluates the auditory and listening needs of Deaf and hard of hearing students. Together with the TODHH, the Educational Audiologist promotes communication access to support student participation and engagement.

Families as Partners

High levels of family involvement contribute to positive results for children with hearing loss. Parents/caregivers have the right to be informed and engaged participants in their child's educational program. TODHH support families in planning, decision-making, and transitions around accessibility in their child's classroom and educational programming for their child through the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

"The personalized support helped him gain confidence, access learning in a way that worked best for him and develop essential communication skills... This not only enhanced his academic progress but also empowered him to engage more fully with his peers, teachers, and the broader community."

-Parent/Caregiver

Kids and Teens Like Me Days

TODHH are proud to promote specialized activities for students with hearing loss from Kindergarten to Grade 12 in our Kids and Teens Like Me Days. Activities promote socialization with other students who have hearing loss to make new friends, increase social skills, and enjoy educational opportunities that are fully accessible. Many of our students are the only ones with hearing loss in their school and these district events help students learn that there are others like them who share similar experiences.

Students Who are Deaf Blind

Deafblindness is a unique and separate identification from deafness or blindness. An individual with the combined losses of hearing and vision requires specialized services including adapted communication methods. An Intervenor facilitates the interactions of a person who is deafblind with other people and the environment. They provide access to information, through auditory, visual, or tactile. Intervenors act as a sighted guide, teach appropriate communication methods (sign language, braille, object cues and communication boards), and assist with communication systems. Intervenors adapt the classroom teachers' programming to meet the needs of the student they support.

"The support provided by the Deaf and Hard of Hearing teacher has had a tremendous impact on both my children's educational experience in the DDSB. Individualized programming helps my children thrive by addressing their unique communication needs, while in-servicing classroom teaching staff foster a more inclusive environment. Additionally, the focus on peer education promotes understanding and the emphasis on self-advocacy empowers my children to confidently use their equipment independently."

-Parent/Caregiver

For more information about the DDSB Inclusive Student Services Impact Update, please visit DDSB Inclusive Student Services.

Appendix A

Durham District School Board (DDSB)

Inclusive Student Services Impact Update

DDSB Ignite Learning

2024-2025 • Issue 8

Speech and Language Services

Communication skills are an essential part of a student's success and well-being. Language helps students to understand and participate in all aspects of their school day, and supports their social, cognitive, emotional, and academic development.

Speech and Language Services: Communication, Connection, Participation

Speech-Language Pathologists (S-LPs) are part of DDSB Inclusive Student Services and work with students, families, educators, and professionals to create culturally responsive, inclusive, and accessible learning environments that embrace all ways of communicating. S-LPs have a master's degree and are registered with the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO). The team has specialized training in communication, speech, language, and literacy.

Supporting All Aspects of Communication

In collaboration with families and school teams, S-LPs support the academic success and social and emotional well-being of students through a variety of services, such as:

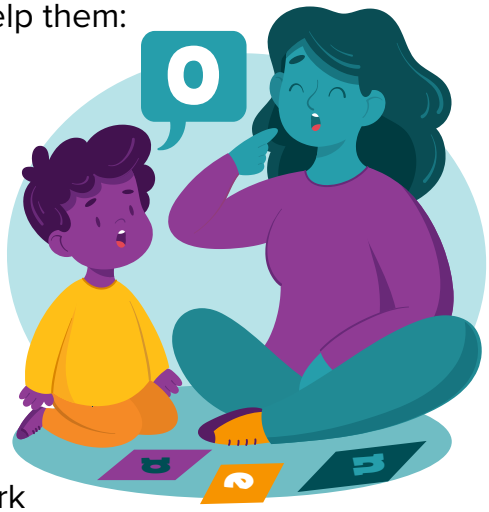
- Assessments: Evaluating language, communication, and speech skills using various assessment methods that respect each student's development, home language, and culture.
- Collaboration: Partnering with educators, support staff, families, and other professionals to set goals and strategies that make learning accessible.
- Training and Support: Teaching and modeling ways to enhance communication skills for all, including Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) users.
- Workshops: Providing learning opportunities for parents, educators, and community partners.
- Community Connections: Coordinating with community agencies and making referrals (e.g., Grandview Kids School-Based Rehabilitation, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital).

Language is the basis for thinking, communicating, and learning. Students need language skills to comprehend ideas and information, to interact socially, to inquire into areas of interest and study, and to express themselves clearly and demonstrate their learning."

—Ontario Ministry of Education, The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Language, 2023

Who We Support

We work with students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 to help them:



- Understand spoken language, written text, and/or picture communication symbols.
- Express themselves through speech, writing, and other communication methods.
- Develop communication skills for social interactions.

While early intervention is a priority, we support students of all ages.

As members of a multi-disciplinary Inclusive Student Services school team, S-LPs work in collaboration with members of Early Years, Psychological Services, Social Work departments and other educators and professionals to provide student support.

"The S-LP showed me how to use my child's communication device, and now we feel so much more confident using it at home."

—Parent/Caregiver

"I have had the pleasure of working with our S-LP as a homeroom teacher and a Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT). Our S-LP focuses on building strong foundational literacy skills and communication tools for our students. They empower educators by providing strategies and resources to enhance language development and accessibility to curriculum for all learners. They help to ensure that we are working together to reduce barriers and create an environment where all students can learn and develop their language skills in order to reach their full potential. Their knowledge, experience, and dedication to our school is top notch."

—SERT

How to Access Our Services

Individual services are referral based and provided in accordance with the professional standards and ethical guidelines of the CASLPO. School-based staff follow the Inclusive Student Services referral pathway. Parental/guardian informed consent is required before services begin.

"We always appreciate the expertise of our brilliant S-LP. They are a wealth of knowledge for SERTs, classroom educators and students alike. Our S-LP is always knowledgeable about assessment tools and high yield strategies to support a wide variety of student needs. They are always willing to collaborate with school teams and other members of the ISS team to develop comprehensive and innovative programs. We can always depend on them to see the whole student and to give programming suggestions that play off their strengths and potential. It is amazing to see the growth in the students they support, and they continues to make a long-term impact on our school community."

—SERT

Did You Know?

Having knowledgeable and supportive communication partners is essential in creating inclusive communication environments. DDSB S-LPs dedicate time to creating materials, programming, and training/coaching staff and families on the use of AAC tools and strategies to ensure that all students have a way to access and use language across their day.

"The work the S-LP has done alone with our PLP (Practical Learning Program) class is like nothing I have ever seen. She has gone above and beyond to provide parental supports and student supports and has certainly left a lasting impression on our staff in our PLP class who are working diligently to implement the strategies she suggests."

—Principal

For more information about the DDSB Inclusive Student Services Impact Update, please visit DDSB Inclusive Student Services.

Appendix A

Durham District School Board (DDSB)

Inclusive Student Services

Impact Update

DDSB Ignite Learning

2024-2025 • Issue 9

Professional Learning to Support Shifts Towards Anti-Oppressive Practices

To address ableism, we must identify, challenge, and disrupt biases, barriers, structures and practices that hinder the achievement and well-being of learners—especially those who experience systemic discrimination and disadvantage. By critically examining our own practices, we can better support all students.

Professional learning reinforces our roles and responsibilities, both individually and organizationally. Ongoing learning throughout the school year helps us connect more deeply with students' experiences, strengthen our skills and reflect continuously on how to improve services. Inclusive Student Services staff have access to a range of professional learning opportunities, both job-embedded and session-based.

Student learning is at the core of all programs within the DDSB. As our students grow and evolve, so too must the professionals who support them.

Within Team Monitoring

Inclusive Student Services teams have established a variety of internal structures to support consultation and mentorship. For example:

- Clinical Supervisors within Psychological Services provide one-on-one and small group consultation.
- Social Work teams offer mentorship in small groups and ongoing support from the Senior Social Worker for consultation and debriefing.
- New this school year, lead roles were introduced for Teachers of the Blind/Low Vision and Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing. These roles provide formal mentorship for educators new to the team and offer in-school support for student program planning.
- These additions complement existing mentorship roles such as the Senior Social Worker and the newly established Senior Speech-Language Pathologist (S-LP) role.

> ***"The training with Fae and Nicole specifically helped highlight the impact language has when working to support individuals/students/ families. It was insightful to see how the way we approach these conversations are so connected to the relationship that also gets built between us as social workers and the people we work alongside... "***
>
> —Social Worker

Focused Working Groups

S-LP working groups have engaged in targeted, team-driven professional learning. For example:

- The team reviewed and updated its collection of low-tech and mid-tech Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) tools and created a resource lending library. This allows S-LPs to borrow and trial a variety of AAC tools with students in classroom settings.
- Assessment tools have also been reviewed. Outdated tests have been removed, and new tools—designed to be more strengths-based, dynamic and neuro-affirmative—are being trialed. Team feedback will inform next steps and potential implementation.

Collaborations and Community

Inclusive Student Services and the Innovation team recently partnered with GrandviewKids to co-host the first IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility) conference. This inaugural event featured a full day of learning sessions covering a wide range of topics relevant to staff across departments, including Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs) and school administrators.

Teams supporting student mental health—including Social Work and Psychological Services—also engaged in learning with provincial and national leaders in identity-affirming system planning and anti-discrimination practices. We are grateful to facilitators such as Fae Johnstone, Special Advisor and Co-Owner, Wisdom2Action (W2A), and Nicole Bonnie, Principal Consultant, Firma Strategy Group, for leading meaningful discussions that strengthened our understanding and capacity.

The following reflections highlight some of the learning during the 2024-2025 school year and the impacts to both professional growth, service shifts and direct links to supports for students.

"I have learned so much in my first year as a SERT. The learning curve was steep... Having an Administrator to work alongside, collaboratively plan with and encourage me has been one of the most beneficial things that has helped me this year. Each member of the ISS team has shared their knowledge of their own field to help build perspective, assist with programming, and further my understanding of various learning needs. Finally, being able to collaborate with colleagues to understand processes, navigate meetings, and share opinions has been immeasurable."

—First Year SERT

"...had the opportunity to attend the virtual Professional Development (PD) Trauma-Lens to S-LP Practice offered by Anna Rupert (Dr. PH-student) and Chiara Frigeni (M.Ed., RP) from the George Hull Centre for Children and Families. This may have been the most impactful PD of any I have attended to date. Interacting with students, families, and often others using trauma-informed approaches is critical to build trust, create a safe and supportive environment, and help individuals establish meaningful connections... This PD provided a thorough look into what trauma might look like in different individuals, the cerebral structures affected when exposed to trauma, and how these changes might present themselves in terms of behaviour, interpersonal abilities, and academic performance."

—S-LP

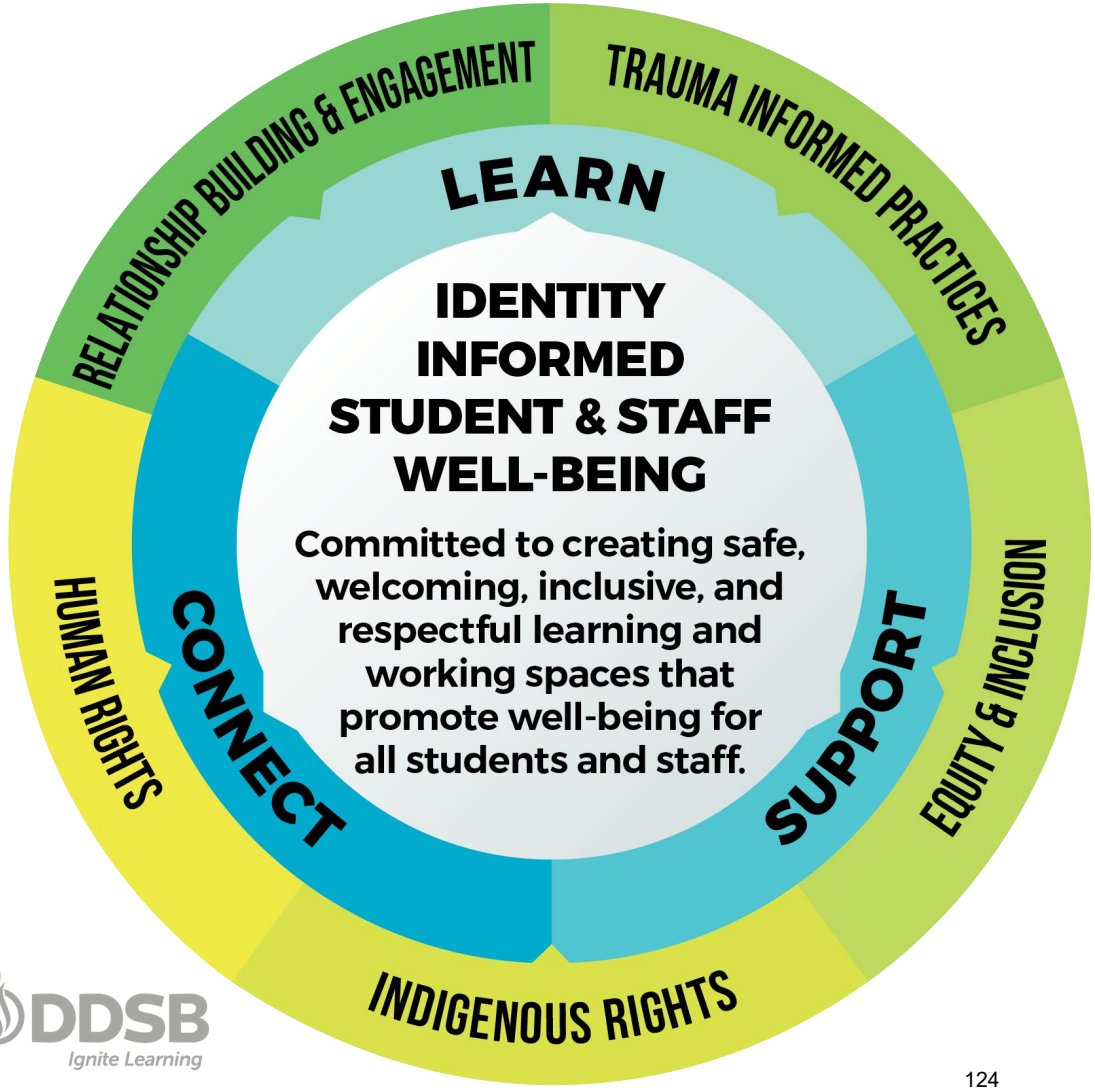
"As a team, we have been learning to take a strength-based approach to assessments and ensuring our reports are written in a neuro-affirming way. Simple shifts in our conversations with caregivers, such as asking questions in a way they are proud of allows families to engage with the assessment process in a different way than if we were focusing on deficits and trying to solve a problem... Additionally, the sessions with Fae Johnstone and Nicole Bonnie were impactful experiences that deepened our understanding of identity, and impacts of bias and systemic barriers, and empowered us to take meaningful steps toward creating more inclusive and affirming learning environments."

—Psychological Services

For more information about the DDSB Inclusive Student Services Impact Update, please visit DDSB Inclusive Student Services.

Learn Support Connect

We believe it is important to **learn** how we can support the everyday mental health and well-being of students and staff. We commit to provide for our students and staff inclusive, identity affirming, and culturally relevant **supports** as needed. We strive to **connect** all students and staff to, from, and through the pathways for those supports.



LEARN TO UNDERSTAND

1. Mental health literacy
2. Everyday conditions that support mental health and well-being

SUPPORT TO STRENGTHEN

1. Focused staff skills building for student support
2. Mental health supports and services

CONNECT TO PATHWAYS

1. Strong pathways to, from and through mental health supports

WELL-BEING EVERYONE EVERY DAY

Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan 2022-2025

DDSB Ignite Learning

OCTOBER 2022

Best Practices for Engagement and Attendance

Durham District School Board (DDSB)

DDSB
Ignite Learning

The World Health Organization includes education as one of its twelve Social Determinants of Health; we know that a good education is a key factor for individual success.

Most educators, allied professionals, parents/guardians, community members, and students would be aware of the requirement in Ontario for young people under the age of 18 to be enrolled in and attend school. Many children and youth do attend regularly and are engaged in many aspects of school life, including co-curriculars, clubs and social events. However, about one-fourth of all youth will experience some period of school avoidance during their school career (Anxiety Canada). The impact of school avoidance is well known and some of these consequences may include:

- Loss of relationships and developmental experiences
- Increased isolation and family conflict
- Emerging or intensifying mental health issues
- A decline in academic success
- Impact on future opportunities and pathways

Reconsidering and examining our engagement and attendance processes and approaches in a trauma informed way invites us to consider: " Does this school policy support a culture of care or a culture of compliance? "

Alex Shevrin Venet

School avoidance (some literature also uses the term school refusal), is a term used for circumstances where the child/youth is not attending school and the parent/guardian is aware of the student's whereabouts. This is different from the term 'truancy', whereby parents/guardians are typically unaware that their child is not in class. The reasons for school avoidance are varied and are unique to each individual and/or family. Some factors and barriers that may contribute to a young person's school avoidance/refusal include:

- Lack of safety at school (all forms of discrimination and harassment including racism, ableism, oppression, homophobia, transphobia, bi-phobia, sexism, and religious discrimination)*
- Bullying and social conflict
- Food insecurity
- Housing insecurity (frequent moves or staying in shelters)
- Poverty (limited access to seasonal clothing or school supplies; it's often hard to ask for help)
- Difficulties getting to school (unsafe to walk, parent/caregiver is often late getting them to school, missing a bus and lack of alternatives, the parent/caregiver had an unpleasant experience with school and struggles to support attendance)
- Fear of judgment
- Home related stressors
- Caring for loved ones or needing to get a job to help with income support
- Feeling like they don't fit in
- Unassessed or unaddressed communication or accommodation concerns
- Separation anxiety/change in routine
- Emerging or intensifying mental health concerns
- Grade decline
- Loss of hope/inability to see a future or worried about future
- Lacking a safe and caring adult at school
- Unmet learning needs

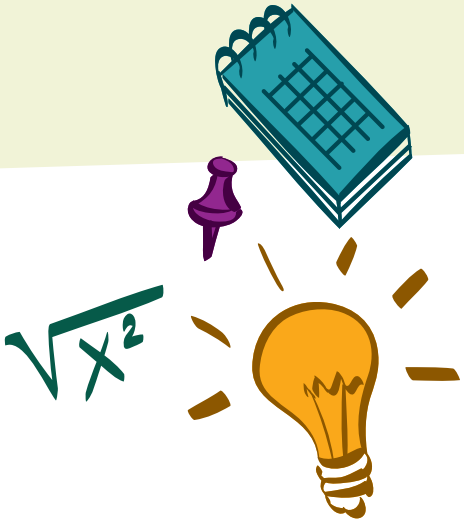
" ...about one-fourth of all youth will experience some period of school avoidance during their school career."

Anxiety Canada

**If issues of discrimination or harassment may be involved, then it triggers responsibilities under DDSB policies, procedures and processes (for example, the Indigenous Rights, Human Rights, Positive School Climate, Code of Conduct policies and procedures etc.) to address it. If such an issue arises, then the employee needs to report it (or take steps to address it depending on the role and circumstances).*

Engagement and attendance go hand in hand and are firmly grounded in the District's commitments to student and identity centred practice, Human Rights, Indigenous Rights, and mental health and well being.

When we engage with a young person and their family from a place of authentic interest, in a way that is non-judgmental and moves away from 'compliance' and focuses solely on genuine caring, we are more likely to get at what the barriers to school attendance are and tips into how to meaningfully address them. Parents/guardians and students already know that children and youth are required to attend school (compliance) and if they could attend regularly, they likely would already be engaged in and attending school on a regular basis. When focusing on engagement, we are better able to meet the young person's needs, fulfill our duty bearer responsibilities, create a culture of care, help a young person develop problem solving skills, repair fractured relationships, and impact the trajectory of a young person.



Key Actions

This work requires us to:

- **Actively reflect on and check our biases, assumptions and stereotypes: our own and systemic**
- **Be aware of our own emotions and how they may have an impact on our interactions with others**
- **Ask our team/colleagues if the approach we are considering will enhance a culture of care or is it focused on compliance only**
- **Believe that engagement can be achieved from genuine caring; 'when I feel seen, safe, and heard I will want to show up' (compliance)**
- **Challenge our beliefs, personally and systemically, about 'attendance' and 'engagement'**
- **Value that any move forward is a win; change can be slow, it is deeply personal, and it is rarely linear**
- **Critically examine practices that may impact engagement, for example, discipline processes for lates**
- **Believe that intrinsic motivation creatives meaningful and personal change in a way that external pressure rarely does**
- **Understand that attendance (whatever that looks like) is not the only marker of how a student is faring**

A whole school engagement and attendance approach is a collaborative team effort amongst Administrators, educators, school staff, Social Work/Attendance, Psychological Services, Speech Language Pathologists, Information Technology (I.T.) Services, and System Leads/Superintendents. This approach asks us to:

- Know our roles and uphold our responsibilities
- Listen to students and families/guardians and respect their truth
- Leverage and respect professional skill and experience across disciplines
- Be aware of pathways for support

Best practice tells us that our collective responsibility requires us to acknowledge the strengths of our students and families and actively seek ways to identify and address barriers. Rather than asking "why isn't this young person coming to school", let's start by becoming curious about what we might be missing, or at least, how might the school be inadvertently contributing to the situation resulting in our students having unmet social/academic needs.

With respect to engagement and attendance tracking, there are everyday practices that help focus our ongoing engagement efforts (caring) and our daily management of attendance (compliance). Supporting students and their families requires a joint effort from the various school-based professionals and while some responsibilities may fall to the Administrator or Attendance Counsellor/ Social Worker, a student's sense of safety and belonging depends on all of us.

Daily School Based Practices

Engagement (Caring)

- Get to know our students with genuine interest (easier to notice pattern changes)
- Our ongoing efforts to engage with our families and our school communities affords us the opportunity to share information about engagement, attendance and ways we can support families around upcoming interruptions in regular engagement and attendance (such as extended vacations, hospital stays).
- Personal reach outs to kindergarten families, or where a student is transferring to the school to inquire if there are any ways to support
- Checking in and paying attention—small details matter to students
- Welcoming in a way that demonstrates that we see and value the individual and they belong
- Notice when a young person is 'off'—perhaps they are coming in late, or they've been absent, or their demeanor has changed
- Reach out to the young person (or parent/guardian) and be authentic in our caring approach "I'm glad you're back", "I notice that you don't seem yourself? How are things?"
- Build trust and respectful relationships with the parents/guardians
    - Make sure we know how parents want to be contacted and when so that they can best receive information
    - Invite a conversation about their child/family and what they want us to know about their student (strengths, challenges, habits, interests) and any accessibility issues or other barriers
    - Create an environment that understands and supports the complex challenges that parents face; making space and time for parents to connect with their child's school
    - Maintain a respectful and non-judgmental approach to the various ways that families are structured and how they live their lives and maintain their values which may not always fit with the school expectations, agendas or timelines
- When we notice changes in demeanor, attendance patterns, and/or behaviour, it is imperative that we reach out to the student to ask about how they are doing, and we maintain our caring and compassionate approach
- Collaborate with parents/caregivers when issues arise and when changes in attendance patterns begin to emerge to get their perspective and input: this is foundational information for supporting the student's engagement and addressing barriers
- Actively check our personal biases, judgments, assumptions and stereotypes and be aware of how those may show up in interactions with parents and students
- Leverage school supports (Social Work, Psychological Services, Speech Language Pathologist, Child Youth Well-Being Workers) for early consultation and/or capacity building around engagement approaches and problem solving

Attendance Management (Compliance)

- Review Enrollment Register Instructions
- Every school is required to maintain an attendance register
- Become familiar with the various codes that track attendance
- Become familiar with the various reports that are available related to monitoring student attendance
- Attendance is taken daily
- Establish a plan within the school to ensure that communication about attendance issues is brought to the attention of the office
- Co-develop a plan with school Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor for regular review and monitoring of attendance concerns, engagement approaches, and referral pathways
- Ensure families are aware of the temporary excusal form through the school website, newsletters, School Community Council (SCC) meetings, etc.

Consultation/Referral for Attendance Services

Engagement (Caring)

- Best practices in engagement efforts provide opportunities to build relationships and create caring environments
- Irrespective of the student's response, a non-judgmental message that you **noticed**, and you **offered** a kind acknowledgment and support, and that you **see** the student, has considerable positive impact on both the student and the relationship between student/school
    - Seek support and consultation if you are unsure about how to proceed (Administrator, Guidance, SERT, Social Work Services, Psychological Services, etc.)
- It is in our engagement efforts that we learn about our students and their families, their strengths and challenges, and it is this knowledge and information that is central to the **in-person consultation** with the Attendance Counsellor when more specific concerns are brought forward about a student
- Gathering this data, including staff perspectives, family input and efforts made to address the concerns are all foundational to formulating next steps
- This information provides school professionals (Speech Language Pathologist, Psychological Services, Social Work/Attendance, etc.) necessary consultation criteria to inform how best to meet the identified needs of the student and how we can build on the school's engagement efforts to date

- This information also helps to develop an integrated plan where we consider ways to leverage the expertise of others, to build on the relationships that the student and family identify as being caring and trusting in a manner that minimizes duplication and stress for a parent/caregiver (for example, multiple children in the family with attendance concerns who attend different schools; a coordinated effort can streamline engagement efforts)
- Increased disengagement in the form of poor attendance is typically symptomatic of other underlying issues for the student that may originate both at home and school so remaining curious and compassionate helps students and families share their story
- Based on identified needs (learning needs, assessment needs, lack of resources), a Social Work referral may be the appropriate next step with the consent of the family so that barriers can be addressed
- Transparency and clarity with the family and student fosters positive relationships and ensures that everyone is aware of concerns and pathways for support, including potential attendance referral
- An attendance referral has a narrow scope and specific criteria and should be considered when all other engagement efforts have been implemented and met with limited success
    - A referral for attendance does not require family consent, thus the impact on families and students is a factor to consider and could have significant consequences on future engagement efforts; having ongoing conversations and relationship with the family may minimize the impact
- Because persistent absenteeism is typically chronic, sporadic, and challenging for home and school, it is important for a thorough consultation with the Attendance Counsellor to occur to determine whether the family and student needs could best be met through a Social Work referral or if an attendance referral should be completed.

Attendance Management (Compliance)

- Using school-based plan for tracking and monitoring reports/practices, identify individual students where attendance patterns are beginning to emerge, and concerns are arising
- These reports, in combination with student/family engagement efforts will lead to a consultation with Social Work/Attendance.
- Consultation with Attendance Counsellor/Social Worker is required before a referral is completed
- Reasons for attendance referral:
    - persistent absenteeism
    - prolonged absence (approaching 15 days)
    - no contact with family despite efforts,
    - referral to Community Based Learning Program (CBLP)
- Fill out referral document on PowerSchool SP: Principal or designate fills out the form
- Family and student are informed of the referral to the Attendance Counsellor; this referral should not be a surprise to the family as this could feel quite punitive.
- Attendance Counsellor accepts the referral if there has been pre-referral consultation

Open File/Closing File

Engagement (Caring)

- After accepting the referral, efforts to contact student and family are made by the Attendance Counsellor and will also continue by school staff
- The Attendance Counsellor will work from the information provided in the consultations and build on the efforts the school has made; intention is to build on the work and not duplicate where possible
- Contact with student/family to continue to understand the barriers to engagement and attendance and support next steps
- Regular contact and partnership with Administrator/SERT/teacher is often required to support ongoing efforts to jointly address barriers as identified by student and caregiver
- There is no student or family consent involved with respect to an attendance referral and it may limit the scope of work that could occur in the scope of an attendance referral:
  - At the DDSB our Attendance Counsellors are Registered Social Workers and are bound by the requirements of the College of Social Workers and Social Services Workers (OCSWSSW), PHIPA, and other relevant legislation.
  - The provision of any services for which informed consent is normally required applies when working with a student and/or family through an attendance referral. This means that the provision of any ongoing service on the part of the Attendance Counsellor/ Social Worker to address the issues identified as barriers will require informed consent from the client and will result in a concurrent Social Work file.
  - For example, if emerging mental health concerns are identified as the reason for student absence, informed consent is required from the student (client) to support the student with those specific concerns; in the absence of informed consent, resources will be provided.
  - If consent is not provided, the Attendance Counsellor can provide community resource information
- Even when efforts have improved the relationship and engagement between the student/family with the school and barriers are reduced, efforts to maintain this progress need to be ongoing
- There is a recognition that change may be slow and it is unlikely to be linear; any move forward is celebrated and acknowledged
- We will actively resist ‘all or nothing’ approaches (compliance) and rather, will adopt creative approaches to maximize engagement and success (caring)

Attendance Management (Compliance)

- The school continues to monitor attendance and maintain the register.
- For prolonged absence (consecutive absences), the Attendance Counsellor will monitor student attendance for the purpose of providing 15 day letters as required; regular two-way communication is required to continue to produce the letters and allow the file to remain open
- Prolonged absence letters (15 day letters) can be provided up to 60 days for students aged 14-17; this does not apply to students under 14 as letters can continue to be issued up to two years if two-way contact continues
- Prolonged absence letters are provided to the school for the purpose of communicating that the attendance file remains open; these letters are filed in the student's OSR
- For prolonged absence the attendance file must be closed at 60 days if the student has not attended school
- For persistent absenteeism, the attendance file will be closed when:
  - Attendance is improving.
  - Barriers to attendance are identified and beginning to be addressed and reduced
  - Or where there is no communication with student and family after all efforts have been made
  - Or where efforts have been made and exhausted and significant improvement to attendance has not been realized, the Attendance Counsellor may close the file
  - Attendance Counsellor and school team collaborate about possible next steps
- Generally speaking, persistent absenteeism attendance files may remain open as long as there is some or sporadic attendance, there is two-way communication, and ongoing planning efforts
- An attendance file may remain open into a new school year when there are concerns that the attendance pattern will likely continue into the beginning of the new school year or where there are concerns that the student may not attend on the first day of school. The concerns that would give rise to such a referral should not be new and should be rooted in work the school team and the family has been engaged in throughout the year. In other words, late June referrals in the absence of consultation with the Attendance Counsellor/Social Worker should not occur.
- An attendance file will remain open if a student attends CBLP in order to maintain connection with the home school. The file is closed when it is confirmed that the student will not be returning to the home school. Best practice would be to document the next steps for the student (example, new school or program),
- Once an attendance file is closed, the Attendance Counsellor/Social Worker will inform Administration, support staff, and Guidance (Secondary) that the file has closed
- The principal determines if the student will be removed from the register

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Student Engagement Strategies

Attendance Counsellor's Guide

DDSB Ignite Learning

Student Engagement

Student engagement is viewed as a whole school responsibility and relationships with students and families are foundational to social and academic success at school: fostering a culture of care and belonging. Engage with the administrators and school staff through regular contact and communication; co-create a planned time to connect.

School staff who are responsible for tracking and maintaining the enrolment register should review the enrolment instructions annually and be familiar with the consecutive absence report and the temporary excusal form.

The Attendance Counsellor will provide the Enrolment Register Instructions to their admin at the start of each year (this document comes out annually).

The consecutive absence report can be run on a more regular basis by school staff. durhamschboard.service-now.com/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=KB0012303

The school team works to create conditions that enhance safety and well-being for everyone, and an anti-racist/anti-oppressive approach is foundational practice in the school. The Attendance Counsellor is available for consultation to bring a different lens to the discussion.

Lend your skill and expertise to the school to enhance capacity around student and family engagement, school climate, challenging biases and practices.

Practice Ideas to consider:

- Attend Student Success meetings where possible
- Regularly scheduled attendance meetings with school staff and Attendance Counsellor
- Remind school staff of the attendance reports available to them, and their purpose (such as consecutive absence) and review in attendance meetings

Emerging Attendance Issues

Be available for consultation when staff report there are changes or shifts in a student's attendance patterns including frequent or chronic lates.

Support staff in their efforts to reach out to student, family/caregiver if students are absent or frequently late, to inquire about wellness, barriers, and steps that could be taken to support engagement and improve attendance; approaching with care and curiosity.

Things to Consider

- **Has school connected with family to understand any issues?**
- **Staff encouraged to pay close attention to changes in pattern – missing more school, disengaged when otherwise they seemed fine, doing work but not physically attending**
- **IEP should be reviewed by school team – is the student's learning plan being followed?**
- **Consider other factors that may be present; could the student be feeling unsafe?**

Staff will consult with Attendance Counsellor to explore other steps or considerations such as alternatives (for example, social work referral, SOAR, SAL, community partners).

If an attendance referral is indicated following consultation with the Attendance Counsellor, the referral is completed on PSP by school personnel. The AC cannot accept a referral in the absence of consultation.

Absences

Absence Codes

Attendance coding is defined by the Ministry and outlined in the Enrolment Register Instructions.

Connection to I.T. for questions related to coding: submit a help ticket to the I.T. Desk and categorize it under Power School.

A – student is absent; no parent or guardian has explained why

AA – student absent due to an appointment

AI – Illness: Health and Well-Being

AV – student absent due to vacation

AE – student absent with parent approval

AB – student absent due to bereavement

AR – student absent for religious purposes

G – general absence day (numerous absences fall under G code; refer to Enrolment Instructions)

AC – to be used on day 16, indicating that an attendance referral has been made

N – non-instructional time. Part-time status, private instruction, Intensive Behavioural Interventions.

Temporary Excusal

- Parent/guardian makes a written request that a student be excused for a period > 15 days (add link to form)
- School provides a program of study for a pupil, which must be certified by the principal and retained. The code is G.

Prolonged Absence

- For those students where previous consultation has occurred, at 15 consecutive full days of absence, Principal/VP must notify the attendance counsellor in writing on the 16th day
- The attendance referral keeps the student on the register. If attendance file is open, principal will receive a prolonged absence letter from the Attendance counsellor at the beginning of each 15-day period that the file is active (maximum of 60 days for students 14 – 17 years old) as long as there has been contact with student/family.
- Principal/Vice Principal/Student Success Teacher to contact student and attempt to re-engage within each 15-day period
- For secondary students, when a student is removed from one class due to prolonged absence, the holding code is GLN4OK, when removed from all 4 classes, the code is GLN4OZ
- The 15-day consecutive absence can only be broken by student attendance; the count may continue into a new semester but not to a new year

Medical documentation:

- If documentation is provided, an attendance referral is not required. Ensure appropriate supporting medical documentation is obtained and in the OSR. Whenever possible there should be an end or review date.

When a student is removed from the register, a list is maintained of students withdrawn and it is the responsibility of the school, for students aged 14-17 to attempt to make contact at the beginning of each semester.

2024-2025

WELL-BEING, EVERYONE, EVERY DAY.

DDSB Ignite Learning

WELL-BEING EVERYONE EVERY DAY

Dear SERT Team,

The DDSB is committed to supporting the well-being of all students and staff. In alignment to the commitments in our Multi-year Strategic Plan, the Mental Health and Well-Being Plan, as well as our Anti-Oppression Strategy and the Compendium of Action to Support 2SLGBTQIA+ Students, Staff, and Families, we have purchased a number of codes/enrollment keys for you to participate in the Rainbow Health Ontario (RHO) 2SLGBTQ Foundations course.

Rainbow Health Ontario (RHO), a program of Sherbourne Health, developed this seven-module course on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and Two-Spirit (2SLGBTQ) health for healthcare and social service providers. These short self-directed modules will help build your foundational knowledge for providing care to 2SLGBTQIA+ students, staff and families, and can be accessed at your convenience. This course is intended to support our commitment to provide inclusive, affirming, welcoming, culturally sensitive care; collectively strengthening our practices as a District.

Please see attached document that will assist with creating an account and how to enroll. Please use your work email when registering.

The enrollment key is: **XXXX** (insert where you see **APPLY COUPON**)

The key is case-sensitive, and if copying and pasting the code in the enrolment key field, please ensure no extra spaces are being pasted into the field. **Please do not share this code with anyone else.**

** You have 30 days to complete the course from the date of enrollment**

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to any member of the DDSB Mental Health Leadership Team:

- Carolyn Ussher – Senior Manager and Clinical Lead- Social Work
- Mike Menheere – System Lead, Positive School Climates
- Sara Schleien – Senior Manager and Clinical Lead - Psychological Services
- Steffanie Pelleboer – Mental Health Lead

Appendix D

Appendix E

Grandview School

DDSB
Ignite Learning

The IDEA

IDEA CONFERENCE

For SERTS, Principals, Vice Principals and Grandview School Staff

Monday, April 7, 2025 • 8:30am – 3:00pm

Grandview Kids, 1461 Harwood Ave N, Ajax, ON

Registration Opens on Tuesday, February 18th - No Supply Codes are Available

• • • • •

The IDEA Conference focuses on enhancing education by integrating **Inclusive Technology and Universal Design for Learning** (UDL). This conference serves as a platform to bring together educators, presenters, attendees, fostering an environment for collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and inspiration. This event is an excellent opportunity for participants to explore innovative teaching strategies and tools that can be implemented to support diverse learners.

JOHN DRAPER

Keynote Speaker

John Draper is the Founder of **Together We Rock!** Established in 2006, the mission of this corporation is to inspire learning and champion leadership to create accessible and inclusive communities. Through his sense of humour John reminds his audiences that every day is filled with possibilities for making our workplaces, schools and communities more accessible and inclusive.

Sign up through myPD using the Inservice ID # 44223

Once registration is approved, participants will be sent a link to sign up for the breakout sessions.

Breakout Sessions on Adaptive Phys Ed, Inclusive Technologies, AI, AAC, Transition Planning, STEM, and more.

In partnership with our community partners: **Grandview Kids, Abilities Centre** and **Resources for Exceptional Children and Youth.**

Grandview Kids

Abilities Centre

Resources for Exceptional Children & Youth

Appendix F

AFFIRM

DO YOU IDENTIFY AS 2SLGBTQIA+?
ARE YOU BETWEEN 13 AND 18 YEARS OLD AND IN GRADE 9-12?

Facilitated by members of DDSB Social Work and Psychological Services Teams, Project AFFIRM offers evidence-based coping skills training for 2SLGBTQIA+ and questioning youth across Ontario.

WHAT DO YOU GET?

- Evidence based coping skills and strategies
- An opportunity to be in community with other 2SLGBTQIA+ youth

WHO CAN JOIN?

Anyone **13-18** and in grade 9-12 who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, two-spirit, trans, non-binary, queer and/or questioning their sexual orientation or gender.

For more information email affirm@ddsb.ca with any questions.

AFFIRM GOALS

Why participate?

- **DECREASE UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS**
- **IMPROVE WELL-BEING**
- **GAIN SKILLS**
- **UNDERSTAND STRESS**
- **FEEL BETTER ABOUT SELVES AND LIVES**
- **FOSTER HOPE**

DDSB Ignite Learning

BLACK EXCELLENCE MADE EVIDENT

DDSB Inclusive Student Services Presents:

BeMe: Black Excellence Made Evident

The Black Excellence Made Evident group is designed to amplify the voices and experiences of Black students. This 2-day in-person symposium brings Black identifying youth together in a safe space to:

- Affirm and validate Black student's identity
- Discuss strategies to confront marginalization and Anti-Black Racism
- Promote positive leadership amongst our Black students
- Provide mentorship opportunities and build connection to community

Please contact beme@ddsb.ca for more information

DDSB
Ignite Learning

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Guide to

Special Education Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)

Durham District School Board

JUNE 2025

Inclusive
STUDENT SERVICES

The Purpose of this Guide

Thank you for the opportunity to partner with you in program and pathway planning for your child. Your knowledge of your child's strengths, programming needs and interests are key in planning for their learning and well-being at school. You are an essential partner to your child's school team.

This guide has been created to provide you with information about the process we follow in the Durham District School Board (DDSB) for consideration and decision-making regarding identification as an exceptional student and program placement.

It is important that parent(s)/guardian(s) understand each of the steps in this process as we strongly believe that your input, and that of your child, is key when decisions are being made about their school program.

If you have questions after reading this guide, we encourage you to contact your child's school for additional assistance.

Key contacts at your school:

- Classroom Teacher
- Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT)
- Principal/Vice-Principal
- Inclusive Student Services team members

Thank you for partnering with school teams in supporting your child's program.

Kind regards,

Andrea McAuley

Superintendent of Education, Inclusive Student Services
Durham District School Board

Inclusive
STUDENT SERVICES

Serving Students and Families

The DDSB recognizes Indigenous rights are distinct. In the exercise of those rights, Indigenous staff and students shall not be subjected to actions with the aim or effect of depriving these distinct rights.

The DDSB is committed to learning, and working environments that centre human rights and equity and are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible, inclusive and free from discrimination, oppression, harassment, and harm.

As a district, we are committed to addressing ableism, shifting practices to an asset-based approach to inclusion and challenging medical models which focus on diagnosis and/or deficit. As a district, we acknowledge and commit to the work that must be done to make these shifts.

The DDSB provides a range of differentiated placements, programs, supports and individualized accommodation to maximize engagement, participation, integration and independence, enable meaningful access to education, and support student success.

In partnership with parent(s)/guardian(s), the DDSB considers the student's individual learning strengths and needs.

School teams and parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to engage in regular communication throughout the school year. Sharing of successes and working through where programming may be adjusted is part of an important partnership between home and school.

Exceptional Pupil and the Program According to the Education Act

An exceptional pupil is "a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that they are considered to need placement in a special education program…". Students are identified according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education and Training.

A special education program is an educational program that is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation; and includes a plan called an Individual Education Plan (IEP) containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil.

For more information on special education policies, laws, Policy and Program Memoranda and resource documents, visit the Ministry of Education website.

For most students, regular class placement with Indirect Support and appropriate accommodations is the most inclusive setting and must be considered as the first potential option for placement.

Categories of Exceptionality

The Education Act identifies five categories of exceptionalities:

- **Behaviour**
- **Communication (Autism, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Language Impairment, Speech Impairment, Learning Disability)**
- **Intellectual (Giftedness, Mild Intellectual Disability, Developmental Disability)**
- **Physical (Physical Disability, Blind and Low Vision)**
- **Multiple**

Supporting Many Paths to Success

On-going assessment of your child's strengths and needs is an important part of supporting your child. The Special Education in the Durham District School Board Many Paths to Success resource outlines the steps that school teams will take to assess, accommodate, provide specialized supports, and monitor the progress of your child as we learn more about these strengths and needs to best support them. Classroom teachers provide important information to both family and school team staff to determine next steps together. Individualization of a student's learning program is an ongoing cycle of planning, reflection and strategy refinement. A variety of information types, including feedback from you and your child, helps inform next steps.

Should initial accommodations or supports not sufficiently meet your child's needs, the SERT will be activated for more comprehensive supports. In partnership with families, additional assessment and information will be gathered through observation, daily tasks, formal assessment tools, and conversations to further the understanding of the strengths and needs of your child. This information will guide additional accommodations and further individualized planning.

A referral to additional Inclusive Student Services team members may be activated, with parent(s)/guardian(s) informed consent, to provide support, strategies, additional assessment, and recommendations for your child. A care conference may be arranged to bring together school, family and community supports to share any assessment data or new information and to discuss next steps.

In some situations where a student's needs are complex and/or medical information outlines the need, the steps towards IPRC may be moved along more quickly to meet your child's needs, including supporting programming modification or support through alternative curriculum.

What is an IPRC?

- An IPRC is a committee of the DDSB which undertakes a formal process that is mandated under Regulation 181 of the Education Act for students who require additional supports to be successful in meeting curriculum expectations.
- An IPRC is composed of at least three DDSB staff members, one of whom must be a Principal/Vice-Principal or a System Lead of the Board.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are key players in any decisions that are made regarding your child; you are highly encouraged to attend and participate in the meeting as your input is valued.
- Accommodation is an ongoing process involving adjusting services, programs and practices to remove barriers and better respond to or address individual Human Rights Code related needs. Program planning may include assessment by school board or community based, clinicians and the results are shared at school team meetings (or care conferences) with the parent(s)/guardian(s). If appropriate, then an IPRC may be requested.

The IPRC Committee

The team will strive to ensure that you are an integral part of the planning process. Your input is valuable within the decision making process.

During the IPRC meeting, the committee will:

- decide whether or not your child should be identified as an exceptional student as per Ministry of Education criteria;
- identify the areas of your child's exceptionality according to the categories and definitions of exceptionality provided by the Ministry of Education;
- after considering the options available, the committee will also decide an appropriate placement for your child based on individual needs and strengths;
- review the identification and placement at least once in each school year.

Annual IPRC Review

Your child's special education needs must be reviewed at least once a year at an annual review of placement. You will be notified of this in writing.

Before the IPRC

If a program is not yet meeting a student's needs, school staff will communicate concerns, in-class assessments, planning and strategies to parent(s)/guardian(s) on a regular basis. The teacher may request support from the school team comprised of the SERT and school administrator(s) for programming ideas.

If a program continues to not yet meet the student's need, the school team will host a Care Conference. A Care Conference is an informal, strategy seeking team meeting where all those who have been working to support your child meet with parent(s)/guardian(s) (and your child as appropriate), to determine further in school supports and strategies, the need for outside supports, and whether the student would benefit from a formal identification.

A summary of all information will be presented which may include:

- information you choose to share as parent(s)/guardian(s)
- educational assessments conducted by school staff
- community based assessments subject to the consent provisions completed by other professionals that you have provided informed consent to be involved with your child and are relevant to the identification or placement decision
- strengths, needs and interests of the student; decided in collaboration with you and based on assessment data
- potential programming options

If identification is being considered, the team can describe what placement options are available to meet your child's needs. Most of our students with special education strengths and needs access learning through regular class placements with indirect support. For some, a more intensive, smaller staff to student ratio program is recommended. More information and a list of these programs can be found on the DDSB Inclusive Student Services web page.

Options may also include provincial or demonstration schools run by the Ministry of Education.

Most of our students with special education strengths and needs are in regular class placements.

Requesting an IPRC

As a parent(s)/guardian(s), you have the right to request an IPRC. The request must be written and sent to your child's school principal. The principal shall organize the IPRC and inform you in writing of the process and timelines to IPRC.

The school team may request an IPRC based on their assessment(s) of your child's progress. The principal will inform you in writing.

Within 15 calendar days of receiving your request, the principal must provide you with a copy of the DDSB Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Guide to Special Education Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC).

Schedule of an IPRC

At least 10 days before the IPRC will be held, the principal or chair will provide you with a written notice of when the IPRC will meet (location/format, date and time). If the date is not convenient you may request an alternate date or time and the principal or chair will try and accommodate your request.

If you are unable to attend, the principal will forward to you a copy of the IPRC form. Your input is important even if you are unable to attend. Please offer any information for consideration to your school team in advance of the IPRC. The IPRC Statement of Decision will include a written statement of the identification and the recommendation of placement.

The Importance of Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are an essential part of the IPRC and an equal participant in the discussion that will lead to making a decision for your child. We encourage you to become as involved and informed as possible. We highly encourage you to attend the IPRC if able. If language interpretation services or accessibility supports are required to participate in the meeting, please ask your child's principal to arrange for what you need.

If your child is 16 years or older they are encouraged to attend the IPRC meeting. Children under age 16 may attend with parent(s)/guardian(s) permission. Given the sensitive nature of some of the information presented, you may want to talk in advance with your child and your school principal about how they might be involved in the meeting.

Prior to the IPRC, your input regarding strengths, interests and placement (if change is recommended) needs will be sought.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) should be offered an opportunity to review the student's strengths, needs and interests as well as other relevant updates, including any current assessment data prior to the meeting.

Planning for IPRC Participation

Students and parent(s)/guardian(s) in the IPRC

Parent(s)/guardian(s) and students 16 years of age or older are encouraged to attend the IPRC and are important contributors to the discussion. Staff who have come to know and work with your child will attend an IPRC.

An advocate or support individual, if invited by the student/parent(s)/guardian(s) may also be in attendance to provide support or speak on behalf of students and families. We request that the school team be notified in advance so that meeting room arrangements and any accessibility accommodations can be made for participants.

IPRC Committee

The IPRC Committee is comprised of at least three designated staff from the DDSB. These will include at least one Superintendent and/or Principal/Vice-Principal. It may include the System Lead for Inclusive Student Services, or other System Leads from the central office. Others might include:

- SERT, or Head of Special Education from the school
- Classroom Teacher and/or other teachers from the school
- Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing or Teacher of the Blind and Low Vision
- Facilitators
- Professional support staff e.g., Psychological Services or Speech and Language Pathologists

Further information about the five categories of exceptionalities, and their subcategories, can be found in the Ministry of Education resource, Part D: The Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process.

What Happens During the IPRC Meeting?

The IPRC Chairperson begins the meeting by welcoming all attendees and initiating introductions. The purpose and goals of the IPRC meeting are reviewed and participants, including the parent(s)/guardian(s), are invited to provide information to assist the committee in understanding the student's progress, strengths, needs and interests.

A regular classroom placement (mainstream placement) should be considered as the first and most inclusive option. Before recommending a placement in a special education class (small class placement) the IPRC must decide whether this placement will meet your child's needs.

At the IPRC, the chairperson will ask that a summary of strengths, needs and interests be presented to the committee. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will have been offered an opportunity to review this information prior to the meeting. IPRC meetings are usually scheduled for 10-20 minutes.

IPRC Discussion

The IPRC will review all available information relevant to IPRC about your child.

The members will:

- consider an educational assessment of your child;
- consider, subject to the provisions of the Health Care Consent Act, 1996, a health or psychological assessment of your child conducted by a qualified practitioner, if they feel that such an assessment is required to make a correct identification or placement decision;
- connect with your child, with your consent if your child is less than 16 years of age, if they feel it would be useful to do so; and
- consider any information that you share about your child or that your child shares (if they are 16 years of age of older).

The Committee may discuss any proposal that has been made about a special education program or special education services for your child. Committee members will discuss any such proposal at your request or at the request of your child, (if the child is 16 years of age or older).

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be invited to ask questions and to join in the discussion.

IPRC Decision

A decision will usually be made regarding identification and placement. The Chairperson will explain it carefully.

Placement Information

What will the IPRC consider in making its placement decision?

Before the IPRC can consider placing a student in a special education placement, it must first consider whether placement in a regular class, with appropriate special education services, will:

- meet the student's needs; and
- be consistent with parent(s)/guardian(s) preferences.

If, after considering all of the information presented to it, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a regular class will meet the student's needs and that such a decision is consistent with the parent preferences, the committee will decide in favour of placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services.

Regular Class with Indirect Support

The vast majority of our students with special education strengths and needs will access regular class placements. This placement includes individualized accommodations. The placement also involves a number of key supports and strategies often referred to as 'Indirect Support' and can include but are not limited to:

- Learning planned on a foundation of universal design for learning (UDL);
- Differentiation in environmental, teaching and assessment strategies;
- Focused small support groups for specific skill building;
- Targeted and small group instruction and intervention within classes
- Specific tools and resources introduced to address individual learning needs, support, and skill building;
- Leveraging of technology to provide instruction, rehearsal, engagement and support; and
- Programming support from SERT(s), Inclusive Student Services team members, and, with consent, collaboration with involved community agencies and other experts.

In the DDSB, Regular Class with Withdrawal Assistance and Regular Class with Resource Assistance are placements for the relatively small number of students accessing direct teaching by Itinerant (teachers with specialized certifications working in multiple schools) for students who are Blind/Low Vision or Deaf/Hard of Hearing. It is important to note that placement does not indicate any specific educational assistant support.

Special Education Placements

A listing of Special Education Placement class types and description of the program outcomes for each class type can be found in the Special Education in the Durham District School Board Many Paths to Success resource and individual program brochures.

What Decisions Can Be Made by the IPRC?

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given a record of Decision of the recommendations of the Committee.

The Committee:

- Is clear on what information is being used to inform the decisions of the IPRC
- Describes and provides a statement of the student's strengths, needs and interests
- Determines whether your child is "exceptional", and if so, designates the area of exceptionality as defined by the Ministry of Education and DDSB criteria. A student may be identified with more than one exceptionality
- Determines placement options based on your child's needs and strengths (where the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional)
- Determines the appropriate level of support for the student, based on the placement: and one of five placement options defined by the Ministry of Education
- States the reason for the recommendation if the committee has decided that the student placement is a Special Education Class
- Discusses and makes additional written recommendations of specific programs or services deemed by the committee to be important for understanding and meeting the needs of the student
- The IPRC may also consider referring the student to a provincial committee for consideration of eligibility for admission to one of the Provincial Schools for blind, deaf or deaf-blind students, or to one of the Provincial Demonstration Schools for students with severe learning disabilities

Five Placement Options as Defined by the Ministry of Education

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **A special education class with partial integration** where the student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class in which the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for at least 50 per cent of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.
5. **A full-time special education class** where the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for the entire school day.

An IPRC placement decision cannot be implemented unless a parent(s)/guardian(s) has agreed to the decision or has not filed a notice of appeal within the request time limit (within 30 calendar days of receiving the IPRC Statement of Decision).

If You Agree with the IPRC Decision

If you agree, then you will be asked to indicate by signing the IPRC Statement of Decision that you agree with the designation of the exceptionality and the placement. You may take the document home to consider or you may sign the document at the conclusion of the IPRC. You have a maximum of 30 working days to finalize with parent(s)/guardian(s) signature.

The appropriate staff will then notify the school that you agree with the decision and that an IEP will be developed within 30 school days of formal placement within the recommended program.

If You Disagree with the IPRC Decision

If you disagree with either the identification or the placement, you have 2 options available to you:

1. Within 15 calendar days of receiving the decision, request in writing an additional meeting to re-evaluate the decision of the IPRC. The principal must hold the meeting as soon as possible. Any new or additional information related to the previous decisions can be shared at this time. Following the meeting, the Chair of the IPRC must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of any changes to the decision of the IPRC.

If after the second meeting to re-evaluate the IPRC decision you still disagree, then you have 15 calendar days to appeal the decision in writing.

2. Within 30 calendar days of receiving the IPRC decision, the parent(s)/guardian(s) may appeal the decision in writing.

If you do not agree with the IPRC decision but you do not appeal it, the board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

If as parent(s)/guardian(s), you disagree with the decision reached at the Annual Review of Placement, you may appeal in the same way as described for the original IPRC.

You may appeal the IPRC decision in writing. Address your appeal to:
Superintendent of Inclusive Student Services,
Durham District School Board,
400 Taunton Road East, Whitby, ON, L1R 2K6

What Happens in the IPRC Appeal Process?

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- School board staff will establish a Special Education Appeal Board to hear your appeal.
- The chair of the appeal board will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but no later than 30 calendar days after the chair has been selected (unless parent(s)/guardian(s) and the board both provide written consent to a later date).
- The appeal board will receive the material reviewed by the IPRC and may interview any persons who may be able to contribute information about the matter under appeal.
- You as the parent(s)/guardian(s), and your child, if they are 16 years old or over, are entitled to be present at, and to participate in, all discussions.
- The appeal board must make its recommendation within 3 days of the meeting's conclusion. It may:
  - *agree with the IPRC and recommend that the decision be implemented; or*
  - *disagree with the IPRC and make a recommendation to the board about your child's identification, placement, or both.*
- The appeal board will report its recommendations in writing to you and to the school board, providing the reasons for its recommendations.
- Within 30 calendar days of receiving the appeal board's written statement, the school board will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations. School boards are not required to follow the appeal board recommendation.
- You may accept the decision of the school board, or you may appeal to a Special Education Tribunal. You may request a hearing by writing to the secretary of the Special Education Tribunal. Information about making an application to the tribunal will be included with the appeal board's decision.

The Special Education Appeal Board is made up of three members:

1. one member selected by the school board;
2. one member selected by the parent of the pupil; and
3. a chair member (selected by the school Board and parent members)

The appointed members cannot be an employee of the school board, an employee of the Ministry of Education, or a person who has had any prior involvement in this matter (including anyone who may have been involved in the IPRC process). Once the school board and parent members have been chosen, those individuals appoint a third person to act as chair. This will happen within fifteen (15) days of the parent(s)/guardian(s) member's appointment.

The Ministry of Education requires that every student who has been identified by an IPRC as exceptional must have an IEP. The IEP is developed by the school with opportunity for consultation with parent(s)/ guardian(s), the school team and may include input from the central board staff.

Following the IPRC

What is an IEP?

An IEP will be developed for the student, inclusive of an opportunity for your input and your child's, and will include:

- A statement of the student's strengths, needs and interests;
- Specific education expectations;
- An outline of the special education program and services that will be provided;
- A statement about the methods by which your child's progress will be reviewed; and
- A transition plan to assist with changes to a student's experience at school as part of their school life (such as the transition between grades or schools).

The IEP may also include:

- A Student Safety Plan for students whose behaviour poses a risk of injury to themselves and/or others;
- Medical plan for students who may experience an emergency as the result of a medical condition as outlined by a physician to describe the necessary interventions required (e.g., seizures, choking, etc.);
- Emergency Evacuation plan for students who require specialized assistance in the event of a school emergency (e.g., fire drill, lock-down, etc.).

The IEP must be completed within 30 school days after your child has been formally placed in the program by an IPRC, and the principal must ensure that you receive a copy of it. Every student will receive an updated IEP within 30 working days of the start of each school year. Your input into this initial draft is important. The IEP is a working document that will be updated for every reporting period, or as student needs and program strategies change. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to continue to provide feedback as part of the ongoing development and implementation of the IEP.

Where Can Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Obtain Additional Information?

Additional information can be obtained from:

School Based Team Members such as Classroom Teachers/Support Staff, SERT, and School Administrators.

Inclusive Student Services Team Members such as Instructional Facilitator/Inclusive Student Services and System Lead–Inclusive Student Services.

Inclusive Student Services, Durham District School Board:
905-666-6371 or 1-800-265-3968 or Text Telephone (TTY): 905-666-6943

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

School boards are required to establish a Special Education Advisory Committee which includes representatives from local parent associations and trustees.

These representatives serve as advocates for children and parents, and the associations have useful parent(s)/guardian(s) resources. For more information, view the SEAC brochure.

Members of The Special Education Advisory Committee
c/o Superintendent of Education/Inclusive Student Services, Durham District School Board
905-666-6371 or 1-800-265-3968, extension 6371 and Text Telephone (TTY): 905-666-6943

Local Associations that Further the Interests of Exceptional Persons

Association for Bright Children (ABC) abcontario.ca

Autism Ontario—Durham Region Chapter autismontario.com/region/central-east

Durham Down Syndrome Association ddsa.ca

Easter Seals Ontario easterseals.org

GrandviewKids Family Advisory Council
grandviewkids.ca/about-us/family-leader-program/family-advisory-council

Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region ldadr.on.ca

Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC) opbvic.ca

Sawubona—Africentric Circle of Support sawubonaacs.org

Members At Large:
Elizabeth Daniel jason_liz@sympatico.ca, Jessica Wells jessica.carol.wells@gmail.com

DDSB Trustees:
Michelle Arseneault michelle.arseneault@ddsb.ca, Donna Edwards donna.edwards@ddsb.ca, Kelly Miller kelly.miller@ddsb.ca

Provincial and Demonstration Schools

The Ministry of Education and Training operates provincial and demonstration schools throughout Ontario for students who are deaf, blind, deaf-blind and severely learning-disabled, as well as those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Residential programs are offered at the schools Monday to Friday for students who live too far from school to travel daily.

Demonstration Schools for English-Speaking Students with ADHD and Severe Learning-Disabilities:

Sagonaska School
350 Dundas Street West, Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
Telephone: 613-967-2830

Amethyst School
1515 Cheapside Street, London, ON N5V 3N9
Telephone: 519-453-4400

Trillium School
347 Ontario Street South, Milton, ON L9T 3X9
Telephone: 905-878-8428

Schools for the Deaf:

Ernest C. Drury School
255 Ontario Street South, Milton, ON LT9 2M5
Telephone: 905-878-7195
Text Telephone (TTY): 905-878-7195

Robarts School
1515 Cheapside Street, London, ON N5V 3N9
Telephone and Text Telephone (TTY): 519-453-4400

Sir James Whitney School
350 Dundas Street West, Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
Telephone and Text Telephone (TTY): 613-967-2823

Schools for the Deaf/Blind:

W. Ross MacDonald School
350 Brant Avenue, Brantford, ON N3T 3J9
Telephone: 519-759-0730

Helpful Information for Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

School Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Principal Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Inclusive Student Services Team Members:

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Dates to Remember/Key Information:

Appendix H

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Life BEYOND High School

TRANSITION PLANNING

Getting Started

for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Explore the transition pathway and begin planning supports and services for life after high school.

- **Academic Upgrading**
- **Modified Post-Secondary Program**
- **Workplace Level College Programs**
- **Post Secondary School** (College & University)

- **Day Programs**
- **Social & Community Programs**
- **Sport & Team Programs**
- **Creative and Arts Programs**
- **Self-Developmental & Skill Building Programs**
- **Respite**

- **Employment Service Providers**
- **ODSP Employment Supports**
- **Programs with a work readiness component**
- **Programs with a volunteering component**

Talk to your Classroom Teacher, Special Education Resource Teacher, or Transition Coordinator for more information and resources.

TRANSITION PATHWAY

General Considerations

- **Attend all Individual Education Plan** (IEP), **Identification, Placement and Review Committee** (IPRC) **and Transition Planning meetings and discuss long term transition planning.**
- **Apply for the Disability Tax Credit** (DTC)
- **Open and contribute to Registered Disability Savings Plan** (RDSP)
- **Explore community supports and services for life after high school.**

HELPFUL TIP
This is a suggested timeline for transition events. If you're older than a certain age but haven't completed the tasks for that age, please make sure to finish them.

14–15 years old

- **Begin collecting/preparing documentation for future applications.**
  - **Birth Certificate**
  - **Health Card**, also called an OHIP card
  - **Social Insurance Number**, also called SIN
  - **Passport**
- **Open a bank account.**
- **Obtain a copy or request a Psychological Assessment*.**
- **Apply for an Access2 Card.**
- **Explore Transit Supports and Services in Durham Region.**

HELPFUL TIP
Begin exploring Community Supports & Services!

16 years old

- **Apply for Developmental Services Ontario** (DSO).

  To apply you will need:
  - **Proof of Age** (i.e., Birth Certificate)
  - **Proof of Ontario residence** (i.e., Health Card)
  - **Psychological Assessment — with scores on both** ***Cognitive and Adaptive Functioning***
- **Apply for an Ontario Photo Card.**

HELPFUL TIP
When you apply for DSO, you are also applying for Passport Program funding.

17 years old

- **If student is beneficiary of a RDSP, begin filing personal income tax returns to ensure the continuity of grants and bonds at 19 years old.**
- **Apply for Ontario Disability Support Program** (ODSP).

  To apply you will need:
  - **SIN Card**
  - **Health Card**
  - **Banking information**
  - **Immigration Documents** (if applicable)
  - **Tax returns** (if applicable)

HELPFUL TIP
Having a letter of eligibility from DSO can help speed up the process of applying for ODSP.

18–21 years old

- **Adult Funding and Services begin.**
  (i.e., DSO funded services, Passport funding, ODSP income support and benefits)
- **Begin planning supports and services needed for life after high school.**
  (i.e., learning about transit services, explore options for support workers, tour and meet with local day programs).

HELPFUL TIP
Call DSO 6 months before leaving high school to let them know you are looking for supports and services!

*DDSB supports provision of Psychological Assessments without precedence and subject to annual review of resources.

General Considerations

- **Attend all Individual Education Plan** (IEP meetings, and Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) **meetings and discuss long term transition planning.**

- Apply for the **Disability Tax Credit** (DTC).

  WHAT: The DTC is a non-refundable tax credit, that helps people with a disability, or their supporting family member reduce the amount of income tax they have to pay.

  WHY: It is also required to open a **Registered Disability Savings Plan** (see more information in the next section).

  WHO: To be eligible for DTC a person must (1) have a severe impairment in physical or mental functions, (2) the impairment must be prolonged, and (3) must be restricted at least 90% of the time.

  WHEN: There is no age requirement, meaning if you qualify you can apply at any age.

  HOW: Apply for DTC by completing Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) form T2201.

- Open and contribute to **Registered Disability Savings Plan** (RDSP).

  WHAT: The RDSP is a savings plan for people with disabilities intended to support long-term financial security. RSDP are made up of personal contributions, and bonds and grants contributed by the federal government.

  WHY: Having RDSP does not affect **Ontario Disability Support Program** eligibility (see more information about ODSP, under 17.5 years old)

  WHO: To be a beneficiary of RDSP a person must (1) qualify for Disability Tax Credit, (2) have a valid Social Insurance Number, (3) be resident of Canada, and (4) be under the age of 60.

  WHEN: After qualifying for Disability Tax Credit, an RSDP can be opened until 59 years old.

  HOW: If the RDSP beneficiary is under 19, a legal parent, guardian, or public department, agency or institution can open an RDSP as a Plan Holder. Plan holders can contact participating financial institutions that offer RDSPs.

14–15 years old

Begin collecting/preparing documentation for future applications.

- **Social Insurance Number**, also called SIN
- **Health Card**, also called an OHIP card
- **Passport**
- **Birth Certificate**

Open a bank account

WHAT: A bank account can be used for everyday payments and savings.

WHY: Having a separate bank account provides important benefits when it comes to employment, cashing cheques, safety and accessibility. When you apply for ODSP, financial assistance will be deposited directly into your bank account.

HOW: You can open a bank account online, in person or by calling a financial institution. You will either need to provide two pieces of identification, or provide one piece of identification and have someone who is in good standing with the bank or community confirm your identity.

Start learning about Transit Supports and Services offered in Durham Region.

For more information see page 12.

Obtain a copy or request a **Psychological Assessment***

WHAT: A psychological assessment is a written evaluation of an individual's behaviour, abilities and other characteristics and capabilities completed by a psychologist or psychological associate.

WHY: It is required for Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) application. Specifically, DSO requires assessments containing information on **Cognitive Functioning,** and **Adaptive Skills.**

WHO: You can request a copy or make a request to have a psychological assessment completed by either:

- **Contacting your Physician**
- **Contacting your Teacher, Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT), or Curriculum Lead**

Apply for an **Access2 Card.**

WHAT: The Access 2 Card is a program that allows cardholders to eliminate or reduce admission fees for accompanying support persons.

WHY: Presenting an Access 2 card at participating venues decreases admission fees for a support person.

WHO: To be eligible for an Access 2 Card, individuals must (1) live with a permanent disability, and (2) the nature of the disability requires the assistance of a support person when visiting venues.

WHEN: The Access 2 card is for all ages and types of permanent disabilities that require the assistance of a support person.

HOW: To apply for an Access 2 Card individuals must complete an application and pay the administration fee.

*DDSB supports provision of Psychological Assessments without precedence and subject to annual review of resources.

16 years old

Apply for Developmental Services Ontario (DSO).

WHAT: DSO is the access point for all adult developmental services that are funded in Ontario. Government funded services include, the **Passport Program***, Housing Supports, Community Participation Supports, Caregiver Respite Supports and Specialized Supports such as Person Directed Planning, and Adult Protective Services.

WHY: At 18 years old all children's developmental services end, such as Special Services at Home (SSAH), Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD), and Ontario Autism Program (OAP). DSO is the adult funded supports. Having a letter of eligibility for DSO will also help speed the process of applying for the **Ontario Disability Support Program** (ODSP).

WHO: To be eligible for DSO, individuals must (1) have a developmental disability, (2) live in Ontario, and (3) be 18 years or older.

DSO services begin at 18 years old, however, individuals can apply for DSO at 16 years old.

HOW: Individuals can apply when they have:

- **Proof of age** (i.e., birth certificate)
- **Proof of Ontario residence** (i.e., health card)
- **Psychological Assessment with scores on Cognitive and Adaptive Functioning and age of onset.**

*What is the **Passport Program?**

WHAT: Passport is a reimbursement program where people and families submit invoices and receipts for admissible expenses. Then we reimburse admissible expenses up to the amount of the annual funding allocation of $5,500.

WHY: Passport funding can be used to help individuals get involved in their community, by providing funding that can be used to purchase services and supports for community participation, activities of daily living and person-directed planning.

WHO: To be receive Passport funding individuals must be eligible for DSO.

WHEN: Passport funding begins at 18 years old.

HOW: Once DSO has determined eligibility for funded services, individuals must consent to a referral to the Passport Program. This happens during the DSO application process. Individuals will then be referred to a local Passport agency to receive funds.

Apply for an Ontario Photo Card.

WHAT: The Ontario Photo Card is a government issued identification available to Ontarians who do not have a driver's licence.

WHY: Having an Ontario Photo card makes it easier for individuals to do things that require official identification (i.e., open a bank account, domestic travel).

WHO: Available for individuals who (1) do not/will not have a driver's licence, (2) are an Ontario resident, and (3) are 16 years of age or older.

WHEN: 16 years of age or older.

HOW: To obtain an Ontario Photo card individuals must go to a ServiceOntario centre and bring documents to prove their legal name and date of birth (i.e., passport, birth certificate, health card).

17 years old

- If student is beneficiary of a RDSP, begin filing personal income tax returns to ensure the continuity of grants and bonds at 19 years old.

17.5 years old

- Apply for **Ontario Disability Support Program** (ODSP).

WHAT: The Ontario Disability Support Program provides financial and job support for people with disabilities. It helps cover costs like food, housing, and medical needs, including drug and vision care. ODSP also offer assistance to help you find and keep jobs.

WHY: ODSP offers valuable supports for individuals with disabilities and is the only government financial assistance for people with disabilities.

WHO: To be eligible for ODSP, individuals must (1) be 18 years or older, (2) be an Ontario resident, (3) have assets that are no greater than the limits set out by ODSP, (4) be in financial need, and (4) meet ODSP's definition of a person with a disability.

WHEN: ODSP income and health benefits begin at 18 years old, however individuals can apply for ODSP at 17.5 (6 months before their 18th birthday).

HOW: To apply for ODSP individuals will need the following documents:

- **SIN**
- **Health Card**
- **Birth Certificate**
- **Immigration documents** (if applicable)
  - This may include Unique Client Identifier and/or Sponsor Information.
- **Income Tax Return** (if applicable)
  - This is only for individuals who have filed a personal income tax return.
- **Up to date banking information**

Applications can be completed online, **sada.mcss.gov.on.ca/intake/home-page**, by calling, **1-888-999-1142**, or visiting the ODSP office, **850 King St W, Oshawa, ON, L1J 2L5.**

18–21 years old

- At 18 years old children services and funding end, this includes **Special Services at Home** (SSAH), **Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities** (ACSD), and **Ontario Autism Program** (OAP).

- **Passport funding** and **ODSP income support and health benefits** start.

- Explore transit services through **Durham Region Transit.**

TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP)

- **The Transit Assistance Program** is for customers receiving social assistance (including ODSP) in Durham Region.
- To apply for TAP, individuals can bring their **monthly social assistance statement** to a DRT PRESTO point of sale.

SUPPORT PERSON CARD

- **The Support Person Card** is available for customers who require the support of another person as it relates to communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs.
- The correct fare is to be paid by the customer, and the support person travels for free when the support person card is presenting upon boarding.
- Cards are valid for 3 years.

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SPECIALIZED SERVICES

- **Durham Region Transit** (DRT) **Specialized Services** provides public transit service for eligible persons with disabilities who are unable to use conventional transit services for all or part of their ride.
- Individuals must complete an application package.
- **DRT** will confirm eligibility by mail.
- For more information visit https://www.durhamregiontransit.com/en/routes-and-schedules/on-demand-specialized.aspx or call 1-866-247-0055

- Begin planning supports and services needed for life after high school (i.e., learning about transit services, explore options for support workers, tour and meet with local day programs).

WHAT: Supports and services for life after high school will look different for everyone. They may include:

- **Continuing Education**
- **Employment/Volunteer**
- **Community**

WHY: Planning for supports and services before leaving school is important as there may be wait times, registration periods, fees, or other considerations to be aware of. These may impact how quickly individuals will be able to access supports and services.

WHO: Planning supports and services for after high school is important for all students.

- You can explore supports and services by:
- Attending DDSB's annual **Life Beyond High School Event** or checking out the **Life Beyond High School Transition Supports webpage**, ddsb.ca/en/family-and-community-support/life-beyond-high-school-transition-supports
- Talk to your Classroom Teacher, Special Education Resource Teacher, or Transition Coordinator for more information and resources!

OTHER TRANSITION PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

HOME & LIVING SITUATIONS

There isn't a single 'right' or 'best way to live. Choices about home and living situations are influenced by personal preferences, needs, finances, resources and what's available.

***Please be aware that wait times for government funded housing can be long, depending on priority and need.**

Examples of housing options that focus on the needs of adults with intellectual disabilities might include:

LIVING WITH FAMILY

Living with your family in your family home. You may qualify for support with activities of daily living from a Personal Support Worker.

Contact Ontario Health atHome if you are interested in learning more about home care services.

SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING

Living more independently, with someone to help with daily activities. You receive between 2-10 hours of support during the day every week. You are alone overnight.

Contact Developmental Service Ontario (DSO) if you are interested in learning more about this option.

GROUP HOME LIVING

Living with a few unrelated people, with support 24 hours per day and accommodate you based on your needs and abilities.

Contact Developmental Service Ontario (DSO) if you are interested in learning more about this option.

HOST FAMILY HOME/ASSOCIATE LIVING SUPPORT

You live with a family who can provide you with care and support. You are encouraged to become an active member of the household. You are matched with a family that has similar interests, needs, and lifestyle.

Contact Developmental Service Ontario (DSO) if you are interested in learning more about this option.

CREATIVE HOUSING OPTIONS

Explore innovative, forward-thinking housing options, by exploring some of the resources listed below.

Housing Toolkit
from Developmental Services Ontario

Housing Resources
from ConnectABILITY.ca

Housing Navigator for DSO Central East Region
Kathrine Pickard
1 855 277 2121 ext. 2218 or
kpickard@yssn.ca

A Place to Call Home, Housing Resources
from Partners For Planning (P4P)

Imagining Home Meetings
offered by Durham Association for Family Resources and Support

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Legal considerations may apply to young adults with intellectual disabilities, depending on their needs and situation.

Examples of legal considerations may include supported decision making and/or substitute decision making for property & personal care, legal guardianship, estate planning, trusts, Microboards and more!

Check out the resources for more information on Legal Considerations:

- Future Planning Tool from Plan Institute
- Planning Guide from Individual Funding (IF) Library
- Legal and Estate Planning Resources from Partners for Planning
- Financial and Legal Resources from ConnectABILITY.ca

Disclaimer: This Transition Planning: Getting Started document is intended for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal, technical, business, or other advice and should not be relied on as such. Please consult a professional if you have any questions related to the topics discussed in this document. Durham District School Board (DDSB) does not endorse any commercial product, process or service referenced in this document, or its producer or provider. The DDSB also does not make any express or implied warranties, or assumes any legal liability for the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, or usefulness of any information contained in this document, including web-links to other servers. All URLs mentioned in this document will link to an external website.

NOTES:

SCAN ME!

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Transition Planning for Students with Special Education Strengths and Needs

WELL-BEING EVERYONE EVERY DAY

Inclusive STUDENT SERVICES

Flexible approaches, consultation with families/caregivers to consider students' individual identities, needs and circumstances that impact transitions, need to be considered in focusing scope and implementing transition strategies and supports for individual students. Collaboration and ongoing communication are essential to exploring options and determining workable strategies.

Our shared commitment is to keep students at the centre of special education programming and service planning including transition supports. Collaboration with families and caregivers is foundational to decision making to individualize the planning for each student.

This resource tool has been designed to support schools with transition planning. Focus is on the macro transitions that students may be moving through whether that be, for example, entry to school, program changes or secondary to adult pathways.

Examples of Key Transitions for Students:

- Entry to School
- School to School
- Class to Class
- Grade to Grade
- Changes in School Support
- School to/from Community Program
- Elementary to Secondary
- Secondary to Post-Secondary
- School to Community Service
- School to Work
- Program Placement Change

Why Transition Planning is Important

A transition is defined as a process of change that requires attention and flexibility and may create vulnerability and worry. From our youngest students to our most senior staff, we are challenged as we navigate this particular transition together, and collaboration is essential.

Transitions include layers of planning including well-being and mental health considerations, leveraging strengths, bolstering strategies and supports in areas of anticipated challenge.

Supporting Transitions for Students

Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs
(Ministry PPM 156)
This memorandum sets out the requirements for district school boards with respect to transition planning for students with special education needs, from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Key points in PPM 156:

- Transitions occur both within the micro (within the day) and at significant key times such as entry to school, grades, programs, schools as well as elementary to secondary, secondary to post-secondary and through annual reviews which change student program placement.
- Principals are responsible for ensuring that transition plans are developed, implemented and maintained.
- Transition plans must be developed for all students who have an IEP, whether they are formally identified or not; Transition Plans are a part of the IEP itself.
- Transition plans must be developed in consultation with the parent(s)/caregiver(s), student (as appropriate), post-secondary institutions (where appropriate), and relevant community agencies or partners (as necessary).
- Transition plans will identify specific goals, support needs, actions to achieve the goals, roles, responsibilities and timelines.
- Ontario Regulation 181/98 states that for exceptional students who are age 14 years or over and who are not identified solely as gifted, the student's IEP must include a transition plan for transition from school to work, further education, and/or community living.
- For children and youth accessing support through Education Community Partnership Programs (ECPPs) provide programming which centres on treatment needs with educational wrap around. District staff and partner agency staff will work together in creating transition plans when entering in and moving from programs. In the Durham District School Board (DDSB), ECPPs are supported through Grove School. Transition Planning to/from Grove School Programs is specifically noted later in this document.

Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) – PPM140

Memorandum PPM 140 provides a framework for school boards to incorporate the use of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into board practices, and instructional programming, for our students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

Key points in PPM 140:

- Ensures the implementation of effective, evidence-based educational practices, to meet the individual needs of students with ASD.
- Intended to strengthen the collaborative relationships between students, families, schools and community partners.
- Requirements include:
    1. School boards must offer students with ASD special education programs and services, including, where appropriate, special education programs using ABA methods.
    2. School boards must plan for the transition between various activities and settings involving students with ASD.
- Incorporating the principles of ABA into transition planning for our students with ASD will help to ensure a thorough assessment of student needs (via data collection and analysis), proactive planning measures, skill building for the student, reinforcement contingencies, fidelity of programming across staff supporting our students, monitoring of programming, and generalization of program to new settings/people, in order to facilitate a thoughtful transition process.

Although this particular memorandum highlights the effectiveness of implementing the principles of ABA within our practices for students with ASD, it should be noted the generalization of these strategies to students throughout the board (identified or non-identified students), has also been embedded throughout our educational practices.

Educator Support Guide to Transition Planning:

The Educator Support Guide for Transition Planning, a Ministry of Education – Learning for All K-12 initiative, is a transition brochure developed by the Barrie Region Boards to assist educators in writing and implementing meaningful transition plans for students from Kindergarten to Graduation who have an IEP. Please refer to brochure on page 6.

A Note About Integrated Transition Planning for Students with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities

The Ministries of Children and Youth Services, Community and Social Services, and the Ministry of Education have created the memorandum entitled, “Integrated Transition Planning for Young People with Developmental Disabilities” (D.O.D January 28, 2013). The goal of this memorandum is to provide

school boards with protocols that would lead to the development of a single integrated transition plan for every young student with a developmental disability.

As highlighted within this document, integrated transition planning for youth with developmental disabilities includes collaboration between the student and their families, service providers, and school boards. The common goal of this collaborative team is to ensure for a smooth transition to work, further education, participation in life activities, and/or community living, based on the individual student, their strengths/needs, and their own personal transition goals. Our Transition Coordinator team can be activated to provide support to students and families.

Mental Health and Well-Being

The pandemic continues to have a major impact on all students and their respective families, especially students who were vulnerable and/or at risk prior to the pandemic, i.e., students with special needs associated with specific medical and/or psychological conditions, including educational limitations, as well as those with individual/family mental health needs. The impact of this pandemic may have resulted in an elevated stress response in one or more individuals in the family. The mental health of students will be influenced by both pre-pandemic stressors as well as the stressful period of dealing with the variety of issues/hardships associated with the pandemic.

Working in collaboration with parents/caregivers, school teams and community partners, it is necessary to identify students with a heightened level of anxiety and/or possible signs of traumatic response. These students and their families may need support from the school and other systems (medical, mental health, etc.) to cope adequately during any transition period. Many of these students already may have been flagged for attention based on their prior academic histories and developmental trajectories. However, additional students may require supports on numerous levels. Support may be required on a short-term basis or for a prolonged period, depending on factors associated with the individual student, their family, community, and supports available to them.

Working in collaboration with school teams and Inclusive Student Services, it may be helpful to operationally define the level of support for student needs to be responsive to the tiered level of support required. Examples of tiered responses to student needs are noted on the next page. This framework can help school teams differentiate between individual student setting events and risk factors. It also allows school teams to continue to be attuned to the key features of our students who are struggling.

The capacity of students to cope adequately with the transition back to school is influenced by individual and family-based factors as affected by the pandemic and other experiences and their associated changes in routines, economic status, access to supports and personal vulnerabilities. It will also be influenced by factors associated with the staff and the organization of the school that intends to welcome the student back to school. The student's ability to adjust during the transition period needs to be viewed within a larger context, including the system of the school and the community, and the extent to which all these systems have been negatively impacted by the pandemic and other stressors over a prolonged period of time.

Transition Team PLANNING OPTIONS

GOAL 1 **To identify strategies required to support the transition for students with an IEP.**	**Transitions Entry to School**	**Possible Actions -** Consider development of IEP and Safety Plan • Arrange visit to current setting (day-care, home, etc) • Arrange visit to classroom/school • Prepare visuals to assist with the transition: school photo book or video, map of the school • Classroom/school scan of learning materials, resources and space
	Transitions School to School	**Possible Actions -** Arrange receiving school/class visits • Arrange transfer of OSR with updated IEP, and transition plan • All About Me/ IPP plans transferred to new school • Contact representatives from outside agencies who are to be involved with student (e.g. CCAC) • Communicate with receiving school staff and parents/guardians regarding transition issues and/or supports (i.e. School information, transportation, timetable, equipment)
	Transitions Class to Class	**Possible Actions -** Create a daily schedule to prepare moving from class to class • Prompt (visual, verbal) 5 minutes prior to the end of class • Create a checklist to gather materials required for each class • Provide a transitional object (e.g. fidget toy, familiar object) as a source of comfort • Provide opportunity to practice route from class to class • Provide opportunity to practice routine for entering each class and parents/guardians regarding transition issues and/or supports (i.e. School information, transportation, timetable, equipment)
GOAL 2 **To develop a transition plan in collaboration with a student's transition team.**	**Transitions Class to Class**	**Possible Actions -** Identify strategies that are successful and share them with new staff • Have receiving staff observe student and meet the student to review programming needs • Arrange a visit for the student prior to school starting
	Transitions Changes in School Support	**Possible Actions -** Introduce student to new staff in the classroom • Provide social script • Work through routines as indicated in individual schedule (visual, electronic) • Conduct specific training for new staff (e.g. lifting, toileting, augmentative communication devices, assistive technology) • Facilitate any job mentoring/shadowing experiences for school staff • Inform parents of change in personnel
	Transitions Elementary to Secondary	**Possible Actions -** Identify and document strategies that are successful and share with new staff • Gather information about the receiving school's environment while considering the student's programming needs • Have receiving team observe student and programming in elementary school • Organize student visit to receiving environment
	Transitions Secondary to Post Secondary	**Possible Actions -** Ensure that student is an active participant with knowledge of their learning needs • Update assessment information as appropriate • Assess student's ability to self-advocate and provide opportunities to practice skills if needed • Ongoing guidance and special education support re: goal setting and career planning, scholarship availability for students with IEP, and the college/university/trade application process • Investigate available financial supports (e.g. Bursaries, scholarships, OSAP etc.) • Guidance and Special Education staff to provide information about all university and college transition programs
GOAL 3 **To implement strategies and determine next steps.**	**Transitions School to Community**	**Possible Actions -** Explore student interests, skills, abilities, needs and appropriate self-advocacy skills • Review OSR and determine if appropriate documentation of disability is in place to ensure student/family meets criteria for appropriate community supports • Connect parent/guardian with local associations (e.g. Community Living, DSO. etc) • Invite the agency Case Manager to transition meeting • Identify transition community partners from outside the school that would help the family and student
	Transitions School to Work	**Possible Actions -** Complete Individual Pathway Plan (IPP) • Complete job readiness skills (application form, apply for Social Insurance Card, resume) • Practice responses to job interview questions • Provide opportunities for simulated employment skills (e.g. apply to jobs online) • Pursue summer/part-time employment **in area of strength and interest • Participate in workplace experiences • Explore possible career choices**

COMMON ACTIONS

- Establish transition team to support the planning. It will include parents/guardians, school staff, the student (where appropriate) and can also include school board staff, health care workers, community workers and others who support the student
- Arrange special transportation as required
- Arrange transfer of equipment
- Provide new staff with a contact list and/or appropriate resources
- Arrange for peer supports and student awareness activities
- Gather information regarding student's strengths and interests using OSR
- Incorporate self advocacy into the student's IEP
- Ensure that the student's voice in the All About Me Portfolio/Individual Pathway Plan (IPP) is incorporated into the transition planning process
- Educate student and staff about the student's strengths and needs and the use of accommodations, assistive technology and learning strategies that are applicable for his/her learning
- Determine resources/professional training opportunities that may be required for staff
- Organize materials to support student in transition (social scripts, visuals, photos, equipment transfer)
- The transition plan must be stored in the OSR
- Inform parents/guardians of any significant changes that will impact the transition plan
- A transition plan is required for all students with an IEP, however, there may be times where the transition plan may indicate that no action is required at this time

Examples of Mental Health and Well-Being Tiered Systems of Support:

Tier 1 Supports: Irrespective of age or grade level, students may require support for return to school because of the increased level of change and stress experienced over the COVID period, with possible associated hardships facing their families. For example: a Grade One student who is leaving home after five months of not being at school in person and is experiencing some separation anxiety and/or worries about the parent's health; a Grade Nine student who experiences a heightened level of anxiety of facing a new school and new friends, in the context of parents losing their jobs due to COVID-19. These students will need a supportive team of staff at the school who are working collaboratively with them (and parents/caregivers) to help them adjust to being back at school. Psychological Services and/or Social Work may not be required at this stage of the student's transition back to school.

Tier 2 Supports: Students may require support for the return to school because of the increased stress level experienced over the COVID period with associated hardships facing the whole family, combined with pre-existent concerns about their functioning. For example: a student who is formally identified and supported with an IEP before the pandemic because of a history of academic and behavioural difficulties; upon return, worries are exacerbated regarding failing grades and other stress points, e.g., family transitions. This student may need Psychological Services and/or Social Work at the DDSB and possibly services in the community.

Tier 3/Tier 4 Supports: Students may require support for the return to school because of the increased stress level experienced over the COVID period with associated hardships facing the whole family, but who have historically displayed a range of mental health symptoms and corresponding behaviours. They may have had ongoing family-based stressors which have led to the involvement of professional assistance (legal, medical, mental health) and/or community-based support. This student needs coordinated services from Psychological Services and Social Work support at the DDSB, and community and/or medical support, possibly even crisis intervention.

Every DDSB school has a mental health team with staff from Psychological Services and Social Work. This video was created to provide students with information about connecting with their school's mental health team.

Transition Planning Key Considerations

- Determining all parties to be involved in the transition planning (e.g., student, family/caregivers, community partners, school staff, Inclusive Student Services team member(s)).
- Identifying team leads at sending school and receiving school (use checklist in SERT OneNote binder for guidance).

- Ensuring student involvement in the transition process, when appropriate.
- SEA equipment transfers.
- A limited video tour may be used to introduce students to a program space or school setting. School teams are advised to follow Positive School Climate guidelines when creating and sharing school-based videos. For example, recording only specific areas of the school and ensuring consideration for privacy/confidentiality of students.
  - Descriptive video needed for students who are Blind/Low Vision.
  - Closed Captioning for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- Introduction videos of staff:
  - Audio strategies for students who are Blind/Low Vision.
  - Closed Captioning for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements.
- Determining the most appropriate transition plan for individual students (e.g., starting with half days and increasing to full days, based on ongoing assessment of transition plan).
- Priming our students ahead of time for the transition that will occur, explore possible mental health concerns.
- For students with very specific, structured programming, ensuring that staff at the receiving school are trained to implement to the same programming, and behavioural responses, for purposes of consistency, and safety.
- Ensuring the physical space accommodates student needs (e.g., wheelchair accessible for students with mobility difficulties; creating a space in the classroom for students with self-regulation needs, etc.).

Specific to Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions Requiring Accommodation

- Plans of care utilizing the advisement of public health and the family/student's medical team must be developed.
- Consider routines around disinfecting classroom, equipment, etc.
- Consideration of additional PPE that may be required for staff and students, based on public health recommendations.
- Consider policy around partnerships with community partners such as Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and/or Nursing support who may be supporting at school (e.g., with Developmental Programs).

School Teams may Consider Strategies such as:

Transition (e)Binders

Transition (e)binders are a comprehensive tool outlining all the relevant, and specific information about the student, and their programming at school. The sending school/teacher often creates an (e)binder for the receiving school/teacher, as a resource to prepare for the student transitioning between the two environments, ensuring continuity and consistency of programming and routines. Different platforms in which these can be created include a OneNote binder, google docs and shared via google drive, etc.

Suggested considerations to include in a transition (e)binder are (if applicable for the student):

- Introduction to the student (e.g., current information).
- Parent/Caregiver Survey (Strategies for Teaching based on Autism (STAR) has a great resource).
- Daily living skills (e.g., eating, road safety/awareness, personal hygiene).
- Reinforcement Preferences (e.g., reinforcing items) and thorough description of reinforcement systems (e.g., "Student utilizes a token economy system. They work for 5 marbles and can cash in for...").
- Challenging behaviour (e.g., operational definition, antecedents/triggers, consequences, etc.).
- Behaviour Escalation Continuum (and reference to Behaviour Safety Plan, if applicable).
- Identified replacement behaviours/skill building opportunities.
- Required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for staff supporting students.
- Required Specialized Equipment Allocation (SEA) for both technology and other equipment.
- Visual Schedule – including photos when possible and examples.
- Work System – including photos when possible and examples.
- Routine for transitions (e.g., "Provide a verbal countdown when transitioning between activities in the classroom...").
- Additional spaces the student may access (e.g., teacher table, calming corner, etc.).
- Programming (e.g., academic levels, reference to IEP, if applicable).
- Self-Regulation and/or Social Skill Curriculum tools.
- Daily School Entry & Exit Routine.
- Copies of any data collection which the school may use.
- Occupational Therapy (OT)/Physiotherapy (PT) recommendations.

Tip: When possible, it is also suggested that school teams include photographs or samples of what these structures look like (e.g., a picture of the students work station, token board, etc.) specific to the individual student.

Transition Books/Videos for Students

Transition books are a key transition tool for students who have a variety of transition needs (e.g. ASD, anxiety, mobility considerations, etc.). Transition books for students should be a key communication piece. Their use cannot be stressed enough as a key transition tool at any time, to reduce anxiety and allow students to know what to expect in their new setting, whether that be within the same school building or if they are changing schools.

What to include in a transition book for students:

- Images of the outside of the school building, including yard/playground.
- Tactile maps for students who are visually impaired.
- Their entry door.
- Office.
- Library.
- Gym.
- Calming spaces.
- Location of washrooms the student is likely to use most frequently.
- Non-structured spaces (e.g. alternate spaces at recess).
- Relevant staff members (admin, SERTs, teachers, EAs, custodian, office staff).
- Classroom (may include door of classroom, student's hook/locker area, layout of the room, individual work spaces, etc.).

Considerations for format of transition books for students:

- Digital Book (Google Slides).
- Video: Closed Captioning for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing and/or Descriptive Video for students who are blind/visually impaired.
- Hard Copy book(s) can be sent to students (following public health guidelines).
- Braille and audio versions needed for students who are blind/visually impaired.
- Transportation Planning (for example “Taking the Bus” social story).
- Images of the outside of the school building, including yard/playground.
- Tactile maps for students who are visually impaired.

Planning for Specific Transitions - Entry to School

First time school registration from home - students with accommodation needs

School Transition to Kindergarten (Great Beginnings) websites, videos, personal contacts from classroom educators to students (emails, phone calls, postcards); Linking to teams such as Speech Language or Social Work when appropriate (as they usually attend Great Beginnings events). Ensure all activities are inclusive and accessible to all students and families.

- Educator awareness of students with special and specific needs (e.g. vision, hearing, communication, physical, emotional, medical diagnoses).
- How much information can be gathered ahead of time, Inclusive Student Services (ISS) team members can help reach out to families before and get as much of an understanding as possible, kids likes, strengths, skills (help make environment more welcoming).
- Virtual greetings from Administrators, Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs), Inclusive Student Services (ISS) team. Social media can be leveraged in many ways.
- Parent/caregiver survey re: questions/concerns.
- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a school yard and entry door visit with no other students prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.
- Discussion with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) Daily Living Specialist, DDSB Orientation & Mobility Specialist and family (practicing skills) prior to entry regarding summer/home and community skills training.

- Set up loaner sound field system in class for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and leave unplugged, train teaching staff on use.
- Connect with Inclusive Student Services (ISS) teams to support the steps for anxious, overwhelmed students/families.

Considerations for Students with Special Education Strengths and Needs Transitioning from Community Supports

Transition from Campbell Children's School – GrandviewKids

- Educator awareness of student's specific needs, including specialized equipment.
- Conversations with staff from Campbell Children's School and families regarding student-specific needs and learning style (e.g. medical, Speech Language Pathologists (SLP)/Occupational Therapists (OTs)/ Physiotherapists (PTs), Vision and Hearing assessment and reports).
- Conversation with families regarding their concerns and goals for their child at school.
- Consideration of student specific needs (e.g. communication, physical, hearing etc.) during the Welcome Message. Including the supports needed by these students in the message.
- Ensure Campbell's Children's School families are aware of Great Beginnings virtual events/resources at their receiving school.
- Discuss transportation needs for individual students who may have mobility needs.
- Ensure communication between SLPs/OTs/PTs/Vision Resource Team (VRT)/Hearing Resource Team (HRT) for students with those supports through Campbell's Children's School.
- Ensure a list of SEA equipment is included/discussed. OT/PT can submit SEA recommendations as part of pre-registration to support urgent health and safety needs.
- Kindergarten communication of learning and IEPs have been shared with receiving schools.

Transition from Infant and Child Development Program – Durham Health Department

- Conversations with Infant and Child Development staff who are currently supporting these children and families regarding student-specific needs and learning style, include ISS teams for mental health support.
- Conversation with families regarding their concerns and goals for their child at school.

- Educator awareness of student's specific needs, including possible equipment.
- Conversations with staff and families regarding student-specific needs and learning style (e.g. medical, SLP/ OT/PT, Vision and Hearing assessment and reports). SEA recommendations can be submitted as part of pre-registration for urgent health and safety needs.
- Consideration of student specific needs (e.g. communication, physical, hearing etc.) during the Welcome Message. Including the supports needed by these students in the message.
- Ensure families are aware of Transition to Kindergarten virtual events/resources at their receiving school.
- Discuss transportation needs for individual students who may have mobility needs.
- Ensure communication between SLPs/OTs/PTs/VRT/HRT for students with those supports.

Transition from Infant Hearing Program (IHP)

- Conversations with IHP staff who are currently supporting these children and families regarding student-specific needs and learning style.
- Conversation with families regarding their concerns and goals for their child at school.
- Educator awareness of student's specific needs and hearing equipment.
- School training on interpreter use (where applicable) and FM equipment.

Entry to School

First Time School Registration from home - Students with Accommodation Needs

Without community access to school buildings:

- Conversations with previous educators regarding student's needs and learning style, Inclusive Student Services (ISS) supports involved with student.
- Personal connection with family and student (e.g. phone call, email, letter/postcard to student).
- Transition and introduction video about new school, teacher, classroom, administrative staff, etc:
  - Descriptive video needed for students who are Blind/Low Vision.
  - Closed captioning needed for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- For students who have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or other social communication challenges - ensure language is clear, specific, concise, simple sentences and not too fast; video presentations use clear visuals to show the relevant parts of the new class, routine, work spaces, etc.
- Community route to and from school trained by the Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a school yard and entry door visit with no other students prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.
- Students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) equipment moved to new classroom and left unplugged, teacher trained on use.
- Inclusive Student Services (ISS) teams to support students/families mental health and well-being.

To/From Provincial Demonstration Schools

- Many of the initial transition steps for students who are a candidate for provincial demonstration schools are completed before March Break.
- As this point, the second transition meeting for students returning to the DDSB has been postponed or cancelled.
- School teams can reach out directly to the provincial school teacher to obtain transitional information (i.e. current instructional levels).
- Interviews for admission and transition from Provincial Demonstration Schools (e.g. Sagonaska, Trillium and Amethyst) will be or have been held virtually.
- Students and families should know in the first couple of weeks in June whether they are offered a placement at the provincial school for the next school year.
- Once placement is offered, transition planning next steps are determined between the family and the demonstration school.
- If a student is returning from a provincial school, follow transition procedures for students who are transitioning within the DDSB. Subsequent virtual transition meetings may occur between the sending provincial school and the receiving DDSB school.
- A school visit should be considered for students returning to a new DDSB school from a provincial demonstration school.

Between School Boards

- A school visit should be planned for any student moving schools as an opportunity to build connections and address worries.
- Transition and introduction video/resources developed and shared about new school, teacher, classroom, administrative staff, etc.
- Students who have ASD and other social communication challenges – ensure language is clear, specific, concise, simple sentences and not too fast; video presentations use clear visuals to show the relevant parts of the new class, routine, work spaces.
- ISS team available to make early connections, explore mental health concerns, provide information if new to the area.

Class to Class/Grade to Grade

- Students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) –FM equipment moved to new classroom and left unplugged, teacher trained on use.
- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a school yard and entry door visit with no other students prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.
- SEA equipment moved to new classroom, if still appropriate for use.
- Transition and introduction video/resources about new school, teacher, classroom, administrative staff, etc., developed and shared.
- Students who have ASD and other social communication challenges – ensure language is clear, specific, concise, simple sentences and not too fast; video presentations use clear visuals to show the relevant parts of the new class, routine, work spaces, etc.
- Use of transition e-binder for in-school transitions as well – ensure communication of strengths and needs and programming recommendations between sending and receiving teacher takes place.
- Inclusive Student Services (ISS) teams able to reach out ahead of time to make connections, explore any mental health concerns.
- Consider hosting a visit to the new classroom with the new teacher if schools are open before September.

Elementary to Secondary – Grade Eight to Grade Nine Transitions

Without community access to school buildings:

- Priming our students ahead of time with video/other information about how secondary experience is different than elementary (e.g., routines, schedules, work completion, exams).
- Encourage student/family/caregiver to drive/walk around the school, explore school website.
- Multiple opportunities for grade 8 visits/tours transition activities to secondary schools.
- Students who have ASD and other social communication challenges - ensure language is clear, specific, concise, simple sentences and not too fast; video presentations use clear visuals to show the relevant parts of the new class, routine, work spaces, etc.
- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a school yard and entry door visit with no other students prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.
- Buddy student with an older student to share their high school experience and respond to questions appropriate for peer response.

- Community route to and from school trained by the Orientation and Mobility Specialist.
- Meet/greet with key staff including Guidance and Administration.
- SEA equipment moved to new school and set up, if still appropriate for use.
- Students who are DHH - FM equipment moved to Academic Resource (AR)/Learning Hub or semester classrooms and left unplugged, teachers trained on use.
- Consult with Social Work and Psychological Services to support/manage stress and anxiety in students and families, provide information regarding getting back to routines, expectations.
- Considerations about what Grade 9 day will look like, ensure student/family/caregivers have a key contact with as questions arise.

Program Placement Changes

From Regular Class Placement to Special Education Placement

Conversations (transition meetings) with previous educators student and family regarding student's strengths, needs, learning style, and any ISS supports involved with student.

- Personal connection with family/caregivers and student (e.g. phone call, email, letter/postcard to student).
- Transition and introduction video/resources created about new school, teacher, classroom, administrative staff, etc.
  - Descriptive video needed for students who are Blind/Low Vision.
  - Closed captioning needed for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- Students who have ASD and other social communication challenges - ensure language is clear, specific, concise, simple sentences and not too fast; video presentations use clear visuals to show the relevant parts of the new class, routine, work spaces, etc.
- Community route to and from school trained by the Orientation and Mobility Specialist.
- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a school/entry door/classroom visit with no other students in the room prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.

From Special Education Placement to Regular Classroom Placement

- Conversations with previous educators student and family regarding student's strengths, needs, learning style, and any ISS supports involved with student.
- Personal connection with family/caregivers and student (e.g. phone call, email, letter/postcard to student) is strongly recommended.

- Transition and introduction video/resources created and shared about new school, teacher, classroom, administrative staff, etc.
  - Descriptive video needed for students who are Blind/Low Vision.
  - Closed captioning needed for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- Students who have ASD and other social communication challenges - ensure language is clear, specific, simple sentences and not too fast; video presentations use visuals to show the relevant parts of the new class, routine, work spaces, etc.
- Community route to and from school trained by the Orientation and Mobility Specialist.
- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a school/entry door/classroom visit with no other students in the room prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.

To/From Community Program - Including Grove School (Education Community Partnership Programs - ECPP)

- Ensure consents have been attained for the communication of information between community agencies and DDSB staff.
- Consent for intake should be completed for students coming from a community program to allow ISS staff to support the transition.
- Ensure all relevant team members are informed and involved in the transition planning (e.g. Grove teacher, community agency staff, psychological services staff, etc.)
- Conversations with previous educators student and family regarding student's strengths, needs, learning style, and any ISS supports involved with student.
- Personal connection with family and student (e.g. phone call, email, letter/postcard to student).
- Transition and introduction video/resources created and shared about new school, teacher, classroom, administrative staff, etc.,
  - Descriptive video needed for students who are Blind/Low Vision
  - Closed captioning needed for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- Students who have ASD and other social communication challenges - ensure language is clear, specific, concise, simple sentences and not too fast; video presentations use clear visuals to show the relevant parts of the new class, routine, work spaces, etc.
- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a school yard/entry door/classroom visit with no other students prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.
- Community route to and from school trained by the Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

Secondary to Post-Secondary

- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a campus/entry door/classroom visit with no other students prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.
- Community route to and from school trained by the Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

School to Community

For students transitioning to community based programs, school teams are encouraged to communicate with student, family and community program team on a regular basis regarding transition supports and strategies well before the transition period occurs. The Transition Coordinator team can provide support.

School to Work-In Preparation for Potential On-Site Work Education Next Year

- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a worksite yard and entry door visit with limited people around prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.
- Community route to and from worksite trained by the Orientation and Mobility Specialist.
- Students who are accessing work education experiences typically take public transit to/from the work site; public transportation will need to be reviewed and rehearsed with support prior to independently taking public transportation. (transit training)

Additional Resources for Educators

The following links are provided to support educators. This list in not exhaustive in considerations but is meant to highlight the tremendous resources available to support considerations and planning.

1. **Supporting Transition Planning**
   - Supporting Transition Planning for Students with Autism

2. **Supporting Transitions to Adulthood for Individuals with Autism – Autism Ontario**

   autismontario.com/programs-services/under-18/family-supports/transition-adulthood

3. **Transitions to Post Secondary Pathways for Students with Autism – EDUGAINS**

   edugains.ca/resourcesSpecEd/SchoolLeader/ASD/TransitiontoPostsecondaryPathwaysforStudentswithASD_TranslatingResearchintoPractice.pdf

   - Supporting Transition Planning for Students with Developmental Disabilities

4. **Canadian Hearing Society – Transitions**

   chs.ca/transition-planning

5. **VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children –Educator Resources**

   voicefordeafkids.com/

   - Supporting Transition Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities

6. **Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Needs (Ministry PPM 156)**

   http://www.edugains.ca/resourcesSpecEd/PLF/IEP/PPM156_PPTwithNotes.pdf

7. **Educator Support Guide for Transition Planning**

   cse.google.com/cse?cx=008635593979376682327%3Afklszsccxei&q=educator%20support%20guide&oq=educator%20support%20guide&gs_l=partner-generic.3...8097.13833.0.14223.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0..0.0.csems%2Cnrl%3D10...0....1.34.partner-generic..0.0.0

Video Resources

8. **LD@school webinar, Transition Planning and Pathways for Students Transitioning to Post-Secondary**

   ldatschool.ca/transition-planning/

9. **LDAO Transition Planning Resource Guide for Students with Learning Disabilities**
   access.resources.ldao.ca/main/documents/TransitionPlanningResourceGuide4.pdf

10. **Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities: Transition to Post-Secondary Education**
    transitionresourceguide.ca/

11. **Post-Secondary Transition Planning for Students with LDs written by Cindy Perras**
    ldatschool.ca/post-secondary-transition-planning/

12. **Transition Planning and Pathways for Students Transitioning to Post-Secondary: The Importance of Planning with the End in Mind presented by Ryan Machete**

    ldatschool.ca/transition-planning/

13. **How Grade 8 students at Sagonaska Demonstration School created self-advocacy pamphlets to support their transition to Grade 9**
    ldatschool.ca/our-self-advocacy-pamphlet-journey/

14. **Creating Pathways to Success which supports career/transition planning from K - Grade 12**
    edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/cps/CreatingPathwaysSuccess.pdf

15. **Student with LDs Success Story**
    ldatschool.ca/success-story-danya/

    - Supporting Transition Planning for Students with Physical Disabilities

16. **Easter Seals Ontario - Transitions**
services.easterseals.org/family-information-resources/transition-planning/

17. **Connect with your Mental Health Team**
ddsb.ca/en/family-and-community-support/resources/Videos/Connect-with-your-Mental-Health-Team-video.mp4?wmode=transparent#DDSBWellBeing

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Leading Inclusive Programming

Inclusive Student Services (ISS)

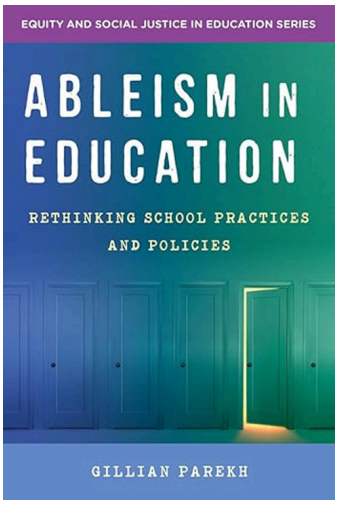
Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) eBulletin

2024-2025: Issue 3

If you have any questions or topic suggestions for the Leading Inclusive Programming e-Bulletin, please contact your Instructional Facilitator or Michelle Crawford-Eade, ISS System Lead michelle.crawfordeade@ddsb.ca.

Information Share

Reflections on Reading: Ableism In Education – Rethinking School Practices and Policies by Gillian Parekh



"…Educators must approach modifications with extreme caution and a contingency plan for how the school will intentionally address the gap created by the curricular modification." (Parekh – 2022, p.123)

Consideration for Curriculum Modifications

"Although modifying curriculum expectations may appear to be an immediate solution, the consequences of modifying curriculum are long lasting. Research is showing that modifications in a curricular area result in a gap that can rarely be closed within a public education setting." Brown, Parekh & Zheng, in progress, as cited in Parekh (2022, p.123)

Reflections for School Teams (shared with Administrators during October Family of Schools meetings):

Individual Students

- Within a continuum of accommodations, modifications at grade level and modifications from grade level 1) what is informing decision 2) are impacts understood? 3) how will impact be monitored?
- If a student's program was previously based on a modified curriculum, did that action have the intended impact on their achievement?
- If considering modifications for a student, it is important to also consider impacts to their pathway options. Opening modifications in junior grades, can impact course access through secondary and beyond.

School Data

- What is the percentage trend of students within your school with Individual Education Plans based on 1) accommodations only, 2) modifications at grade level, 3) modifications from grade level and/or 4) alternative curriculum. What do you notice within the data and the processes of consideration?

York DSB Guides:

Supporting All Students Particularly Students with Learning Disabilities

During October Family of Schools meetings with Administrators, similar reflections were embedded. In addition, York Region District School Board "Waterfall" resources supporting individualizing programming were distributed for each school.

These resources are designed by the YRDSB team to help educators support all students in partnership with families and professionals. The documents contain information about the processing areas that impact learning and support planning of classroom instruction and assessment guided by students' strengths and needs.

Two resources (3 copies each/school):
•Guides to Supporting All Students Particularly Students with Learning Disabilities v.2 (2024)
Understanding Learning Disabilities How Processing Affects Mathematics Learning v.1 (previously published)

Please use the linked YRDSB Waterfall Resources slides to share information with your school team as you implement use of the resource. The slides highlight key updates from the previous version of the document and digital tool differences between the districts important to note.

ISS Impact Updates

Each month we share highlights of impacts of Inclusive Student Services related programs and services through the format of the "ISS Impact Update". In addition to sharing information with key stakeholders including the Special Education Advisory

Committee (SEAC), this monthly resource is meant as a tool to support school teams in growing awareness and knowledge; SERTs are encouraged to share with your school-based colleagues. For example, this month's issue has focus on Informed Consent. The information highlights what informed consent is, the teams bound by their professional standards and College requirements. As regulated health professionals, colleagues, for example, in roles of Psychological Services, Social Work and Speech Language Pathologists, the standards of practice are key in the delivery of service.

ISS Impact Update 2024-2025 - Vol. 1 - Informed Consent

Andrea

Andrea McAuley – Superintendent of Education – on behalf of the Inclusive Student Services Leadership Team

Important Dates

EA Allocation Requests

The next submission deadline is Wednesday October 30th, at noon.

Gifted Screening

Gifted Screening will take place at schools the week of Nov. 4th - 8th

The Nomination Link opened on **Monday, October 7th, 9:00 am and will close Friday, October 11th, 9:00 pm.** *Late nominations will not be accepted*.

A link to a spreadsheet called the *Gifted Testing Parent Nomination Report* was shared with each SERT and Administrator of each school by Lynn MacLean the week of Sept. 30th. SERTs and Administrators are able to monitor a live list of nominations submitted by their school's families to ensure that all families have had an opportunity to nominate their child.

- Please print PDFs of nomination forms and file them in the OSR. To print the nomination forms SERTs will go to the *Printable Student Report Tab* in the *2024 Gifted Testing Parent Nomination Report*.
- Once the form has closed, please review for any errors (i.e. incorrect DDSB student or multiple entries) Please contact Lynn MacLean or Melanie Benedet to highlight anything that should be changed.

Testing dates must fall between ***November 4th – Nov 8th***. It is advised you test on Nov 4th, 5th & 6th and use the 7th & 8th for make-up test days. **The last day for scantron cards to arrive at the board office is Wednesday, November 13th**.

Please see the 2024 Fall Timeline for Gifted Screening and the 2024 SERT Guide to Gifted Testing for more information.

An editable testing date letter can be found in the 2024 SERT Guide to Gifted Testing for filling in your school specific test dates and sending to families .

Reach out to Melanie Benedet (melanie.benedet@ddsb.ca) if you have any questions.

SEA Chromebook Virtual Information Sessions for Parent(s)/Caregiver(s) November 14th from 6:00-6:45 pm

This virtual session will provide DDSB parents/caregivers an overview of some of the tools available to support their children's learning on DDSB SEA Chromebooks. Please share this SEA Chromebook Virtual Information Night flyer with families of students who have SEA Chromebooks.The flyer includes a link to a Google Form to register.

Professional Learning

2024-2025 Supporting Student Mental Health: Community of Practice

Date: October 22nd
Time: 3:45pm - 4:45pm

OCTOBER FOCUS:

"Fostering school and classroom environments that promote and bolster student mental health and well-being".

Participants will learn about:

- What goes into creating mentally healthy classrooms?
- School staff role in supporting mental health at school.
- Embedding best practices from a whole school approach.
- Everyday practices that foster well-being.

Register through myPD using the following registration link.

Important Privacy and Documentation Requirements

3rd Party Report – Consent for Sharing and Inclusion in OSR

Schools are important guardians of protected information for learning, well-being, and for some students, health related documentation. Individual student documentation is collected and shared aligned with legislative privacy requirements such as MFIPPA and PHIPA (e.g., individual health information) and Ministry of Education guidelines (e.g., Ontario Student Record Guidelines).

It is important that where information is shared by a student and/or their guardians to support programming that the receipt and consent related to the document is recorded and forms part of the student's record.

Inclusion of a 3rd Party Document in a Student's OSR

To ensure consistency of process, a consistent DDSB template is in place. When you are in receipt of a third party report (e.g., community-based practitioner Psycho-Educational Assessment, statement of diagnosis, private Speech report) a copy of the 3rd Party Report Form should be completed, with signature(s) and included as a cover page to the report being included in the documents section of the student's OSR.

The form is not needed for reports written by DDSB team members who are regulated health professionals. Consent for sharing is part of the informed consent processes between student/guardian and professional; record of consent is held within Inclusive Student Services records.

Removal of a 3rd Party Document in a Student's OSR

Occasionally, students or families will request removal of a document from the OSR for which prior consent has been obtained for inclusion. Should this occur, the 3rd Party Report consent form should be used to make annotation of request and date of removal from the OSR. The form should then be retained in the OSR and the report shredded or returned to student/guardians.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools: Considerations

AI tools can be very useful for educators. Before using any AI tool, it is important to ensure that it has been approved in the Technology Approval Process (TAP). TAP is a way of ensuring that we are practicing our due diligence and adhering to our responsibility to safeguard personally identifying information about our students. Currently, there are several AI tools under review, but only a few have been approved.

In the absence of other information, we can only assume that any information that is input into generative AI technology is also being used to train the algorithms of their parent company. As such, educators must not divulge any personally identifying information into a generative AI tool, including pieces of information that can be combined to identify a student (e.g., school name, distinguishing characteristic, initials).

According to the Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, information is about an identifiable individual if:

- it is about the individual in a personal capacity; that is, it reveals something of a personal nature about the individual, and
- it is reasonable to expect that an individual can be identified from the information (either alone or by combining it with other information)

The listed examples include a person's name when combined with other information about them, such as their address, sex, age, education, or medical history. These examples are not exhaustive and many other kinds of information may still qualify as personal information.

Similarly, confidential school and system level information must not be included in educational professionals' AI prompts. If you are using generative AI to assist with individualized or school planning, write prompts that cannot be tied back to the DDSB, any particular school, or be combined with other prompts to refer to any DDSB staff or students.

For more information about educator use of AI tools, please visit Artificial Intelligence and Education: Best Practices in the Professional Learning Hub.

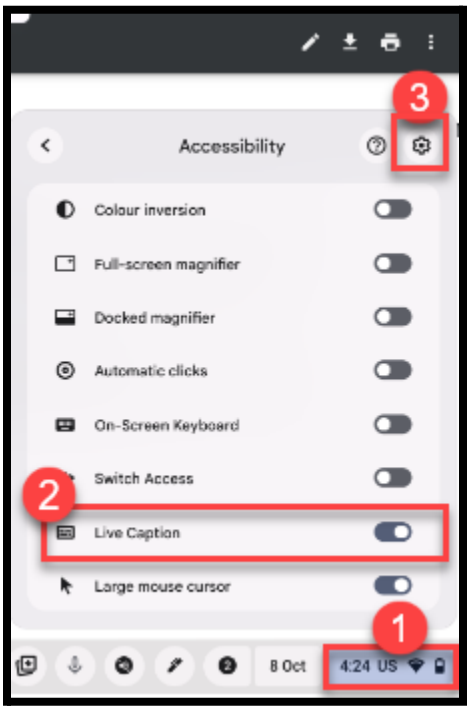
Provincial Demonstration School

In Ontario, students have the ability to apply to a Provincial Demonstration School supporting students with a ***diagnosed Learning Disability.*** If you have a family who reaches out to you to inquire about an application, it's not too late to apply for September 2025! All information can be found in the SERT binder, or by reaching out to Stephanie Wade Lacoursiere, ISS Instructional Facilitator.

Resources

Latest Chromebook Accessibility Tool

With the latest update to Chromebooks, **Live Captions** will now appear. Students can toggle this on to have live captions appear for any sound coming from their device, including Podcasts, and videos that do not have Closed Captions. The background, font, and colour can be adjusted in settings. To do this, select the time on the shelf of the Chromebook and this menu will appear. Next, find Live Captions and toggle it on. Thirdly, select the settings cog and search live captions to alter the settings.



SERT Community of Practice

A new section has been added to the SERT Binder. This section includes slides and documents shared during SERT Community of Practice meetings.

Updates

Reminder to confirm with ISS team members before formally identifying students through the IPRC process. This includes when parent(s)/caregiver(s) provide medical documentation. It is always important, and aligns with the process, to connect and share (redacted) information with the Instructional Facilitator and Clinical professionals supporting your school before moving forward.

SEA iPads

If a student has recently received a SEA iPad and it does not have access to the full App Catalogue (almost 400 Apps), specifically requested apps, or it does not have Guided Access or a Restrictions Passcode enabled, please reach out to Carolyn Wilson, Inclusive Technology Facilitator to resolve the issue.

Blind Low Vision Programs

As new students transfer into your school throughout the year, please review OSRs for indication of vision reports or ophthalmology reports. As well, please review if vision services has been involved or is currently open for consent. If unsure the status of support or referral for a student, please reach out to your area Teacher of the Blind and Low Vision and/or Instructional Facilitator. We would be happy to update on status and next steps. Opening a referral to Vision Services can not occur without appropriate supporting medical documentation stating acuity and/or field losses. As always, please consult with your school's Teacher of the Blind and Low Vision prior to completing referral to ensure appropriateness. We will work with you on next steps.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Programs

As new students transfer into your school throughout the year, please review OSRs for indication of audiograms or previous supports to students for hearing needs. Consultation with your school's Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing prior to referral is recommended.

October 10th is World Audiology Day, in World Audiology Month of October
The day is dedicated to healthcare professionals who identify, assess, and manage disorders of hearing, balance, and other neural systems. We highly rely on our ability to hear and listen in our daily life. Yet, about 60% of Canadian adults report having trouble hearing, according to the National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders. That's why it's essential to know how to protect the health of our hearing! Get a hearing test today if you feel you may have a hearing loss.

October is World Mental Health Month

Mental Health and Well-being in Children with Hearing Loss
Research has shown that children with varying hearing levels may be more vulnerable to mental health and psychosocial problems than their peers with typical hearing. Children's Mental Health Ontario estimates that 1 in 5 Canadian children will experience a mental health disorder. It is not difficult then to predict that Deaf/deaf and hard of hearing children facing potentially more challenges may have higher rates of distress (Du Feu & Chovaz, 2014). Research cites the incidence of emotional difficulties to be 3- 6 times higher in school-aged children who are Deaf/deaf or hard of hearing than in their peers with typical hearing (Health Canada, 1994; Hindley, 1997; 2000; 2005).

What Can Teachers Do to Promote Mental Health and Wellbeing for Students with varying Hearing levels?

1. A sense of belonging is important, if your student with varying hearing levels is struggling to make friends try to connect them with a supportive/empathetic peer in your classroom.

2. Many students report that they appreciate when a teacher chats with them privately. To ask questions such as "What can I do to meet your listening needs? "Is there anything I need to do differently?"

3. Consider reading books that include topics about hearing levels or feature deaf/hard of hearing characters. EPIC books have a selection of titles:
   Primary: "My Friend is Deaf", "What Is Hearing", The Sense of Hearing", "Your Sensational Sense of Hearing"

   Junior/Intermediate/Senior: "What It Is Like To Be Deaf" (ASL focus), "Dad Jackie and Me", "Addy's Race", "Hello Universe", "Left Out", "Innovation: Hearing"

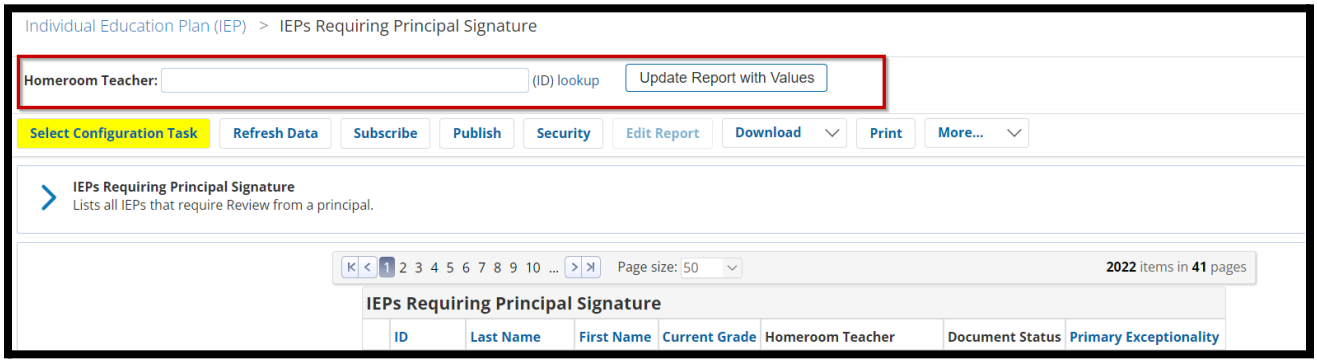
4. Ask your Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to provide a peer presentation for your class on hearing, hearing levels and the technology and strategies used to communicate with a friend with varying hearing levels.

5. Teacher-librarians can purchase books with topics on hearing, deaf and hard of hearing characters, sign language and more for students to borrow and students with varying hearing levels can see themselves in literature.

PowerSchool STUDENT PROGRAMMING (PSP)

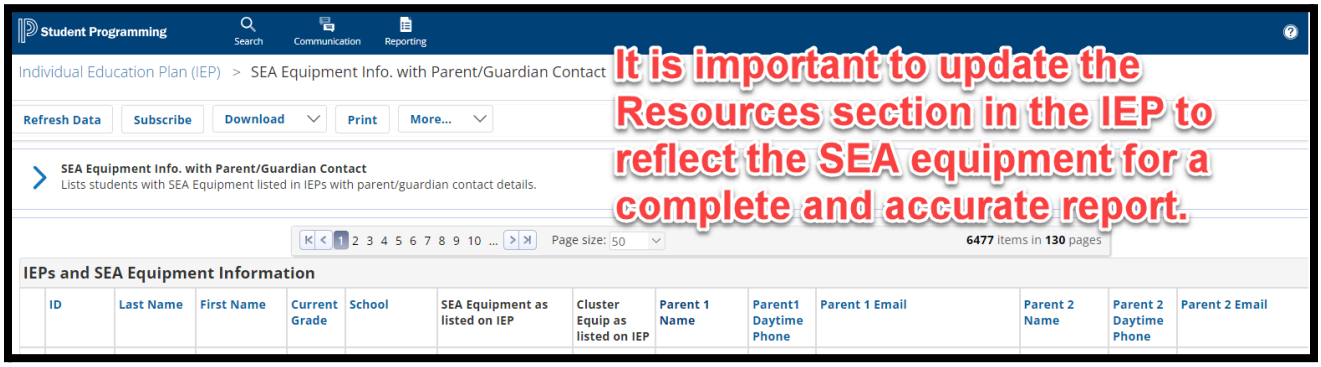
Filtering Reports

Some reports have an additional filter at the top of the page, as shown on **IEPs Requiring Principal Signature.** This allows principals to filter by homeroom teacher.



SEA Equipment Information Report

This new report lists the students with SEA equipment as described in the Resources section of the IEP and the equipment they have. Sandra Langevin provided SERTs with detailed spreadsheets on what to add and/or remove to this section of the IEP so it is accurate each year.



Correcting an IPRC Statement of Decision

If there are errors on a student's Statement of Decision (SOD), it is recommended that the Principal unfinalize the document and make the correction. However, if the change is significant such as a change of exceptionality, placement, then an IPRC meeting should be held and a new Statement of Decision created. If you are unsure of the best practice, please reach out to the ISS Area Secretary or Instructional Facilitator for guidance.

If a new SOD is created in October for example, do not back date the placement start date to the first day of school. The best practice would be to make the effective date of placement the day after the IPRC meeting date.

PSP Support

If you need to report an issue or have any questions about PSP, please **submit an incident** using the IT Service Desk. When creating an incident, please select the category of Software and subcategory of “Student Programming.”

Appendix K

Special Education Glossary

AAC - Augmentative and Alternative Communication

ABA - Applied Behaviour Analysis

Advocacy - A collaborative process involving input and contributions from parent/guardians, students, school staff, and professional services that identifies appropriate instructional strategies and interventions to optimize the student's ability to achieve to their full potential.

ART - Autism Resource Team

ASD - Autism Spectrum Disorder

ASIST - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

AT - Advanced Technology

BMS - Behaviour Management System

BSP - Behaviour Safety Plan

Differentiated Instruction - allows teachers to address specific skills and difficulties and adapt instruction to suit differing characteristics

EA - Educational Assistant

ECE - Early Childhood Educator

FM System - Frequency Modulation System

IBI - Intensive Behaviour Intervention

IEP - Individual Education Plan

IPRC - Identification, Placement and Review Committee

PHIPA – Personal Health Information Protection Act

PowerSchool PSP - Special Education data base for tracking Special Education processes and completing forms

PPM 140 - Policy Program Memorandum, #140

SEA - Specialized Equipment Allocation

SERT - Special Education Resource Teacher

SIP - Special Incidence Portion

SMHO - School Mental Health Ontario

START - Short Term Assistance Response Team

The Tiered Approach - is a systematic approach to providing high-quality, evidence-based assessment and instruction and appropriate interventions that respond to students' individual needs.

Tier 1 - Assessment and instruction are planned in relation to the curriculum for *all* students, applying principals of Universal Design and Differentiated Instruction. The teacher observes, monitors student progress, and notes which students may be experiencing difficulty.

Tier 2 - On the basis of assessment results, differentiated instruction and interventions are planned for students who are facing learning, behavioural or social challenges. Student progress in response to these interventions is closely monitored, and instruction is adjusted as needed.

Tier 3 - For students who require intensive support to achieve learning goals, even more precise and individualized assessment and instruction are planned, often with the help of the in-school team, the Family of Schools Special Education Team and/or other resources. Monitoring of the student's response to these interventions continues.

Universal Design - provides educators with broad principles for planning instruction and designing learning environments for a diverse group of students