



**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BOARD
Report No. 25-036**

**18 June 2025
23 June 2025**

Special Education Plan 2024-2025 and Special Education Report 2025

Key Contact: Kate Stoudt, Superintendent, Learning Support Services, 613-596-8254
Deborah Lyon, System Principal, Learning Support Services, 613-596-8211 ext. 8111

PURPOSE:

1. To obtain Board approval of the Special Education Plan 2024-2025 and the Special Education Report 2025.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

2. The special education plan outlines several links to the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan with a focus on the core values of:
 - equity, inclusion, and accessibility by highlighting the District's model for special education and some of the key shifts that are being made to reduce barriers to student achievement and providing individualized, personalized support and resources to meet the needs of every learner;
 - community building by encouraging engagement, trust, and collaboration with parents/caregivers, community groups, and school based teams;
 - responsible resource use by outlining the use of resources in support of teaching practices, student success, and good governance; and
 - leadership development by encouraging and supporting critical thinking, global awareness, and ethical decision-making.

The goal of the plan is to provide students, families and employees a fulsome tool to use as a guide and resource when supporting students with special educational needs in the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) through the key areas of focus, learning, wellbeing, and social responsibility.

CONTEXT:

3. 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 31 July. 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. Once again, this year, the review and revision of the plan was undertaken which included consultation with the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), review of each standard with a dedicated team from Learning Support Services (LSS), and collaboration with other OCDSB departments for feedback on the plan. Revision of some content is status quo and those 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.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

4. Purpose and Requirements of the Special Education Plan and Special Education Report

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 as well as 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.

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. This report is attached as Appendix B - Special Education Report 2025.

5. Revision Process of the Special Education Plan

The revision process of the plan includes two steps: a formal review brought forward at monthly SEAC meetings, and an independent review conducted by individual members of the SEAC. The following is a summary of the topics and dates of the items reviewed at the following SEAC meetings:

- 4 September 2024, SEAC - The role and composition and special education staff;
- 6 October 2024, early identification procedures/intervention strategies and equipment;
- 6 November 2024, identification placement and review committee (IPRC) process and appeals and individual education plans (IEPs); and
- 6 December 2024, transportation and the OCDSB model for special education.

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.

Over the years, 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.

The current practice of reviewing the special education plan in sections with the SEAC on a monthly basis works well in that it allows for discussion of the document in manageable pieces, allowing progress to be made 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.

6. Key Updates to the Special Education Plan 2024-2025

Some key changes to the plan this year include:

- a continued focus in the Staff Development standard on inclusive education practices; and
- an update to the Board’s consultation process and the Board’s model for special education standards to include current initiatives that LSS has been focused on including the Elementary Program Review.

The “Moving Forward in this Standard” section outlines upcoming work or next steps related to the information shared within the section and has been updated to reflect planning and initiatives for the upcoming year. Staff is committed to continuous improvement and opportunities to increase the accessibility of the information for staff, parents/guardians and where appropriate, students.

7. Submission Process and Timelines

As required in the *Special Education in Ontario - Kindergarten to Grade 12 - Policy and Resource Guide 2017*, the approved special education plan is forwarded to the Ministry of Education along with a copy of the Board motion and the date of approval.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8. The work undertaken on the special education plan by LSS to review and update the plan 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. In addition, the SEAC has allocated time on four agendas for this item.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

9. 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 the 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. The special education plan 2024-2025 draft will be presented at the SEAC meeting on 18 June 2025 for approval.

A variety of sections of the plan were shared with different District staff for review. The following departments and individuals were consulted for feedback:

- LSS (academic and professional staff);
- Program Services (system principals); and
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA).

LSS plans to offer collaborative learning sessions pertaining to the following standards within the special education plan to educators (i.e., administrators, teachers, educational assistants and early childhood educators, etc.):

- the Board's model for special education;
- the individual education plan;
- the identification, placement and review committee; and
- early identification procedures and intervention strategies.

These learning opportunities will solidify the cross-departmental work that happens and supports the District's commitment to ensuring the diverse needs of special education learners are served in a culturally responsive manner through the lens of inclusive design.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Special Education Plan 2024-2025, attached as Appendix A to Report No. 25-036 be approved.

THAT the Special Education Report 2025, attached as Appendix B to Report No. 25-036 be approved.

Kate Stoudt, Superintendent, Learning Support Services

Pino Buffone
Director of Education and Secretary of the Board

APPENDIX

Appendix A Special Education Plan 2024-2025
Appendix B Special Education Report 2025