



MEMORANDUM

Memo No. 21-001

TO: Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

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

DATE: 6 January 2021

RE: **Learning Support for Students with Special Education Needs**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) with an overview of the content and the planned release process for the OCDSB *Learning Support for Students with Special Education Needs* resource.

The OCDSB *Learning Support for Students with Special Education Needs* resource is intended to be the foundation for all OCDSB staff that work in classrooms and schools to understand their role in ensuring inclusion for all. The goal of the resource will be to support staff to tailor special education programs and services in the OCDSB for all learners. It ensures educators (teachers, Early Childhood Educators (ECE), Educational Assistants (EA), and administrators) have the essential information, tools and resources to provide personalized and precise support. Educators will be able to use the resource to guide professional learning as they build capacity in meeting the needs of all students. Further, as capacity improves, practices intended to support specific students may also support all students (i.e. what is necessary for some is beneficial for many).

Background

In 2012, Learning Support Services (LSS) developed the resource *Quality Programming Indicators - Promoting the consistent delivery of quality special education programs and services across the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board*. The purpose of this document was to outline all of the Quality Program Indicators (QPI) for each specialized program class. The intent was for school administrators and specialized program class staff to have a comprehensive overview of each specialized class as well as the quality program indicators that should be consistently applied in these settings.

Since 2012, the work of LSS has been informed by professional development and new provincial directions, including the following resources, *Learning for All - A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for all Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (2013), *Including Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Language Programs - Guide for Ontario Schools* (2015), and *Special Education in Ontario - Kindergarten to Grade 12 Policy and Resource Guide Draft* (2017). The OCDSB Exit Outcomes, the OCDSB Strategic Plan 2019-2023, and the OCDSB Indigenous, Equity, and Human Rights Roadmap 2020-2023, have also contributed to the rationale behind the review and format of this resource.

Resource Overview

The updated resource, *Learning Support for Students with Special Education Needs* affirms that the needs of special education students are not only the work of administrators and staff in schools with specialized program classes, rather it is the collective responsibility of all District staff to support Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and differentiated instruction. The purpose of this updated resource is to provide a comprehensive overview of quality programming to meet the needs of special education students within both the regular and specialized program classes in K to 12 settings.

Indicators of quality programming will focus on the following topics: Class Profiles; the Tiered Approach to Intervention; Individual Education Plans; Transition Plans; Assessment and Evaluation; Assistive Technology; Specialized Program Classes; and quality program look-fors by exceptionality. The format of this resource is a Google site and the intention is that it will be housed within the OCDSB Staff Portal.

Resource Targeted Release Process

A soft launch of the resource will be intentionally phased in beginning in February 2021 and ending in June 2021. The intention of a targeted launch of different sections of the resource is to allow LSS to field test different components. The field testing will have the goal of eliciting feedback from the system to ensure effectiveness and usability. The feedback provided will be reviewed and implemented where possible for the official launch of the resource in September 2021.

It should be noted that when the resource is officially launched in September 2021, it is intended to be an online resource. Similar to the *Special Education in Ontario - Kindergarten to Grade 12 Policy and Resource Guide Draft (2017)*, this resource will continue to be in a perpetual draft version. This will help to facilitate ongoing updates and additions that reflect new resources and understanding.

The following is an overview of the targeted phased in launch of the resource:

Timeline	Resource Content Area(s)
February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Specialized Program Classes● Individual Education Plans (IEPs)● Transition Plans● Assessment and Evaluation● Quality Program Look-fors by Exceptionality<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Blind/Low Vision (B/LV)○ Giftedness
April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identification, Placement, and, Review Committee (IPRC)● Tiered Approach to Intervention● Class Profile● Quality Program Look-fors by Exceptionality<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Behaviour○ Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)○ Deaf / Hard of Hearing (D/HH)

September 2021	All mentioned previously in addition to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Resources (All exceptionalities)● Learning Support Services Teams● Quality Program Look-fors by Exceptionality<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Developmental Disability○ Language Impairment○ Learning Disability○ Mild Intellectual Disability○ Physical Disability○ Speech Impairment○ Multiple Exceptionality
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This initiative is directly linked to the District's Strategic Plan. Specifically, this initiative supports the District's goals of ensuring:

- equitable access to learning;
- modernization of instructional practices;
- rich programming that has high expectations for learning; and
- the priority of dignity and well-being of students in inclusive and caring classrooms.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Peter Symmonds at peter.symmonds@ocdsb.ca

cc Senior Staff
Manager Board Services
Corporate Records