



**Learning Disabilities**

**Specialized Intervention Program (LD-SIP)**

**Program Evaluation Plan**

## Learning Disabilities Specialized Intervention Program (LD-SIP) Program Evaluation Plan

### I. Background

The Learning Disabilities Specialized Intervention Program (LD-SIP) was initiated in September 2016. This program was founded on several recommended changes to the service delivery model for students with LD, contained in OCDSB Report 15-157, *Review of Programs and Services for Students with Learning Disabilities in OCDSB Regular and Specialized Classroom Settings*<sup>1</sup>. Appendix I contains the draft program logic model for the LD SIP.

In addition to the recommendations pertaining to students with LD in the regular program, the following structural changes to the LD-SIP program itself were approved:

- I. *The program shall be known as the Learning Disabilities Specialized Intervention Program (LD SIP) (Junior and/or Intermediate);*
- II. *The program delivery model be formalized as a half-day of specialized intensive program support for students for a one year duration; subject to consideration of individual student needs, up to one additional year may be provided; and*
- III. *The program be offered to junior and/or intermediate aged students, as required, in a grades 5/6 (Junior) and grades 7/8 (Intermediate) configuration.*

Although no formal public reporting commitments were made for the evaluation of the LD-SIP, Trustee discussion ensuing from Report 15-157 notes that:

*“LD students who are placed in a regular classroom will be monitored on an ongoing basis to assess improvement, and mechanisms to obtain feedback from parents and students with respect to implementation of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be explored. In addition, anecdotal feedback from teachers and report card data will also be assessed to identify improvements.” - COW Discussion January 2016.*

Further, there is strong pedagogical and administrative justification for the Learning Support Services Department to monitor the implementation of the LD-SIP initiative during its early stages in order to assess factors influencing the program’s effectiveness<sup>2</sup>. To that end, the following document outlines an evaluation plan for the LD-SIP.

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<sup>1</sup> For details see OCDSB Report 15-157, Committee of the Whole in January, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Patton, M. Q., (1997). Utilization-focused evaluation (3rd Edition). Beverly Hills: Sage.

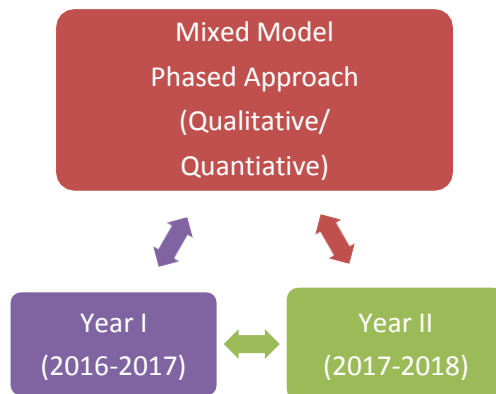
## II. Evaluation Design

### Participatory Evaluation Approach

The LD-SIP evaluation plan was developed based on the participatory approach to evaluation<sup>3</sup>. For example, an evaluation project team composed of several key stakeholders, including those responsible for implementing the LD-SIP, was organized in order to plan and to carry out the evaluation. The project team met in October 2016 to discuss several issues related to the LD-SIP evaluation, including, the methodological procedures, evaluation resources, reporting requirements/information uses, and budgetary constraints associated with this evaluation project. Feedback from the LD SIP Steering Committee was also sought as part of this process.

Given that the LD-SIP program has been in place for less than 1 year, the team agreed that the evaluation plan should employ a sequential (phased) approach, spanning over two years. The first phase will begin in 2016-2017 with the implementation of several formative evaluation activities. Phase II will occur in 2017-2018, where more specific summative outcomes-based evaluation activities will be undertaken. In order to effectively address the information needs of the LD-SIP stakeholders, the team also recommends that the evaluation plan should employ a mixed model design, including both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Figure 1 below summarizes the LD SIP evaluation design.

**Figure 1 LD-SIP Evaluation Design**



### Formative/Summative Evaluation

A basic distinction in the field of program evaluation exists between formative and summative evaluation<sup>4</sup>. Whereas formative evaluation activities provide important insight into the barriers and facilitators to the program's success *during implementation*, summative evaluation activities are more appropriate for outcomes-based evaluation. As such, the project team has proposed several formative evaluation activities for Year I of the program (2016-2017), aimed at addressing information needs from different stakeholder

<sup>3</sup>Cousins, J.B., & Earl, L. (1995). Participatory evaluation in education: Studies in evaluation use and organizational learning (p.159–180). London: Falmer.

<sup>4</sup> Alkin, M.C., (Ed.). (2004). Evaluation roots: Tracing theorists' views and influences. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.

groups during program implementation (see Figure 1). Insight gathered from parents, students and teachers during program implementation will help to set the stage for more specific outcomes-based evaluation activities in Year II, when the program becomes well-bounded. These summative-type evaluation activities are being planned for 2017-2018.

### III. Stakeholder Information Needs

#### Students/Parents

The project team has identified several information needs for Year I of the proposed LD-SIP evaluation. Information needs at the student and parent levels centre around examining the impact of the LD-SIP program on student wellbeing and overall happiness with school. For example, does the student enjoy being at school in the LD-SIP class? The impact of the new program structure on student outcomes will also be investigated, including: i) students' academic skills (reading, writing and/or math) through compensatory strategies; ii) acquisition of executive functioning skills; and iii) self-awareness and self-advocacy skills. A particular focus will also be on examining the impact of the integration component of the LD-SIP as well, such as the level of support students receive whilst in the regular classroom. Table 1 below summarizes the information needs identified for students, parents and staff.

**Table 1: LD SIP Evaluation - Information Needs By Stakeholder Group**

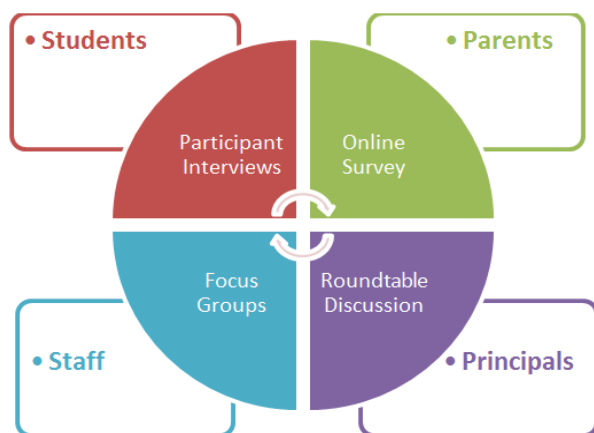
Stakeholders	Information being sought
<b>Students/Parents</b>	Impact of program on students' wellbeing.
	Impact of program on students' compensatory strategies for acquiring academic skills (reading, writing and/or math).
	Impact of program on students' use of assistive technology.
	Impact of program on students' executive functioning skills.
	Impact of program on students' self-awareness and ability to self-advocate.
<b>Program Staff (LD-SIP teachers; Integration teachers; LRTs; and/or administrators)</b>	Effectiveness of the development/delivery of academic program.
	Development, implementation and use of assistive technology.
	Impact of program on students' executive functioning skills.
	Impact of program on students' awareness of LD and ability to self-advocate.
	Barriers/Facilitators to the implementation of LD-SIP.
	Impact of program on students' compensatory strategies for acquiring academic skills (reading, writing and/or math).

An online survey will be employed in order to obtain this information from parents, as well as to recruit participants for a series of student interviews. The student interviews will take place during regular school hours.

### Program Staff

Information needs at the program staff level include several dimensions of program implementation from the perspective of LD-SIP teachers, as well as integration teachers and other school-based staff (e.g., Learning Resource Teachers; LSS professional staff; site administrators). For these particular stakeholders, the evaluation will examine several dimensions of development and/or delivery of academic programming through the use of focus groups. For example, do the student summary profiles help teachers plan and program for their students, and/or do teachers have adequate resources to program appropriately for their students? The impact of assistive technology will also be examined from a teacher perspective, such as the effectiveness of Google classroom's features and extensions. A major focus for program staff will also be on the facilitators and/or barriers to integration into the regular classroom. For example, do regular program teachers have the necessary professional training they require in order to program appropriately for these students?

**Figure 2: LD SIP Implementation Evaluation Model**



During roundtable discussions, LD SIP administrators (principals) will be asked about the facilitators and/or barriers to the implementation of LD-SIP at their site. Dimensions of interest from this stakeholder group include, but are not limited to: i) planning and implementing the LD-SIP classes at their particular school; ii) guidance and direction for both regular program and specialized program teachers; and iii) opportunities for

collaboration/communication amongst LD-SIP teachers, integration teachers/LRTs, and administration. This level of analysis will provide important insight about program implementation from the administrator perspective.

## **IV. Summary of Formative Evaluation Activities (2016-2017)**

As noted earlier, the LD-SIP evaluation plan involves a phased approach, sequential two-year design where Year I of the plan will focus on several unique formative evaluation activities. The plan includes an intensive evaluation strategy with multiple stakeholder groups (i.e., parents, educators, students), as well as multiple and simultaneous methods of data collection (i.e., parent survey, staff focus groups, roundtable meetings, and/or structured interviews). These activities are summarized in Figure 2. Taken together these activities will provide valuable information to the District in supporting the second year of implementation. The evaluation is scheduled to take place in Spring 2017.

Appendix I: DRAFT Program Logic Model for **Learning Disabilities Specialized Intervention Program (LD-SIP), OCDSB**

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Outcome Indicators
<p>FTE Teacher with Special Ed I &amp; II qualifications</p> <p>Educational resources</p> <p>Assistive technology</p> <p>Speech-Language Pathologist consultation</p> <p>Psychologist consultation</p> <p>Social Worker consultation</p> <p>Learning Support Teacher consultation</p> <p>Specialized class setting</p> <p>Regular class setting</p>	<p>i) <i>Academic Programming:</i></p> <p>MOE Learning Skills and Work Habits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizational skills</li> <li>Communication skills</li> <li>Social skills</li> <li>Self-regulatory skills</li> <li>Self-advocacy skills</li> </ul> <p>ii) <i>Assessment/Evaluation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial assessment for learning</li> <li>Ongoing assessment for learning</li> <li>Identification of additional issues</li> </ul> <p>iii) <i>Consultation/ Collaboration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents</li> <li>Other school staff</li> <li>Multi-disciplinary team</li> <li>Community Agencies</li> </ul>	<p>Children in LD SIP receive ½ day instruction in a specialized classroom setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 individual profile of strengths and weaknesses for each child (IEP) reviewed by team;</li> <li>meetings with parents throughout the school year (e.g., PT Interview);</li> <li>1 individual transition plan;</li> <li>Additional consultation as necessary (Psychology, SLP, SW);</li> </ul>	<p>Personalized outcomes for program participants from start to end of academic year, and/or from admission to de-mission in LD-SIP program in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>literacy/numeracy skills</li> <li>organizational skills</li> <li>communication skills</li> <li>social skills</li> <li>anxiety management</li> <li>anger management</li> <li>self-advocacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent Surveys (post-intervention)</li> <li>Rubric measures (i.e., provincial report card learning skills/habits)</li> <li>Provincial assessment scores (i.e., EQAO)</li> <li>Social-Emotional measures (e.g., SEARS)</li> </ul>