

**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BOARD**

**2 June 2021
21 June 2021**

Report No. 21-054

Special Education Plan 2020-2021 and Special Education Report 2021

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PURPOSE:

1. To obtain Board approval of the Special Education Plan 2020-2021 and the Special Education Report 2021.

CONTEXT:

2. School boards are required to prepare a special education plan annually. The plan must be approved by the Board and submitted to the Ministry of Education every year by July 31. The special education plan is a document which provides detailed information about how the school District carries out its legal responsibilities for the provision of special education programs and services. The special education plan is in many respects, a detailed expression of how the District will implement the Board's special education policy. Recognizing the size and complexity of the plan, there is a regular cycle to manage review of the different sections of the document. This year, after consultation with the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), a modified review process for the plan was undertaken. Over the past three years, Learning Support Services (LSS) has completed comprehensive reviews of the plan. Therefore, it was recommended that for some of the sections of the plan an independent review by each SEAC member be undertaken, as the content in the selected sections remain status quo and are prescribed by the Ministry of Education. As it pertains to the sections of the plan that were to be reviewed independently, SEAC members were given a variety of opportunities (e.g., monthly meetings, email correspondence, etc.) to provide their feedback on these sections.

In accordance with *Regulation 306*, school boards must submit a special education report on the delivery of special education programs and services to the Ministry of Education every two years on the odd year. The purpose of the report is to provide the Ministry of Education with a summary of the provision by

the school board of special education programs and special education services. Essentially, it is a summary of the sections required in the special education plan.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

3. Purpose and Requirements of the Special Education Plan

The purpose of the special education plan is twofold: to inform the public about the manner in which the school board is carrying out its special education responsibilities; and to report to the Ministry of Education. The Ministry policy document *Special Education in Ontario - Kindergarten to Grade 12 - Policy and Resource Guide 2017* establishes precise requirements for special education plans for all school boards of the standards against which their special education plan will be measured. The standards reflect what the Ministry of Education considers to be necessary to meet the needs of exceptional students.

4. Revision Process of the Special Education Plan

As shared above, the revision process of the plan was organized differently this year. Both of the sections reviewed and consulted on at the SEAC meetings and those reviewed and consulted on independently by each member were considered. The following is a summary of the topics and dates of the items reviewed at the following SEAC meetings:

- 4 October 2020, Transportation;
- 4 November 2020, Special Education Staff and The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process and Appeals;
- 9 December 2020, Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and Equipment;
- 6 January 2021, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) The Board's Model for Special Education, and Staff Development;
- 3 February 2021, Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies and Educational and Other Assessments; and
- 3 March 2021, any additional comments or feedback from the sections reviewed independently were discussed.

The remaining sections were reviewed independently by all members:

- Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings;
- Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario;
- Accessibility of School Buildings;
- Roles and Responsibilities;
- Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities;
- The Board's Consultation Process;
- Coordination of Services with Other Ministries or Agencies; and
- Special Education Placements provided by the OCDSB.

Considerable effort has been made reviewing the language of the special education plan and how to access specific information to best support students and families. A regular part of the annual review process includes a review of current data such as expenditures for equipment, professional development opportunities, the SEAC membership, students identified through the IPRC

process or having IEPs to ensure key information is up-to-date and reflects District practice.

Our current practice of reviewing the special education plan in sections with SEAC on a monthly basis works well in that it allows for discussion of the document in manageable pieces, allowing us to make progress over the course of the year. However, given that approval by the Board occurs at the end of the school year, only minor edits can be accommodated at this stage. The final approval stage will likely generate ideas and suggestions which will be carried forward into the review process which starts again in September. Staff is committed to continuous improvement and opportunities to increase the accessibility of the information for staff, parents/guardians and where appropriate, students.

5. Submission Process and Timelines

As required in the *Special Education in Ontario - Kindergarten to Grade 12 - Policy and Resource Guide 2017*, the special education plan and the special education report must be approved by the school board and any amendments must be forwarded to the local district office of the Ministry of Education. Two copies of the complete plan and report must be submitted with the following documents:

- A letter from the director of the school board that confirms that the school board's special education plan is being submitted in compliance with the requirements of *Regulation 306* and with the standards outlined in the *Special Education in Ontario - Kindergarten to Grade 12 - Policy and Resource Guide 2017*;
- A copy of the Board's motion of approval of the plan and the report, including the date of approval; and
- A copy of any related motions or recommendations from the board's SEAC.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

6. The work undertaken on the special education plan and the special education report by LSS to review and update the plan and develop the report has been substantive over the course of this year. Staff estimates approximately 15 days of work have been invested in reviewing and rewriting the plan and the report. In addition, SEAC has allocated time on most agendas for this item.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

7. The key consultation on the plan has occurred through SEAC meetings. The dates and times of the meeting discussions are noted above. The value of discussions at SEAC is that it ensures the committee, and members of the community with a strong interest in special education issues, have the opportunity to discuss ideas and inform the way that services are delivered. These consultations and discussions have also informed the content of the special education report, as they are an extension of the special education plan.

The Special Education Plan 2020-2021 draft will be presented at the SEAC meeting on 2 June 2021 and a motion was passed to approve the Special Education Plan 2020-2021 and Special Education Report 2021 at that meeting.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

8. The special education plan and the special education report outline several links to the District Strategic Plan with a focus on reducing barriers to learning and providing individualized, personalized support and resources to meet the needs of every learner. In addition, both the plan and report support the development of strategies, tools, and resources to foster strong relationships among students, staff, families, and schools.

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. THAT the 2020-2021 Special Education Plan, attached as Appendix A to Report No. 21-054, be approved; and
- B. THAT the 2021 Special Education Report, attached as Appendix B to Report No. 21-054, be approved.

Peter Symmonds, Superintendent,
Learning Support Services

Camille Williams-Taylor
Director of Education and Secretary of
the Board

APPENDICES

Appendix A - 2020-2021 Special Education Plan

Appendix B - 2021 Special Education Report