



MEMORANDUM

Memo No. 20-029

TO: Trustees
Student Trustees

FROM: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education
Peter Symmonds, Superintendent, Learning Support Services

DATE: 28 February 2020

RE: **Update to Storefront Program**

This memo is provided in response to a query from trustees.

The Storefront program is a long-standing program in the District, established in the Ottawa Board of Education (OBE) in 1987. The program is intended to support students aged 19-21 years with developmental disabilities who are ready to transition to workplace experiences. The program is located in a commercial building near St. Laurent Shopping Centre. While there is currently no lease, the landlord is allowing use of the space without charge to the District. The Storefront program is currently staffed with a 1.0 FTE secondary teacher and a 1.0 FTE educational assistant (EA).

Concerns were raised in 2016-2017 when the District was advised that the landlord was planning to charge for leasing the space in the building where Storefront is located. In turn, an analysis at that time highlighted concerns with respect to rental cost, oversight of the program and staff supervision, as well as the manner in which criteria was developed and how student referrals to Storefront were generated and assessed.

In an effort to address some of these concerns, oversight for the Storefront program was brought into the scope of Learning Support Services (LSS) for the 2018-2019 school year.

Students who attend the Storefront program are offered a range of academic, social skills and supported workplace experiences. The functional curriculum goals include: communication & social skills; personal finance; work skills; life skills; and healthy lifestyles (e.g., nutrition, health, sexuality, relationships, personal safety). The goal is for these students to be prepared for paid workplace opportunities, either full-time or part-time, as they leave the public education system. Alternatively, some of these students

will find success in community programs and supported work opportunities through Developmental Services Ontario (DSO).

While not directly related to the transitions model supported through Storefront, it has been suggested through delegations at the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and in discussions during those meetings that there may, in fact, be a gap in transition supports for many students with developmental disabilities as they transition out of the public education system the year in which they turn 21. Post-21 pathways can be complex and it is clear that students and families benefit from increased levels of support. LSS is undertaking a deeper exploration of the transition needs of these students in order to inform continued improvements in programs.

In its current configuration, the Storefront program has a capacity of 12 students. Enrolment patterns are noted in the chart below:

School Year	Enrolment
2018-2019	10
2019-2020	6 ¹
2020-2021 (projected)	12

LSS continues to work with school teams, students, parents/guardians, and the broader community to ensure the program is meeting the unique transition needs of these students.

SEAC has requested regular oral updates for the past couple of years regarding the status of the Storefront program. Staff provided this update at the SEAC meeting on 12 February 2020.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Peter Symmonds at peter.symmonds@ocdsb.ca or by phone at 613-596-8211, ext. 8254.

cc Senior Staff
 Manager, Board Services
 Special Education Advisory Committee
 Corporate Records

¹ Projected enrolment for 2019-2020 was 9 students. Additional enrolment is being examined for Semester 2.