



OTTAWA-CARLETON
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



The
General
Learning
Program
Report

May 2024

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CoA - Certificate of Accomplishment

FSC - Fully self-contained (IPRC Placement)

IEP - Individual Educational Plans

GLP - General Learning Program

IPRC - Identification, Placement, and Review Committee

MID - Mild Intellectual Disability

MLL - Multilingual Learners

LSS - Learning Support Services

OCDSB: Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

OSSC- Ontario Secondary School Certificate

OSSD- Ontario Secondary School Diploma

PI - Partially integrated (IPRC Placement)

SIS - Student Information System

SPC - Specialized program class

In Brief

1

The literature revealed a spectrum of approaches to educating students with MID; however, a noticeable shift in the research towards more inclusive approaches to supporting students with special education needs was documented.



2

Demographic data indicates that elements of a student's identity may be influencing their experience with special education processes and/or support.



3

A Pathway Analysis has confirmed that the majority of students who enter the GLP remain in the placement.



4

Analysis of IEPs revealed that in some cases the program is defining the IEP rather than individualized student need.



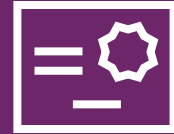
5

Modified learning expectations in combination with current reporting and data storing practices impact the ability of the District to monitor student achievement for students in elementary GLP.



6

Secondary GLP educators have expanded opportunities for credit attainment and credential opportunities (i.e., OSSD, OSSC).



7

Parent and educator perceptual data indicates that while parents understand the basic structures associated with the GLP, they may not be fully aware of the likely educational outcomes associated with a GLP placement.



8

The GLP program structure lacks consistency across school sites at elementary and secondary which has resulted in different educational experiences and credential opportunities available to students.



9

Opportunities for integration are highly valued by students, parents and educators associated with the GLP; however, current structures limit integration opportunities.



Introduction

In 2022, the **Learning Support Services (LSS)** department of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) obtained application based funding from the Ontario Ministry of Education that sought to advance initiatives aimed at preventing and removing accessibility barriers experienced by students with disabilities. Using Ministry funding, this evaluation focuses specifically on learners with a **Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) exceptionality**¹. The work aims to provide foundational considerations for current service delivery models through an equity lens, providing a framework to disrupt systemic practices that have contributed to ableism, classism and racism. To achieve this aim, the purpose of the evaluation was twofold:

- to provide the District with outcome data for learners with a MID exceptionality receiving their educational program through General Learning Program (GLP) **specialized program classes** (SPCs) and
- to facilitate data-informed decision making when considering support and structures for students with a MID exceptionality within the OCDSB special education service delivery model.

It is anticipated that the program evaluation structure, resources and training methods developed through this initiative to support learners with a MID exceptionality could be adapted to support learners with other exceptionalities.

Students with a MID exceptionality compared with students of the same age struggle with abstract thinking, communication and emotional regulation within social contexts. In addition, they may struggle with practical aspects of life including tasks of daily living (e.g., grocery shopping, using transportation, food preparation and banking) ([APA, 2022](#)).

Ministry definition of Mild Intellectual Disabilities (MID)

The Ministry of Education (2023) characterizes the MID exceptionality as

- (a) an ability to profit educationally within a **regular class** with the aid of considerable curriculum modifications and supportive services;
- (b) an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development; and
- (c) a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.

In this report, MID refers to this definition and not the clinical diagnosis as defined by the DSM-5-TR of an Intellectual Developmental Disorder (formerly Intellectual Disability) - Mild Severity.

¹ MID is one of the **exceptionalities** in the Ministry of Education's intellectual exceptionality category.

Description of the General Learning Program (GLP) Specialized Program Class (SPC)

Special Education Delivery of OCDSB

Across the province, there is significant variability in the delivery of special education supports and services despite each district being governed by the Education Act, guided by foundational documents including [Learning For All](#) and being allocated the same proportional funding to support students with special education needs. The OCDSB has traditionally allocated more proportional resources to special education self-contained classes than to special education models adopted by other districts that support students with complex needs in a regular class placement.

The GLP is the SPC available for students with a MID exceptionality. It is available from grades 4 to 12, has a class size capped at 16 students and is staffed with 1 teacher and 1 Educational Assistant.

At the OCDSB, the Board Policy P.096.SES Special Education Program and Services outlines Key Learning Supports and states that the special education policy shall be achieved through the delivery of a variety of learning supports. This includes a continuum of placement options based on the five Ministry defined categories of placement, ranging from 'regular class with indirect support' to 'full-time special education classes.'

The OCDSB currently offers SPCs which are either **partially integrated (PI)** or **fully self-contained (FSC)** placement options for students requiring these levels of support. There are 11 types of SPCs at **elementary** and 10 types of SPCs at **secondary** that support students with specific exceptionality and/or learning profiles.

General Learning Program (GLP)

The GLP is the SPC available for students with a MID exceptionality. As with all district SPCs, the GLP is accessed through a referral process completed by the community school team in collaboration with parents/caregivers (hereafter parent(s) will be used and is inclusive of caregivers and parents). A central multidisciplinary team reviews referrals against specific criteria gathered from cognitive and educational assessments, academic and social/behavioural profiles. Cognitive criteria include a diagnosis of an Intellectual Disability (mild), as specified in the

DSM-5-TR (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, fifth edition), and an adaptive functioning assessment must indicate an impairment. Find out more about [the complete GLP criteria](#).

The GLP is available from grade 4 to 12 with junior (grade 4 to 6), intermediate (grade 7 & 8) and secondary (grade 9 to 12 or age 21) class configurations. Class size is capped at 16 students and is staffed with 1 teacher and 1 Educational Assistant.

For the 2022-2023 school year, the following GLP classes were available at schools across the District. There were 13 elementary classes; 7 junior and 6 intermediate classes located at 12 elementary schools. There were 15 secondary classes across 3 schools.

Literature Review

There is a spectrum of approaches to educating students with MID that range from complete segregation to complete inclusion (Kuntz & Carter, 2019). The segregation model consists of classes of students with similar profiles receiving their education in a separate educational setting. Typically, this involves smaller class sizes and higher educator-student ratios. The inclusive model integrates students with and without disabilities, allowing all students to receive their education in the same educational setting.

Moore (2016) emphasizes that this approach extends beyond sharing physical space. It requires providing students with the appropriate support and opportunities to learn, and engage in, a class and the school community. A commonality among all special education approaches is the intention of achieving an “equity strategy – a strategy committed to the support and education of disabled students” (Parekh et al., 2022, p. 6-7).

A historical scan of the literature demonstrates an evolution of special education programming and structures. It does not suggest one approach is better than another, yet there was a noticeable shift towards more inclusive education beginning in the early 1990s - [click here for the references of the literature scan](#)

Contemporary research continues to investigate a variety of approaches to special education. Recent meta-analyses and literature reviews increasingly support the idea that inclusive education offers several benefits for students with special education needs (Krämer et al., 2021, Oh-Young & Filler, 2015). Some of the cited benefits include increased academic and social outcomes for students with MID.

A jurisdictional scan of nine Ontario districts found that program structures for students with MID ranged from fully self-contained classes with no integration to complete integration in regular classes. The most common programming at elementary and secondary was self-contained classes with partial integration. Beginning in the 2024-25 school year, the Limestone District School Board will shift to a fully inclusive learning environment to provide equitable access to programming, services and support.

Recent meta-analyses and literature reviews increasingly support the idea that inclusive education offers several benefits for students with special education needs.

Students who have MID may encounter barriers at school and in the community. Ableism is described as a form of discrimination that favours abled individuals. Whether conscious or unconscious, it is a form of discrimination that privileges individuals based on ability and devalues the contributions of individuals with disabilities. This discrimination can be present in education in a variety of ways including decisions about how to teach and educate (Parekh et al., 2022).

Provincially, a study conducted within the Toronto District School Board revealed that although students with disabilities who were partially integrated achieved similar academic success as their counterparts who were fully integrated, they did not have equal access to academic pathways (Parekh & Brown, 2019). This discrepancy is a powerful example of the effect of a special education service delivery model on educational outcomes and highlights existing systemic barriers faced by students with MID within the educational system.

Here is the complete [literature review and references](#)



Evaluation Methodology

The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Gain a deeper understanding of student profiles in the GLP;
- Analyse student achievement data;
- Understand pathways for students in the GLP; and
- Learn more about the experiences and perceptions of the GLP from key program stakeholders with a specific focus on students, parents and educators (i.e., GLP teachers and EAs).

Based on these objectives and the exploratory nature of this evaluation, the following five evaluation questions were formulated:

- 1. Who are the students in the GLP?**
- 2. What are the student pathways within the GLP?**
- 3. What are the stakeholder perceptions of the GLP?**
- 4. What factors and conditions do stakeholders perceive contribute to the pathways of students in the GLP?**
- 5. How can this evaluation inform practices and programming for students in the GLP?**

Evaluation Approach

The evaluation employed was a process evaluation. This type of evaluation is utilized to identify the strengths and challenges of a program and provide recommendations for program growth (Patton, 2012). Its purpose is to investigate:

- “how a program was implemented and operates;
- identifies the procedures undertaken; and
- describes how the program operates” (Matheson, 2005, p. 327).

Evaluation Design

A mixed methods design was developed to be completed in one school year. It collected and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data during the same time period. Quantitative and qualitative results were merged and interpreted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the findings (Creswell, Plano Clark, et al., 2003).

Data Collection Instruments, Sources and Participants

This evaluation utilized both primary and secondary sources of data. Table 1 shows the primary data collection instruments and number of participants. The design of the data collection instruments were informed by:

- Recurring themes from pre-evaluation discussions with current and former GLP educators and administrators;
- GLP class and school visits; and
- Feedback from the evaluation’s working group and/or teachers supporting the GLP.

The naturalistic observations and student focus groups were done by teachers supporting the GLP. They were trained by the lead evaluator on how to conduct focus groups, take observations and write field notes. Consultations with educational experts who are working or worked in the GLP were conducted to accurately interpret the findings.

Table 1. The Primary Data Sources Used and the Number of Participants

Primary Data Sources	Number of Participants		
	Educators	Parents	Students
Surveys	40	133	N/A
Focus groups & interviews	10	7	15
Naturalistic observations	10	N/A	18
Email correspondence	4	2	1
Virtual drop-in discussions	4	N/A	N/A

Two types of secondary data were used:

- District databases, specifically the all-active student database and the report card database spanning from 2016 to 2023² and
- Student interviews conducted by teachers supporting the GLP.

Data Analysis

- Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) analyzed students' demographics, academic achievement and pathways.
- Chi-square tests and crosstabulation analyses were employed to explore the significance of associations among parental involvement and satisfaction.
- A thematic analysis was conducted on the qualitative data that included Holistic, Simultaneous, Focus and Magnitude Coding.

Here is the complete [methodology and references](#)



2 Some of this data was gathered and cleaned by members of the Research, Evaluation & Analytics Division (READ).

Demographic Information

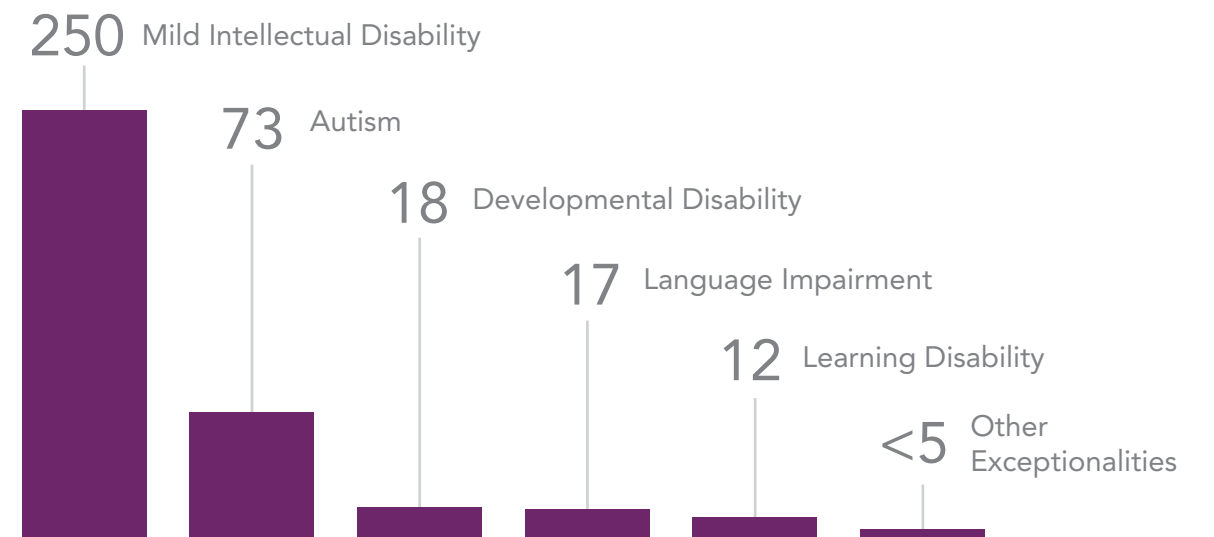
The demographic information in this section is not comprehensive. The information presented demonstrates various patterns that have emerged in the GLP that could indicate potential shifts in the demographics of the students in the program and confirm common trends in special education.

Exceptionalities

Figure 1 displays the average number of **first exceptionalities** of students in the GLP between 2016-23. MID is the most predominant, averaging 250 students, with additional exceptionalities being present.

FIGURE 1

The Average Numbers of Primary Exceptionalities in the GLP Between 2016 and 2023



Placement in an SPC at the OCDSB requires that an **Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)** is completed. LSS provides guidance to inform the school-based IPRC process including that MID is the first exceptionality of students placed in the GLP. The results found a considerable range of first exceptionalities in the GLP including exceptionalities describing student profiles for which the GLP was not intended. These findings could indicate issues with how the IPRC process

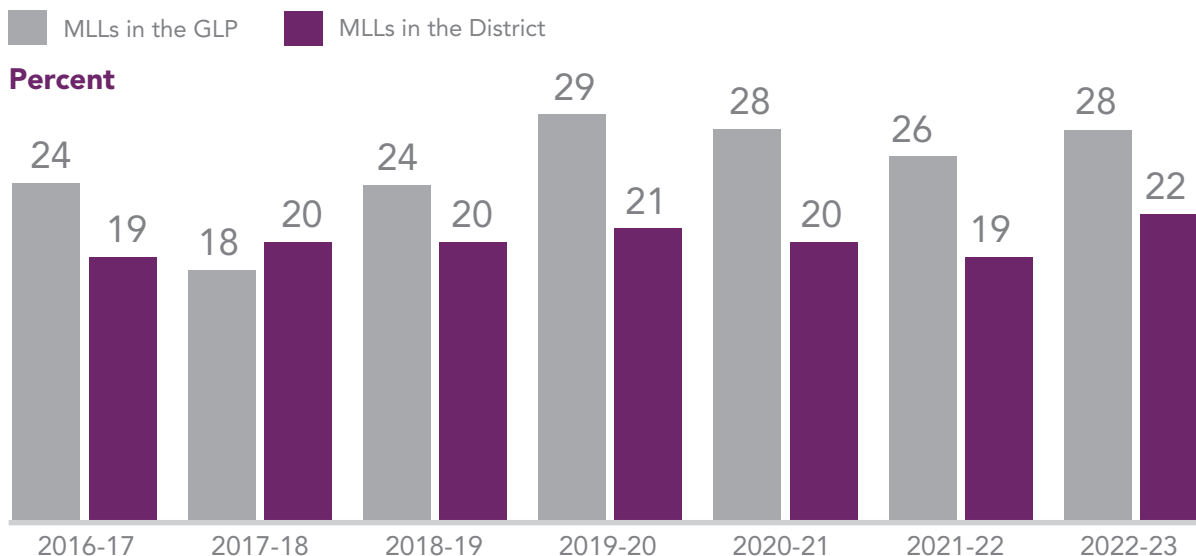
is being implemented across school teams or shifts in a student’s exceptionality/ profile without a corresponding change in placement. Further investigation would be necessary to determine the specific reasons for the discrepancy.

Linguistic Diversity

District data from 2016-23 indicates the number of multilingual learners (MLLs) in the GLP has been growing at a faster pace compared to the District, as shown in Figure 2. The increase in MLLs ranged from 4% to 8% in the years 2016-17 and 2018-2023. There is also a declining trend in the number of students who speak English at home and have English as a first language.

FIGURE 2

Growth of Multilingual Learners (MLLs) in the GLP and the District



The increase in the number of MLLs in the GLP outpaced the increase in MLLs overall in the District. This trend could suggest that a student’s identity (i.e., culture and first language) may be influencing their experience with special education processes and/or supports (e.g., IEP development, IPRC placement, special education programming, etc.).

These findings corroborate the anecdotal observations made by GLP educators regarding the increased linguistic diversity in the program. While exploring the reasons for the shifting linguistic profile of the GLP goes beyond the scope of this evaluation, further monitoring and investigation are essential to understand these reasons and potentially improve programming.

Gender

An analysis of gender identification data available to the evaluators between 2016-23 found a higher proportion of males than females in the GLP, aligning with special education literature. It has been well-documented that there is an overrepresentation of males compared to females in special education programs (Arms et al. 2008). There were no students in the GLP who identified as transgender, non-binary, or gender diverse.

Here is additional information on [the Demographics Section and references](#)



Pathway Analysis

Entry Points

An analysis of GLP entry points between 2016-23 found grade 4 was the largest with 27.2% of students entering at this grade level. It should be noted that grade 4 is the first year the GLP is available. Further examination of the grade 4 cohort revealed that:

- 73% came from **Primary Special Needs (PSN)**;
- 15% came from regular classes;
- 8% came from other SPCs; and
- 5% were not in district databases in grade 3.

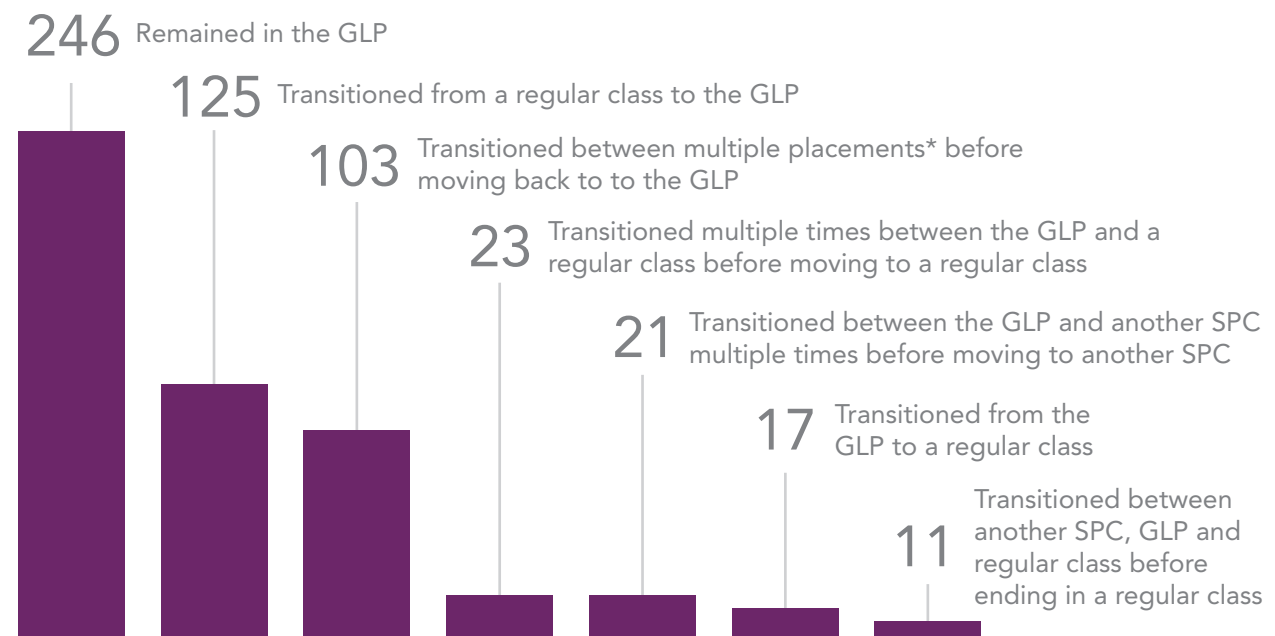
Grades 7, 8, and 9 were also large entry points that ranged from 11-13%.

Placement Patterns

An analysis was completed to better understand the placement patterns of students in a GLP placement at any point between 2016-23. In the database of 546 students, Figure 3 shows the vast majority of students were placed in the GLP in 2023.

FIGURE 3

Placement Changes of Students who were in GLP from 2016 to 2023



* 'Multiple placements' refers to placements in a regular class and/or a SPC that is not the GLP

In summary, the seven-year pathway analysis revealed that 246 students had no changes in their placement (i.e., remained in the GLP), while 300 students experienced placement changes with the majority returning to the GLP.

The majority of students who entered the GLP remain in the placement, aligning with anecdotal observations that once students enter the GLP, they are unlikely to return to regular classes. In addition, a substantial number of students who enter the GLP will experience multiple placement changes (i.e., transitions).

Student Achievement

Students in regular classes follow the provincial curricula. Their achievement of the curricular outcomes is reported in the provincial report card, a standard template provided by the Ministry of Education.

At a district level, reporting on student achievement in regular classes takes into account indicators such as report card marks, credit accumulation (i.e., tracking a secondary student pathway to graduation) and EQAO results.

What is an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?

An IEP is a document that indicates the special education program and/or services that are required to meet a student's needs. As described in the [Special Education Plan](#) of OCDSB (2022), "The IEP outlines the student's areas of strengths and needs as well as the program a student requires for instruction and assessment. The IEP documents formal assessments and any equipment a student requires to support their learning. The IEP is a working document that contains a transition plan and any record of required accommodations, modifications, or alternative programs needed to help a student achieve the learning expectations identified in their IEP" (p. 97).

The achievement of students in the GLP is informed by their IEP. A clear understanding of the function of an IEP contributes to the understanding of student achievement in the GLP.

Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)

IEPs were analysed to learn how they relate to student achievement. For this purpose, it is important to understand these components of an IEP:

- **Accommodations:** individualized specialized teaching and assessment strategies, environmental adaptations, human resources and/or individualized equipment that helps the student learn and demonstrate their learning.

- **Modified curricular expectations** (hereafter referred to as modified): statements on the IEP that reflect changes made to grade-level curriculum expectations and/or an increase or decrease in the number and/or complexity of an expectation for a subject or course to meet a student’s learning needs.
- **Alternative learning expectations** (hereafter referred to as alternative): knowledge and skills that are not represented in the Ontario curriculum expectations (e.g., social skills, personal care programs, etc.)

These categories are not always straightforward. For instance, all IEPs — regardless of type — include a student’s accommodations for learning (i.e., environmental, instructional and assessment). An accommodated IEP describes how a student accesses accommodations to meet the curricular expectations of a subject or credit-bearing course.

Modified IEPs include IEPs for which all subjects have been modified with below-grade-level curricular expectations³. Whereas, modified and accommodated IEPs include some subjects with modified learning expectations, while other subjects only require accommodations to access grade-appropriate curriculum. Modifications at secondary are at the discretion of the school principal and are not common practice at this time.

At the elementary level, an alternative IEP indicates a student has alternative learning expectations in addition to the curricular expectations.

At the secondary level, an alternative IEP includes **K-courses** (non-credit, non-graded courses that teach non-provincial curricular content) and/or alternative expectations that fall outside of the K-courses (e.g., self-regulation). When an IEP has both accommodated and alternative, a student is taking K-courses (that are alternative) and credit courses (with accommodations) (as seen in Table 3).

A combination of one or more components of an IEP means that certain subjects follow an IEP structure while other subjects follow another, depending on individual student needs (as seen in Table 2 and 3).

Students in the GLP have modified or alternative IEPs.

In elementary GLP, all students had modifications (see Table 2). Of those that had modifications, 46.7% also had alternative learning expectations.

³ Students in the GLP have below grade-level expectations. IEPs can also be modified with above level expectations.

TABLE 2

2022-2023 IEPs for Students in the Elementary GLP

IEPs	Number of Elementary IEPs
Modified (all subjects)	27
Accommodated and Modified (some subjects have modifications)	62
Modified and Alternative (all subjects modified)	39
Modified, Alternative and Accommodated (subjects have alternative programming, modifications or accommodations)	39
Totals	167

For secondary students in the GLP, almost all IEPs were found to include alternative program expectations (97.8%) (see Table 3). There were no modified IEPs present in the secondary 2022-23 GLP data. The accommodated IEPs will be explained later in this section.

TABLE 3

2022-2023 IEPs for Students in the Secondary GLP

IEPs	Number of Elementary IEPs
Accommodated (have accommodation for credit courses)	<5*
Alternative (K-courses and/or non-K-course learning expectations)	134
Accommodated and Alternative (have accommodation for credit-courses and alternative programming)	91
Totals	230

*n<5 is suppressed to ensure that individual students cannot be identified

What is the IEP and IPRC system?

The IEP and IPRC system is the integrated technology platform used by LSS to generate and manage special education documentation, including IEPs and IPRCs. It is, therefore, an important source of data to inform evidence-based decision making.

1. At a school level, it appears that the program is sometimes defining the IEP instead of individualized student need.

IEP/IPRC system data showed students in the GLP at some schools have the same components of an IEP. A deeper review of IEPs found that some schools have the same subjects modified for all students. These patterns suggest that IEPs may not fully represent student needs, which impacts outcomes.

2. Inconsistencies in reporting secondary IEP outcomes (i.e., whether or not a school chooses to generate an alternative report card in the IEP/IPRC system) impact IEP data.

If students have alternative learning expectations, the direction from the Ministry is that they receive both a provincial report card and an alternative report card. At secondary, an educator reported that some educators who teach K-courses feel the alternative report card provides more flexibility in reporting student progress than the provincial report card, and found a more efficient way to generate alternative report cards. This practice resulted in coding K-courses as accommodated and alternative in the IEP/IPRC system. K-courses should be labelled as alternative only because they consist of alternative learning expectations. Consequently, the 'accommodated and alternative' IEP numbers reported in Table 3 were determined to be inflated based on this reporting practice.

► *The configuration of the IEP/IPRC system related to historical data limits the ability to complete a fulsome analysis of IEPs across multiple school years.*

The IEP/IPRC system receives student information (e.g., school, grade, etc.) from the SIS. The historical information contained in the IEP/IPRC system only includes IEP and IPRC data and not other information received from the SIS. As a result, using the current IEP/IPRC system structures, if a search was conducted in the 2023-24 school year for the previous school year (i.e., 2022-23), the only historical information the database has from the previous school year is a student's IEP. The rest of the information (e.g., grade, school, etc.) is current information from 2023-24.

This structure limits the ways the IEP/IPRC system can be used to complete longitudinal and/or retrospective analysis. As a result, the evaluators were unable to further explore some patterns from the 2022-23 school year (e.g., the accommodated IEPs in secondary GLP, as shown in Table 3). With current structures, retrospective analysis would require data sets to be merged across platforms (e.g., the SIS), requiring more complex analysis techniques.

Report Card Data

► *At a district level, the evaluation was unable to accurately measure student achievement for students in elementary GLP using current district and provincial reporting practices.*

An analysis of report card data was undertaken to investigate the achievement of students in the GLP. Report card data, that is recorded in the SIS, consists of the report card outcomes (whether letter grade or percentage mark) that are derived from report cards. The evaluation team was unable to accurately interpret the report card data of students in elementary GLP for the following reasons:

- Students have varied and student-specific modified curriculum expectations. Consequently, their report card outcomes are not necessarily equivalent or comparable to report card outcomes of other students (i.e., inside or outside the GLP) and
- The data contained in the SIS does not indicate the grade level to which the learning expectations have been modified.

As a result, report card data in isolation does not accurately reflect the achievements of students in the elementary GLP. The individualized modified expectations are available only through IEPs. Therefore, at the time of reporting, with current district and provincial reporting practices, elementary student achievement in the GLP could not be measured through the SIS alone and without access to student-specific IEPs.

Secondary Student Achievement

► *The secondary GLP is beginning to shift to provide more opportunities for credit attainment and educational credentials (i.e., Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC)).*

Historically, students in the GLP participated in K-courses (non-credit, non-graded courses based on alternative expectations). In rare cases, a small number of students earned credits based on particular strengths or interests (e.g., Physical Education (PE) or Art) by integrating into regular classes for less than half of their day. As a result, most students in the GLP earned few to no credits during high school, leading to a **Certificate of Achievement (CoA)** at the conclusion of their secondary education instead of an OSSD or OSSC.

In recent years, educators and administrators supporting secondary students in the GLP have begun the work to expand academic opportunities based on the belief that past practices may have underestimated the abilities of students. The evaluation documented the following shifts:

- Credit earning opportunities have been made available to students by including more integration into regular classes and credit expectation tracking, in which non-credit courses potentially lead to the requirements of credit courses (e.g., Civics credit through *Exploring Your World* K-course) and via cross-curricular tracking. Credits earned through cross-curricular tracking can occur across courses and with different teachers over a semester, school year or over more than one school year.
- Educational credentials have become an option for some students due to the focus on credit attainment opportunities. Some students are on a path to achieve an OSSC or OSSD instead of a CoA.
- The credit earning and educational credential opportunities across the three secondary schools with GLP classes are not yet consistent.

► *School practices for tracking credit expectations that lead to credit attainment do not fully align with timetabling standards and are therefore not accurately reflected in district-level data.*

The district-level report card data indicated that students in the GLP earned 101 credits in 2022-23, while schools expected 357.5 credits to be earned. Consultation with the educator team from one secondary GLP school provided insights into this discrepancy. In some cases, credits have been awarded outside of timetabled credit courses. These credits were directly applied to transcripts and graduation summaries.

Other reasons for this discrepancy may exist and should be investigated, as they could not be fully understood by evaluators from the data alone. Since these credit expectation practices better represent student ability, developing timetabling practices that include expectation tracking would make district data more reflective of school practice.

Parent Understanding and Perceptions of the GLP and Related Special Education Processes

What is statistical significance?

Statistical significance determines whether findings observed in a small group (sample) are reliable and likely to be true for a larger population⁴ or if they happened just by chance. Statistically significant results indicate a high likelihood that what researchers observed is true and not just by chance ([Dorneyi, 2007](#)).

Since statistical significance only indicates that a finding is probably true, there are several factors to consider before generalizing a finding to a larger population. For instance, the context in which the data was collected ([Mahojeri et al., 2020](#)).

Parent Involvement in and Satisfaction with their Child's IEP

► *Parents of students in the elementary GLP feel more involved in IEP development and more satisfied with their child's progress on their IEP goals than parents of students in secondary GLP.*

Parents who were involved in the development of their child's IEP were more likely to be satisfied with their child's progress related to IEP goals. Parents of elementary students in the GLP reported being more involved and satisfied than parents of secondary students in the GLP.

⁴ In the context of this evaluation, 'a larger population' would refer to an entire stakeholder population.

The perceived involvement of parents in IEP development is statistically significant. 79.2% of parents of elementary students felt involved in their child's IEP development. Parents of secondary students exhibited a higher proportion of uncertainty about their perceived involvement:

- 41.3% were "Somewhat involved";
- 12.7% were "Unsure"; and
- 20.6% were "Barely involved."

Parents cited concerns about the inadequate or insufficient changes to the IEP over several school years, stability and consistency of the IEP, challenges in comprehending complex IEP documentation, and difficulties related to communication and collaboration with educational professionals.

Parent satisfaction with their child's progress on IEP goals is statistically significant.

- 45.3% of elementary parents were "extremely satisfied."
- 58.2% of secondary parents were "mostly satisfied."

Parent Understanding of the GLP and Program Outcomes

► *Parents comprehend the basic structures associated with the GLP; however, they may not be fully aware of the likely educational outcomes associated with a GLP placement.*

Parents feel they have been clearly explained the following foundational characteristics of the GLP before their child entered the program:

- smaller class sizes (90.2%);
- an increased focus on daily living skills (89.7%);
- attending a school outside their child's neighbourhood (86.1%); and
- an academic focus on two or more years below grade level (79.5).

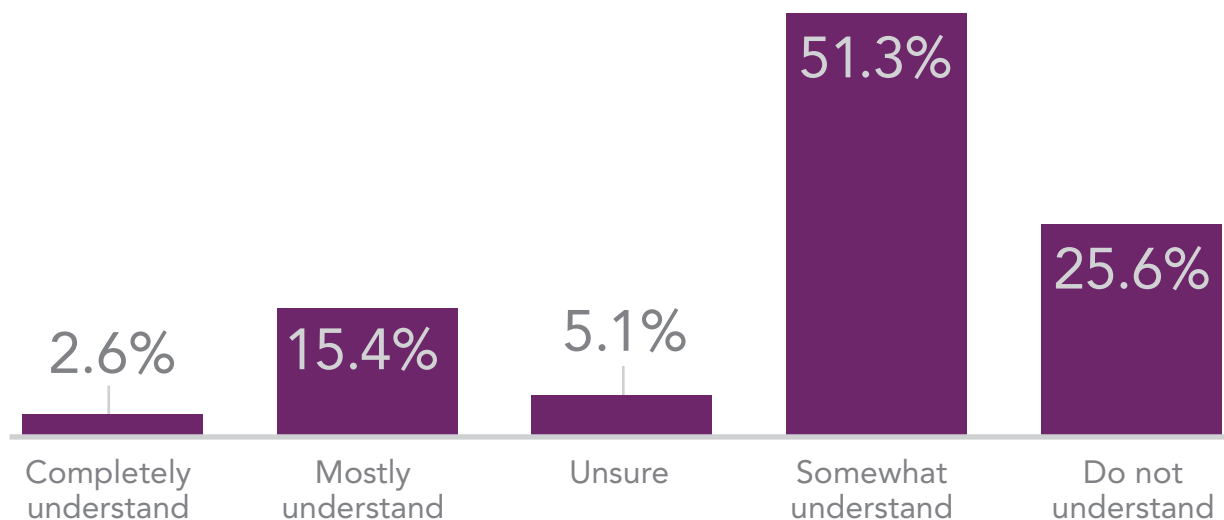
Educators report 51.3% of parents "somewhat understood" and 25.6% "do not understand":

- the possibility of their child remaining in GLP until grade 12;
- not obtaining credits;
- not obtaining an OSSD and;
- not attending post-secondary education.

FIGURE 4

Educator Perceptions of Parent Understanding of GLP Program Outcomes

(i.e., the possibilities of remaining in GLP, not obtaining credits, not obtaining an OSSD, not attending post-secondary education)



A recurring theme in educator focus groups supported these survey findings, with educators reporting that some parents do not understand the GLP. Examples of parent misunderstanding were:

- their child “just needs more homework,...they just need to work to leave the GLP.”
- their child was “going to outgrow it [the GLP] in a way...they [the parents] were saying well: if she’s getting A’s and B’s on her report card then why isn’t she able to write? So I [the educator] don’t think they totally understood that it was a modified [curriculum].”

Educators identified common barriers that impede parent understanding such as language, insufficient understanding regarding the Canadian school system and the large amount of information they receive from schools.

Parent Perception of Their Child’s GLP Placement

▶ *Parents feel involved but lack choice in their child’s GLP placement*

73.2% of parents were “very involved” and 19.5% were “somewhat involved” in the decision to place their child in the GLP.

Reasons parents provided for being involved in the decision to place their child in the GLP included advocating for their involvement and consulting educators about their child’s programming options.

Focus groups revealed that, while parents felt they were involved in the decision to place their child in the GLP, it was not a choice. Parents reported:

- “My son did not have a choice [in entering the GLP]. My son has been in specialized programs from the beginning and I had to place him in a specialized program for Grade 9 in the fall; I don’t have a choice.”
- The teacher told us “this program [the GLP] has now been introduced [at this school] and we’re going to place [your child] into this program.”

Discussion of Findings

Based on their current understanding of the GLP, parents of students in the GLP are:

- involved in the development of IEPs;
- satisfied with their child’s progress and attaining the IEP goals;
- understood basic information about the program such as class size and staff ratios; and
- involved in the process of placing their child in the GLP.

These findings should be considered with the rest of the findings about parent understanding and perceptions of IEPs and the GLP:

- educators posited many parents may not understand the GLP program outcomes and
- the parents reported not having a choice in placing their child in the GLP.

Considering the entire context of the findings, parents may have more limited awareness and/or understanding of the GLP. If they had more understanding regarding GLP programming and pathways, it is possible their satisfaction with their child’s programming would be lower.

Here is additional information on the section about [Parent Understanding and Perceptions of the GLP and Related Special Education Processes](#)



Program Structure

Differences in Secondary Programming

- ▶ *Secondary GLP program structures are inconsistent across schools and result in different educational credential opportunities (e.g., CoA, OSSC, OSSD). Outcomes for some students could be impacted by their geographically determined GLP school.*

Below are brief descriptions provided by educators regarding secondary GLP programming at the time of data collection (2022-2023 school year). Please refer to the System Shifts Resulting from the Evaluation Section for updated information on secondary GLP program models since the time of initial data collection.

School A

A GLP educator described the school's programming as "the focus is not so much credits, it's job skills, life skills. So when they are in grade 10-11, then they start doing work experience."

- Most students:
 - are registered in K-courses;
 - are in self-contained classes;
 - have limited options for integration into regular classes; and
 - obtain a CoA upon completion of the GLP at the age of 21.
- Some students are considered to be eligible for Storefront⁵ at the age of 18.
- Credit tracking in K-courses began in the second half of 2022-23.
- No credits were awarded in 2022-23.

School B

- Most students spend a half-day equivalent in self-contained, ability-levelled classes focusing equally on numeracy and literacy.
- Alternatively, based on academic ability, a few students may integrate into regular program classes for English and Math.

⁵ Storefront is a program that focuses on employability and life skills through multiple work placements and school-based activities. It is open to students who are between 18-21 years old.

- For the other half of the day, students are either integrated into regular program classes working towards earning credits; are in a self-contained GLP class where they work on non-credit K-courses; or are in a self-contained GLP class where credits may be earned over time.
- PLAR [Prior Learning Assessment Recognition]⁶ is also being used when applicable.
- The majority of students are pursuing an OSSC or CoA.
- Several students are expected to receive an OSSD in the 2022-23 and 2023-2024 school years.

School C

Provides two possible program structures or pathways that result in different educational credentials.

- Option 1 - aligns with the historic secondary GLP model and results in a CoA. Students:
 - Take K-courses in self-contained classes;
 - Have limited opportunities for integration; and
 - Have the opportunity for work experience and/or co-op in later years.
- Option 2 - the 'GLP Credit' pilot program that can lead to an OSSC or OSSD
 - Credit accumulation is through a combination of regular classes, K-courses, cross-curricular tracking etc., and is individualized student by student
- At the end of each year, students in option 2 may continue in option 2 or return to option 1 based on individual strengths and needs.

At the end of 2022-23, of the students who were in their second year of Option 2:

- Some were planning to be demitted from the GLP and placed in regular classes for the 2023-24 school year; and
- A school staff member said most "are set to graduate [with an OSSD] by June 2025 or 2026, though a handful are going to be done by June 2024."

Which SPC a student can attend is determined by geographic catchments. In most cases, students are offered the SPC placement in the school that is closest in proximity to their community. When there are discrepancies in GLP programming opportunities across schools, a student's geographic location in the District could influence student outcomes.

⁶ "PLAR defines processes that allow individuals to identify, document, have assessed and gain recognition for their prior learning. The learning may be formal, informal, non-formal, or experiential" (CAPLA, 2024).

Challenges GLP Elementary Educators Face

► *Elementary GLP educators feel a lack of central support.*

Elementary educators reported:

- **Insufficient clarity on the purpose of the program.**
 - *“There is no clear success criteria for the program outcomes or standards beyond what I have personally written as specific curricular expectations on each student’s Individual Education Plan.” (Elementary GLP Educator)*
- **A lack of consistency in the structure of elementary GLP classes in different schools.**
 - *“Overall, the program seems to be implemented differently at different sites [schools] and in different age groupings.” (Elementary GLP Educator)*
- **Level-appropriate resources and materials are challenging to find** (reported by 71.5% of elementary educators).
- **A sense of isolation because all the elementary schools that have the GLP have one class except for one school.**
 - *“As an experienced educator who has worked in many different jurisdictions, it seems strange to me that there are no program meetings, professional development or training relating to a particularly large special education program.” (Elementary GLP Educator)*
 - 85.7% believe an increase in collaboration and networking among GLP educators would have a positive impact on students.

Elementary educators identified the following challenges:

- Managing disruptive student behaviour in a classroom with a diverse range of students with high needs;
- Determining and managing the content to teach; and
- Teaching and engaging students in non-core subjects.

Student and Parent Comments on Structure and Programming

▶ *Disruptive student behaviour in some GLP classes was a concern for students and their parents.*

Students said the most common factors affecting their learning were loud noises in the classroom and the disruptive behaviour of their peers.

"I have to walk out of the classroom when people are being loud." (Student in the GLP)

"Sometimes I get distracted by other people's behaviour." (Student in the GLP)

Parents shared stories about bullying, throwing classroom objects, and using disrespectful language. Concerns were raised about the impact of exposure to disruptive behaviour.

"They [children] are surrounded by this [disruptive behaviour] every day when they go to school, and I'm like, you're training my kids to accept bad behaviour from other people." (Parent of a student in the GLP)

Here is additional information on [the Program Structure Section](#).



Integration into Regular Class, School Community and Community

Within the context of this evaluation, integration refers to the practice of students from SPCs, such as the GLP, attending regular program classes and participating in activities in the school and the community. Parents, students and educators shared their insights and experiences about integration through surveys, focus groups and interviews.

Overview of Integration

► *Integration opportunities for students in GLP are not consistent.*

Across GLP elementary schools, students have varied and limited opportunities to integrate into regular classrooms and the wider school community.

At secondary schools, opportunities to integrate into regular classes are decided based on the program's focus (as initially discussed in the Student Achievement and Program Structure Sections). Students in schools with programs emphasizing academics are more likely to integrate due to active efforts by staff to create integration opportunities. Students in schools with programs focusing on life/employment skills had fewer chances for integration, as these schools emphasize work experience/co-op.

Parent Thoughts About Integration

Regular Classes

► *Parents want their child to integrate into regular classes and the school community.*

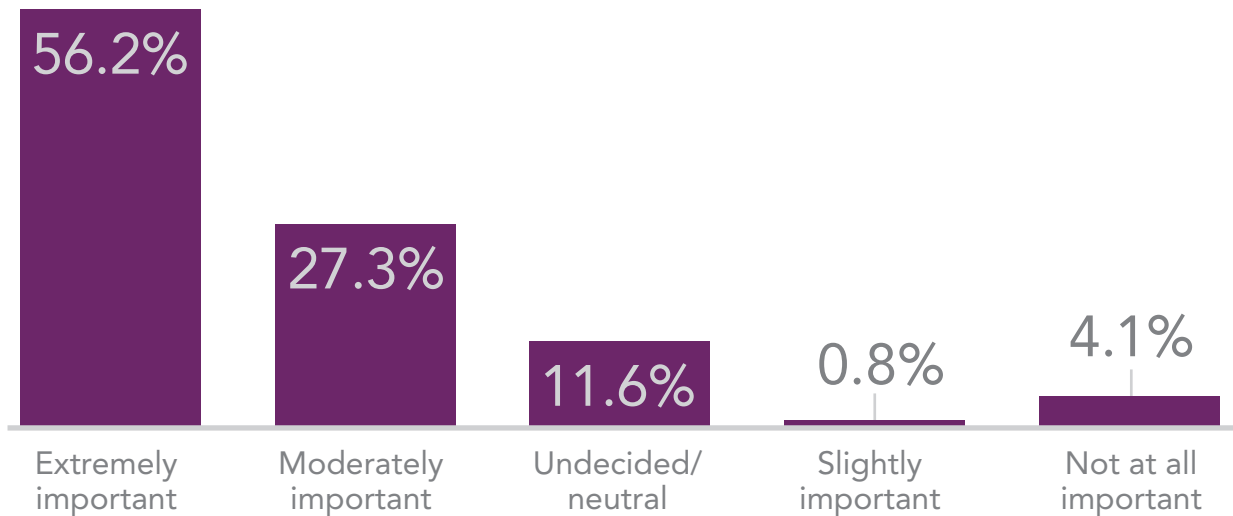
Figure 5 indicates the majority of parents reported that integration of their child into regular classes and activities outside the GLP is extremely important.

Parents highlighted reasons for supporting integration that include their children making friends, connecting with others, having chances to learn, experiencing personal growth, feeling good about themselves and feeling included.

"It [integration] is important so my child doesn't feel different from so-called 'normal kids' and the stigma is not created around GLP students. We want self-esteem to be boosted not eroded." (Parent of a student in GLP)

FIGURE 5

Parent Perception of the Importance of Their Child Integrating into Classes and Activities Outside of the GLP



School Community

In focus groups, most parents reported that their children have not been effectively integrated into the school community. Some voiced concern that their child was being taught to fear the school.

“I don’t feel like from his classroom that they [students] have any level of integration with the regular population of the school...It’s worrisome for them to leave the classroom and do something in the hallway ...sometimes I find [child’s name removed] has been asked to take the garbage and you know, go put it wherever it has to go. But then it’s a quick return to the classroom. It’s kind of like a sense of fear is being instilled where you [as a student] need to keep yourself away from the rest of the school. It’s not overtly done but it seems to be there which is not the best choice.” (Parent of a student in GLP)

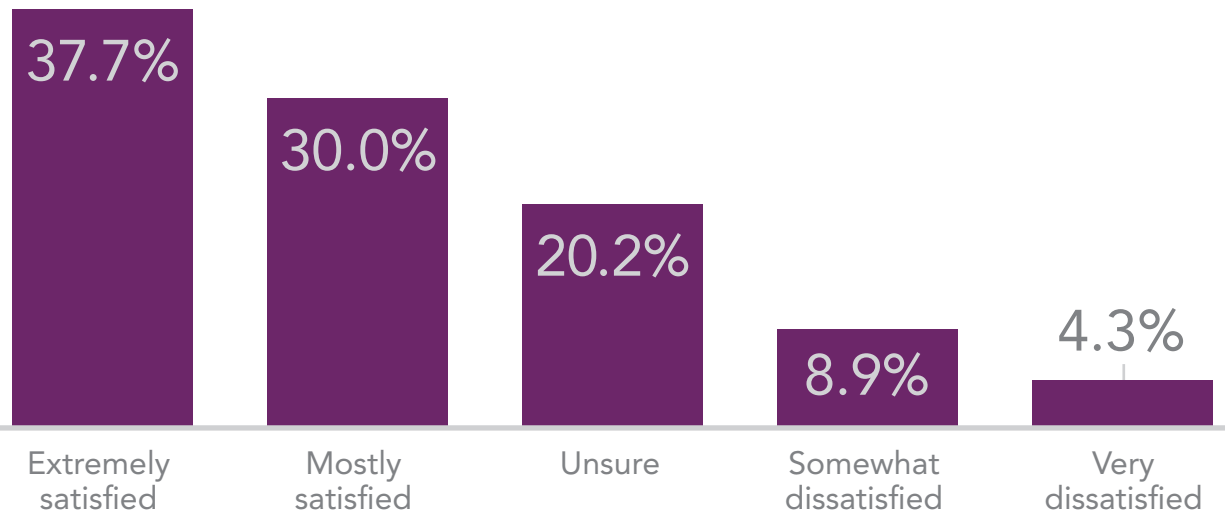
Community

▶ **Parents of secondary students reported that their child’s work and/or co-op experiences are enhancing their employability skills.**

As part of the secondary GLP programming, when possible students can participate in work experience and/or a co-op within the community (e.g., local businesses). Figure 6 indicates the majority of parents think their child’s work experience and/or coop experiences improved their employability.

FIGURE 6

Parent Satisfaction with their Secondary Child's Work and/or Co-Op Experiences in Developing their Employability Skills



Student Thoughts About Integration

Regular Classes

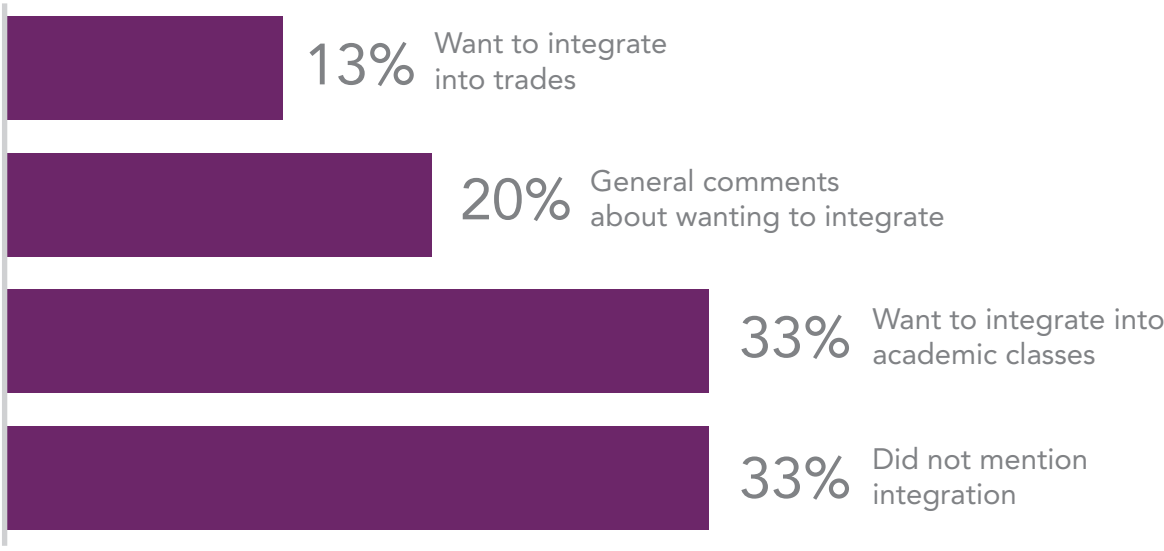
► *The majority of students want to integrate into regular classes and in the school community.*

Even though students were not explicitly questioned about integration into regular classrooms during interviews and focus groups, 66.7% expressed an interest (as seen in Figure 7). Some offered explanations such as

- *"I want to be able to do the credit program. So, that way I have more open options. Especially like, what if I want to go to college? What if I want to be a police officer? What if I want to do welding? What if I want to do horticulture? Stuff like that. And if it's [the GLP is] more open, I think it will be really helpful. For me and others." (Student in the GLP)*
- *"I would like to try and join other classes next year because I feel confident in them." (Student in the GLP)*

FIGURE 7

Student Comments about Integration

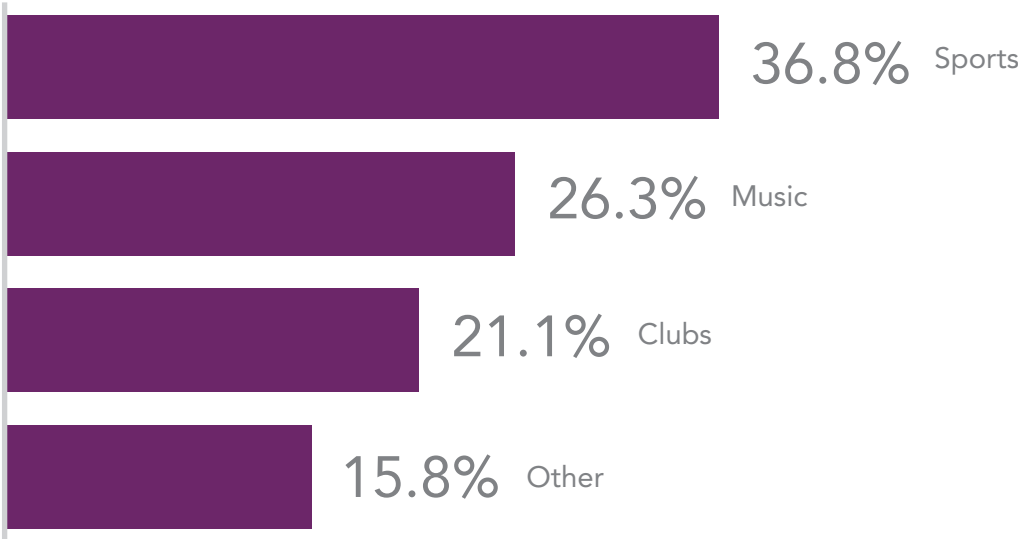


School Community

The students made it evident that participating in the school community was important to them. The extracurricular activities students have participated in or want to participate in were referenced 19 times by the 15 student participants. Figure 8 shows that the most common extracurricular activities were sports and music.

FIGURE 8

The Most Common Types of Extracurricular Activities Students Currently Participate or Wish to Participate in



Community

Observation of a Secondary Co-op Placement

(This co-op placement observation description serves as a small insight into a GLP co-op placement. As it is one observation of a single day, it is an example of a co-op. It does not represent the co-op experience of all students in the GLP.)

An observation was conducted of a day in a student's co-op placement at a recreational centre, where the student was working as a custodian. Prior to this co-op, the student had done other co-ops and volunteer placements in places such as a restaurant, store and car wash. This placement was their first doing custodial duties.

The student had five daily tasks that consisted of mopping, wiping tables and chairs and sanitizing door handles and automatic door opening buttons. These tasks were written down with descriptions that the student referenced each day to ensure the completion of the work. Each task was thoroughly, methodically and efficiently done. The student appeared to be focused and concentrated during the work. Several times the student mentioned that they did not want to waste time and that the work needed to be efficiently completed.

The student expressed enjoying the work because they liked cleaning, the people they met, and using the facilities of the centre (e.g., the pool, the office space and the café). Parts of the job that the student reported not liking were feeling confused, making mistakes and getting in trouble. However, they went on to say they no longer often make mistakes because they have become used to the job. The student was confident the recreation centre would hire them to do the same tasks at the end of the placement for one day a week for two hours. The student believed that their school prepared them for this work by teaching mopping and sweeping skills. The student added that their school has also taught them how to wash cars, cook, clean and hang clothes.

Educator Thoughts About Integration

Regular Classes

► *Most educators believe integrating into regular classes will benefit students.*

- 78.6% of elementary educators believe integration will have a positive impact.
- 63.6% of secondary educators believe integration will have a positive impact.

► *Educators identified social emotional and executive functioning skills as more important for integration into regular classes than academic skills.*

These skills were identified as being the most important for students to integrate into regular classes:

- Adapting to change (84.2%),
- Self-regulation (84.2%),
- Personal self-care (82.9%),
- Interpersonal skills (75.7%) and
- Following directions (65.8%).

Of the academic skills, only reading skills were considered the most important for integration into regular classes by over half of the educators. Here are the academic skills ordered by importance:

- Reading skills (54.1%),
- Reading comprehension (45.9%),
- Basic math skills (40.5%) and
- Math problem solving (27%).

► *Most barriers that hinder integration into regular classes are a result of systemic decisions.*

Educators identified the following barriers as impeding integration:

- Higher educator-to-student ratio in regular classrooms than in the GLP (71.5%);
- Limited suitable choice of courses or subjects (65.8%); and
- Scheduling conflicts (56.7%).

The interviews and focus groups with educators revealed some reasons why some of these barriers exist:

- Having one class at each grade level limits the opportunity for integration (e.g., having one grade 6 class restricts the number of grade 6 students in the GLP who could integrate);
- Existing safety concerns about students integrating into electives courses that are trades (e.g., welding); and

- Prioritizing registration for regular classes for students in regular classes.
 - *"If I have 17 students [in a class] who are regular program students, that's where their funding is. So I can't take one of those seats [for a student in the GLP]."* (Secondary GLP Educator)

A commonality among these reasons is the congregation of students with MID in a small number of schools.

Another recurring barrier to integration with elementary educators in the focus groups was student behaviour.

- *"Behaviour is a big part of it [integration]. They may have the ability but not the behaviour [to integrate]..."* (Elementary GLP Educator)

► *IPRC placements were not found to consistently reflect a student's integration experience.*

The two IPRC placements that students in the GLP have are:

- Fully self-contained (FSC): a student is in a special education class for the entirety of the day and
- Partially integrated (PI): a student is in a special education class for at least 50% of the school day and is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period a day.

Some educators observed that the IPRC placement for students in the GLP did not consistently reflect the amount of integration a student was having in regular classes. For example, students had a fully self-contained placement but were integrated into one or more regular classes which is more reflective of a partially integrated placement.

School Community

► *Students in the GLP tend to be friends with each other.*

In focus groups and interviews, GLP educators from both panels observed that their students are most often friends with others in their GLP class.

- *"My students tend to stick together because they get comfortable with each other."* (Elementary GLP Educator)

- *“The kids are free-flowing in and out of the GLP. Because they are in their own classes, they are a little bit more separate [from other students] and I think they like to hang out with each other because they have their friend groups. But there’s no barrier in that way [socializing with students outside of the GLP].” (Secondary GLP Educator)*

Here is additional information on the [Integration Section](#)



System Shifts Resulting from the Evaluation

As initial findings were shared with the LSS Leadership team, the issues that could be addressed were implemented in real time over the course of the evaluation, and LSS continues to work with and support schools in these areas. Below are actions LSS has taken since the data collection.

- LSS provided messaging in the spring of 2023 that suggested, to the extent possible, the IPRC process for students in GLP should be partially integrated with at least one instructional block in a regular class environment.
- LSS conveyed messaging in September 2023 to all principals regarding the implementation of integration plans for students in all SPCs.
- The administrators of secondary schools with SPCs were given increased flexibility beginning in September 2023 in how they use their allocated special education staffing in order to expand access to credit-bearing course opportunities for students in and out of the GLP. This staffing option was made in recognition that there were limited opportunities for students in the GLP to integrate into regular classes.
- Two community secondary schools were provided with additional teacher staffing for the 2023-2024 school year to meet the disability related needs of students transitioning from an intermediate GLP to attend the regular class at their community school for grade 9.
 - The group of students supported through this approach have demonstrated gains in a number of areas including academics, executive functioning skills and social skills. They are now integrated, credit-earning members of their school community. Three additional secondary schools will receive this staffing augmentation for September 2024 in order to expand this approach.
- The success of the LSS itinerant inclusive teacher model was further expanded in order to support the disabilities related needs of:
 - intermediate students as they transition to secondary school;
 - secondary students in grades 9 and 10 core courses; and
 - elementary students at three elementary schools.

- Asset-based student profiles were developed and prototyped with grade 8 students transitioning from GLP to attend their community school in grade 9. The purpose of this tool was to support the work of secondary educators to effectively program for this group of learners.
 - Throughout the 2023-2024 year, these profiles have continued to evolve as inclusion teachers and grade 9 classroom teachers became more aware of students' personal, social and academic goals.
- GLP elementary educators received professional development in June of 2022-2023 and November 2023-24, which consisted of literacy training and executive functioning training.
 - Due to the success of the first professional development day, the second one included members of LSS and newly hired secondary inclusion teachers to improve success both in the GLP classroom as well as in the integrated classroom.

Opportunities for Change

In addition to the actions that have taken place over the course of this evaluation, LSS will continue to focus central resources with an aim to improve current structures that impact student experience within the GLP.

System Level

- Update documentation to promote a common understanding of the GLP aimed at developing consistent program structure and delivery across schools.
- Consult with internal and external district resources to improve communication practices with parents whose children attend or are being referred to the GLP. Importantly, this will improve the accessibility of information for multilingual parents.
- Increase collaboration across central departments and schools to develop timetabling strategies that reflect the credit accumulation of students in the GLP.
- Continue the development of the IEP platform and its integration with other district platforms to allow for multi-year or longitudinal analysis of IEP trends.
- Develop and deliver professional learning and resources focused on modified and alternative learning expectations. Learning goals will seek to increase/improve:
 - Educator awareness regarding the impacts of modifications and alternative learning expectations on student achievement and pathway opportunities;
 - Strategies to improve accessibility to grade level provincial curriculum; and
 - Practices of monitoring and reporting that contribute to assessment and growth of learning goals.
- Provide system leaders, administrators and educators with training on ableism and the benefits of inclusive learning environments.

School Level

- Strive for more consistent implementation of the use of data-based instruction (i.e., structured literacy and numeracy).
- Continue to improve and increase opportunities for students in the GLP to have meaningful and purposeful inclusion throughout the school community - in regular classes, school activities and school events.

- Create knowledge-sharing opportunities between all educators (i.e., GLP and non-GLP).
- Strengthen conversations with students, families, and school-based teams about the level of support required for a student to build toward independence across personal, social and academic domains. The level of support should be:
 - Reviewed at regular intervals and aligned to the IEP (e.g., 2-3 times per year) and
 - Represented in the IPRC meetings and determination records.

Future Projects and Research

- LSS supports and assists system leaders and schools in implementing the above-mentioned opportunities for growth, evaluates the program changes and monitors the progress and achievement of students.
- Maintain collaboration with the Research, Evaluation and Analytics Division (READ) to deepen understanding of how elements of a student's identity intersect with their experience in special education processes and pathways using the most recent survey data.
- Evaluate and monitor the progress of students transitioning from an intermediate GLP to the regular class at their community school for grade 9.

Glossary of Terms

Accommodations: assist students to attain curricular expectations. Accommodations include special teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and/or individualized equipment that help the student learn and demonstrate learning. Accommodations described in the IEP should include only those strategies and supports that differ from what is normally provided during classroom instruction. Accommodations that the student requires in connection with instruction, assessment and functioning in the physical environment should be listed separately as follows:

- Instructional accommodations - adjustments in teaching strategies required to enable the student to learn and progress through the curriculum
- Environmental accommodations - changes or supports in the physical environment of the classroom and/or the school
- Assessment accommodations - adjustments in assessment activities and methods required to enable the student to demonstrate learning

Alternative learning expectation/ Alternative IEPs: statements on the Individual Education Plan (IEP) describing expectations developed to help students acquire knowledge and skills that are not represented in the Ontario curriculum expectations. Because they are not part of a subject or course outlined in the provincial curriculum documents, alternative learning expectations are considered to constitute alternative programs or alternative courses (i.e., secondary school courses). Examples of alternative programs/courses include speech remediation, social skills, orientation/mobility training, and personal care programs. Alternative programs/courses are provided in both the elementary and the secondary panels.

Certificate of Accomplishment (CoA): a certificate granted to students who leave school before fulfilling the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma or the Ontario Secondary School Certificate. The Certificate of Accomplishment is a useful means of recognizing achievement for students who plan to take certain adaptive programs, or other kinds of additional training, or who plan to find employment after leaving school.

Elementary: in Ontario, it includes Kindergarten to Grade 8 (K-8). The term can also be used to describe students, staff, and the programs within these grades.

Exceptionality: there are five categories of exceptionalities for exceptional students, as outlined in The Education Act: behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical, and multiple. These broad categories are designed to address the wide range of conditions that will affect a student's learning needs. Each category consists of subcategories. A mild intellectual disability is a subcategory of the intellectual category. Click here for more information on exceptionalities - <https://www.ontario.ca/document/special-education-ontario-policy-and-resource-guide-kindergarten-grade-12/categories>

First exceptionality: a primary presenting need of a student that may affect their ability to learn as determined by IPRC.

Fully-Self Contained (FSC): is one of the possible placements that may be offered to a student during an IPRC process. A full-time special education class where the student teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, Section 31, for the entire school day.

Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC): a committee consisting of school board members, a parent, and the student (if 16 years of age or older) that decides whether or not a child should be identified as exceptional, identifies the areas of a student's exceptionality according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education, decides an appropriate placement for a student, and reviews the identification and placement at least once in each school year.

Individual Educational Plans (IEP): A written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student, including a record of the particular accommodations needed to help the student achieve his or her learning expectations. An IEP must be developed for a student who has been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), and may also be developed for a student who has special education needs but has not been identified as exceptional. An IEP is a working document that identifies learning expectations that may be modified from or alternative to the expectations given in the curriculum policy document for the appropriate grade and subject or course. It outlines the specific knowledge and skills to be assessed and evaluated for the purpose of reporting student achievement. A written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student. It identifies learning expectations that are modified from or alternative to the expectations given in the curriculum policy document for the appropriate grade and subject or course, and/or accommodations and special education services needed to assist the student in achieving his or her learning expectations.

K-Courses: are courses consisting of alternative expectations, which are non-graded and do not lead to credits. They do not have a provincial curriculum and generally focus on preparing the student for employment (supported or independent) and/or community living .

Learning and Support Services (LSS): a department at the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board that works in collaboration with teaching personnel and parent(s)/guardian(s) to provide supports and services to meet the individual, special education and mental health needs of student and schools.

Mild intellectual disability: is one of the exceptionalities characterized by the Ontario Ministry of Education (2023) as

- (a) an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modifications and supportive services;
- (b) an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development; and
- (c) a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.

Modified learning expectation/Modified IEP: a statement on the IEP that reflects the changes made to the grade-level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs. Modifications may include the use of learning expectations at a different grade level and/or an increase or decrease in the number and/or complexity of expectations relative to the curriculum expectations for the regular grade level. At the secondary level, a credit may or may not be granted for a course, depending on the extent to which the expectations in the course have been modified.

Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC): a certificate granted on request to students who are leaving secondary school upon reaching the age of eighteen without having met the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD): a diploma granted to secondary school graduates by the Canadian province of Ontario.

Partial Integration (PI): is one of the possible placements that may be offered to a student during an IPRC process. 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 percent of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.

Primary Special Needs (PSN): a specialized program class is for a student with overall significant delays in intellectual development, and who requires an intensive program to develop coping strategies to progress in all school related areas. The Primary Special Needs specialized program class provides opportunities for each student to develop their learning, communication, and social skills.

Regular class: within the context of this evaluation, regular class refers to classes and courses that are not specified program classes (SPCs). This term is used because it aligns with the language used in the Special Education Plan of OCDSB.

Secondary: in Ontario, it includes grades 9 to 12, and is often referred to as 'high school'. The term can also be used to describe students, staff, and the programs within these grades.

Specialized program classes (SPCs): are part of the Special Education Service Delivery Model of the OCDSB. They are self-contained classes designed to provide programming for specific exceptionalities. Students receive a specialized program class placement through IPRC. The General Learning Program (GLP) is one specialized program class (SPC).

