

**TO:** Trustees  
Student Trustees  
Special Education Advisory Committee

**FROM:** Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary of the Board  
Peter Symmonds, Superintendent of Learning Support Services

**DATE:** 2 March 2022

**RE:** **Planning for District Special Education Support 2022-2023**

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This memorandum provides information to support the proposed changes to specialized program classes and for special education support in regular program classes for the 2022-2023 school year as outlined in Report Number 22-022, *Academic Staffing Plan for 2022-2023*.

Annually, Learning Support Services (LSS) assesses system needs for specialized program classes and for special education supports in regular program classes.

#### Recommended Adjustments to Support System Needs

Based on projected specialized program class referrals, student needs in regular program classes, historical patterns and the movement of students currently placed in specialized program classes, the following staffing adjustments are recommended. A summary table is available as Appendix A.

#### **Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)**

The need for intensive support for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in specialized program classes and in regular program classes continues to be high. Despite an annual increase in the number of ASD specialized program classes over the past eight years there continues to be a significant wait list for students that meet criteria for this level of support. The District currently operates:

- 36 elementary ASD classes; and
- 17 secondary ASD classes.

Over the past several years, the District has supported students with ASD both through specialized program classes and itinerant teacher models. The District's experience has been that some students with ASD are very well served in regular classrooms in their community school with the additional support.

A large cohort of grade 8 students currently placed in ASD specialized program classes are transitioning to secondary for September 2022. These students cannot be placed in specialized program classes with the current number of secondary ASD classes.

The following approach to provide intensive supports for students with complex presentations of ASD is proposed for the 2022-2023 school year.

- Maintain 36 elementary ASD specialized program classes and two itinerant teachers of ASD to support in regular program classes;
- Open three new secondary ASD specialized program classes
  - Far West zone: West Carleton Secondary School;
  - West zone: Merivale High School; and
  - South zone: South Carleton High School.

#### ASD Secondary

- *3.0 FTE plus prep secondary teacher contingency staffing requested.*

#### **Developmental Disabilities (DD)**

The District currently has 47 specialized program classes for students with Developmental Disabilities (DD):

- 25 classes located at Clifford Bowey Public School and Crystal Bay Centre for Special Education;
- 10 elementary classes in community schools; and
- 12 secondary classes in community schools.

Based on student movement in the West zone, an adjustment between intermediate and secondary DD classes is required. Bell High School currently hosts two secondary and one intermediate DD classes. For September 2022 it is recommended that the Bell intermediate class close and a third secondary class be opened. Sufficient intermediate placements in surrounding DD classes are available to support future cohorts.

Increased demand for primary students with a developmental disability is anticipated. More specific information will not be available to LSS until the spring specialized program referral review process. The number and profile of students that come forward will influence the decision whether to open a new primary DD specialized program class or to serve students with this profile through an itinerant teacher model. Therefore, it is recommended to maintain the overall elementary staffing level for elementary DD and confirm the support model as further information is available this spring.

#### DD secondary

- *1.0 FTE plus prep secondary teacher contingency staffing requested*

#### **Learning Disabilities Specialized Intervention Program (LD SIP)**

In order to comply with public health guidelines as a result of the measures to control the pandemic (e.g., student cohorts), the Learning Disabilities Specialized Intervention Program (LD SIP) moved from a partially integrated to a fully self-contained model for the 2020-2021 and 2021- 2022 school years. For the 2022-2023 school year, the LD SIP will be staffed to return to a partially integrated model allowing students to benefit from both the low-ratio and integrated educational experience built into the design of the specialized program class. There is a negligible financial impact to this shift given additional staffing requirements to support student integration (e.g., Learning Resource Teachers, contingency home room classes for LD SIP sites).

Approximately 56 students presently in LD SIP classes will be returning to the regular program for the 2022-2023 school year. Due to pandemic measures, many students have

not had the full opportunity to participate in the integrated portion of the program. In order to facilitate their transition out of LD SIP and to support educators receiving these students, the itinerant LD teacher is recommended to continue for the 2022-2023 school year.

### **Dual Support Program (DSP)**

The Dual Support Program (DSP) supports students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities (MID) and significant challenges with self regulation. Currently the District has three elementary and five secondary classes to support students with this profile.

A significant number of students from elementary DSP classes are transitioning to secondary for September 2022. All remaining and incoming elementary students can be accommodated with two elementary classes. The temporary closure of the DSP at Vincent Massey Public School for the 2022-2023 school year will have no impact on current students (i.e., all current students have a natural transition point). The remaining two elementary DSP classes continue to offer reasonable geographic distribution across the District.

### **Gifted**

The District currently has 13 elementary classes to support learners with giftedness. This includes seven English and six French Immersion classes. The size of the student cohorts in both English and French Immersion moving from junior to intermediate classes require fewer classes than what is currently available.

The closure of one English and one French Immersion intermediate gifted class at Broadview Public School is recommended for September 2022. The class closures will not impact any current students and incoming intermediate students can be accommodated with the remaining gifted classes.

### **Resource Implications**

The proposed staffing adjustments to specialized program classes and for intensive supports for students in regular program classes represents an approximate increase of \$525,000 associated with a reduction of 3.57 FTE elementary teachers and increase of 5.32 FTE secondary teachers and a net increase of 5.5 educational assistants.

In addition, increased costs associated with new specialized program classes are typically incurred through facilities modifications, new classroom resources, professional support services personnel and transportation.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Peter Symmonds at [peter.symmonds@ocdsb.ca](mailto:peter.symmonds@ocdsb.ca)

Attach.

cc     Senior Staff  
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