



**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (PUBLIC)
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Report No. 19-091**

**15 October 2019
9 October 2019**

Specialized Program Class Referral Information 2019-2020

Key Contact: Peter Symmonds, Superintendent of Learning Support Services, 613-596-8254

PURPOSE:

1. To provide information requested by the Board regarding the specialized program class referral and placement process for the 2019-2020 school year.

CONTEXT:

2. On 30 October 2018, the Board passed the following motion.

THAT staff produce a series of updates, beginning no later than the end of October 2019, detailing the number of applications and the number of children receiving assessment and placements in all congregated programs, by exceptionality, at both the elementary and secondary levels, and details of waitlists for all congregated programs by geographic zone.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

3. Specialized Program Class Referrals
The data provided in this report reflects information available to Learning Support Services (LSS) as of 28 June 2019. It is important to note that this data changes over the course of the school year as new referrals to specialized programs are received and as students enter and exit specialized program classes.

A total of 580 referrals for specialized program classes were reviewed by central committees in order to provide recommendations for the 2019-2020 school year.

Table 1 provides a summary of elementary specialized program class referral information available for the 2019-2020 school year. In any given school year, specialized program class referrals received after March inform placement recommendations for the following school year. While referrals are reviewed

throughout the school year, operationally, this represents a much smaller number than those reviewed each spring.

Table 1: Elementary Specialized Program Class Referrals¹

Specialized Program Class	Special Program Class Capacity (Total pupil capacity across the District)	Total Number of Referrals Spring 2019	Total Number of Recommendations	Transferred to other committees ²	Total Number of Students Placed in Special Program Class by IPRC ³	Total Number on Waitlist
Autism Spectrum Disorder ⁴	204	60	38	14	196	9
Behaviour Intervention Program	80	30	27	0	75	0
Developmental Disability Program	300	42	38	<5	285	0
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	10	0	0	0	6	0
Dual Support Program	30	5	<5	<5	18	0
General Learning Program ⁵	192	67	49	<5	186	6
Gifted	373	83	75	0	278	0
Language Learning Disability Program Primary	80	33	22	<5	73	0
Language Learning Disability Program Junior	36	16	11	0	29	0
Learning Disability Specialized Intervention Program	112	72	57	0	96	0
Primary Special Needs Program	100	42	36	<5	97	<5
Physical Support Program	24	<5	<5	0	16	0

Notes:

¹ n<5 were suppressed so that individual students cannot be identified from the data.

² In a small number of cases a referral review committee may recommend that a referral be considered for another type of specialized program class. With parent/guardian permission, the referral is officially passed to another committee.

³ This figure represents all students IPRC'd to a specific specialized program class for the 2019-2020 school year by 28 June 2019 and includes new placements and students returning for a subsequent placement in a specialized program class. May represent a slight underestimate as some student IPRCs will occur in September.

⁴ This specialized program class has vacancies while carrying a waitlist due to previously reported placement inefficiency (e.g., intermediate configurations).

⁵ The waitlist for General Learning Program is for intermediate classes only.

Table 2 provides a summary of secondary specialized program class referral information available for the 2019-2020 school year. In any given school year, specialized program class referrals received after March inform placement recommendations for the following school year. While referrals are reviewed throughout the school year, operationally, this represents a much smaller number than those reviewed each spring.

Table 2: Secondary Specialized Program Class Referrals¹

Specialized Program Class	Special Program Class Capacity (Total pupil capacity across the district)	Total Number of Referrals Spring 2019	Total Number of Recommendations	Transferred to other committees ²	Total Number of Students Placed in Special Program Class by IPRC ³	Total Number on Waitlist
Autism Spectrum Disorder	90	<5	<5	<5	73	0
ASDSCSP	40	24	15	6	40	0
Behaviour Intervention Program	56	13	12	0	54	0
Developmental Disability Program	120	8	<5	0	91	0
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	10	<5	<5	0	7	0
Dual Support Program	40	<5	<5	0	25	0
General Learning Program	208	43	38	<5	224	0
Storefront	12	7	<5	0	7	0
Gifted ⁴	N/A			N/A	473	N/A
Learning Disability Program	71	20	17	0	193	0
Physical Support Program	36	<5	<5	0	29	0

Notes:

¹ n < 5 were suppressed so that individual students cannot be identified from the data.

² In a small number of cases a referral review committee may recommend that a referral be considered for another type of specialized program class. With parent/guardian permission, the referral is officially passed to another committee.

³ This figure represents all students IPRC'd to a specific specialized program class for the 2019-2020 school year by 28 June 2019 and includes new placements and students returning for a subsequent placement in a specialized program class. May represent a slight underestimate as some student IPRCs will occur in September.

⁴ Referrals for secondary Gifted are not reviewed centrally, (e.g., School based review). Waitlists do not apply as the specialized program class capacity changes to meet demand

4. Specialized Program Class Waitlist

Table 3 provides the waitlist for each elementary specialized program class with a waitlist as of 28 June 2019. There are no waitlists for secondary specialized program classes as of 28 June 2019.

Table 3: Specialized Program Class Waitlist¹

Elementary Specialized Program Class	Total Number on Waitlist
Autism Spectrum Disorder	9
General Learning Program	6
Primary Special Needs	<5

Notes:

¹n<5 were suppressed so that individual students cannot be identified from the data.

As previously reported in Report 19-037, Academic Staffing 2019-2020 and Revised Memorandum No. 19-066, 2019-2020 Specialized Program Class Locations, 9 elementary and 5 secondary specialized program classes were opened to support anticipated student needs and minimize waitlists for the 2019-2020 school year. The waitlist for intermediate GLP students was higher than anticipated and will be carefully monitored for 2020-2021.

The geographic distribution of students on waitlist was not reported due to the suppression of data less than 5. Staff has analyzed the data with respect to distribution across the geographic zones and no significant patterns were identified.

5. Professional Assessments

The total number of psychology and speech-language pathology assessments completed in 2018-2019 was tracked and monitored through the Digital Data Collection Tool (DDCT). The DDCT was designed to monitor the full depth and breadth of the service delivery model provided by Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) professional services staff (e.g., psychology, speech-language pathology, social work, etc.). It should be noted that formal assessment represents one aspect of a robust service delivery model. Student needs are addressed through many other services including consultation, intervention, observation, programming and referral to community supports. Formal assessment may lead to a referral for a specialized program class; however, many assessments will support programming in a regular classroom setting.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) provided district school boards with Priorities and Partnership Funding (PPF) to support professional assessment and the reduction of service wait lists for the 2018-2019 school year. The detail of this one-time funding was provided to district school boards in February 2019. Access to this funding required specific information regarding current professional service wait lists. This data was manually collected by professional support services staff in collaboration with the school based special education

team (e.g., Learning Support Teachers) in May/June 2019. Working in collaboration with the Professional Student Services Personnel (PSSP) Federation, OCDSB psychologists and speech-language pathologists had the opportunity to complete wait list assessments on a fee for services basis outside of regular work hours during the late spring and summer 2019.

The summer assessment initiative directly reduced the psychology and speech-language pathology assessment waitlist from June 2019.

Looking forward, LSS staff is working with our IEP Online (IOL) provider to develop a robust technology application to assist with workflow and data management of our professional support services staff.

Table 4 addresses the information requested regarding student receiving professional assessments.

Table 4: Professional Assessments

Type of Assessment	# of Assessments completed in 2018-2019 school year	# of elementary students waiting for an Assessment June 2019	# of wait list Assessment completed in summer 2019	Average wait time for each type of Assessment (elementary)	# of secondary students waiting for an Assessment June 2019	Average wait time for each type of Assessment (secondary)
Psychology	511	610	104	8 to 10 mos.	134	5 to 7 mos.
Speech-Language Pathology	624	379	88	2 to 4 mos.	25	less than 1 mos.

6. Timing of Analysis and Reporting

Looking forward, analysis and reporting of the data associated with specialized program classes would be presented more accurately if collected in late October with reporting to Committee of the Whole (COW) in December. This snapshot would better reflect the movement of students and outstanding IPRCs that occur in the month of September.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

7. Data collection for this report was completed with existing LSS human resources. The PPF allocated to the OCDSB to support professional assessments referenced in Table 3 was \$362,466.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

8. The information in this report will be reviewed with the OCDSB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

STRATEGIC LINKS:

9. The presented information directly contributes to the key priority areas of Culture of Caring and Culture of Social Responsibility. This information will contribute to

equity of access, opportunity and outcomes for learners with special education needs and facilitate improved decision making for the system.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

10. The following questions are provided to support the discussion of this item by the Committee:
- Based on the information provided, are there considerations for the specialized program class referral process for the 2020-2021 school year?
 - Should the timing of data collection be shifted to better capture the movement of students in September?

Peter Symmonds, Superintendent of
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Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of
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