OTTAWA-CARLETON
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MEMORANDUM

Memo No. 21-030

TO: Trustees
Student Trustees
Special Education Advisory Committee

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

DATE: 8 March 2021

RE: Planning for District Special Education Support 2021-2022

This memorandum provides information to support the proposed changes to specialized program classes and for special education support in regular program classes for the 2021-2022 school year as outlined in Report Number 21-023, *Academic Staffing Plan for 2021-2022.*

Annually, Learning Support Services (LSS) assesses system needs for specialized program classes and for special education supports in regular program classes. This year there are added complexities as the continuation of pandemic response measures are considered in staffing decisions.

Recommended adjustments to support system needs

Based on projected specialized program class referrals, student needs in regular program classes, historical patterns and the movement of students currently placed in specialized program classes, the following staffing adjustments are recommended. A summary table is available as Appendix A.

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

The need for intensive support for students with ASD in specialized program classes and in regular program classes continues to be high. Despite the addition of 19 elementary ASD specialized program classes over the past seven years there continues to be a significant wait list for students that meet criteria for this level of support. The District currently operates 35 ASD specialized program classes at the elementary level.

Since January 2020, LSS has utilized the support of an itinerant Autism Spectrum Disorder/Developmental Disabilities (ASD/DD) teacher to provide programming and coaching support to regular program educator teams that have a student on the ASD or DD wait list. The model has proven to be highly effective with support for approximately 30 students in the 2019-2020 school year and approximately 30 students thus far in the current school year. Educator teams have advanced their practice with respect to

Individual Education Plan (IEP) development and the implementation of developmentally appropriate programming. This has been accomplished through a combination of modeling and coaching provided by the itinerant teacher. Student outcome data from this year indicates that educational pathways for 8 students have changed as a result of this intensive support (e.g., no longer pursuing specialized program class placements or less intensive placement).

A combined approach to provide intensive supports for students with complex presentations of ASD is proposed for the 2021-2022 school year.

- One ASD specialized program class opening is recommended at Queen Elizabeth Public School. This site would move from 2 to 3 ASD classes to align with the school's Kindergarten to Grade 8 grade structure (e.g., Kindergarten/Primary, Junior, Intermediate); therefore, facilitating improved transition patterns for students accessing this level of support; and
- A second itinerant ASD teacher is recommended to support regular class educator teams that will be accommodating ASD students on the waitlist for specialized program classes.

<u>ASD Elementary</u>

- *2.0 FTE plus prep elementary teacher contingency staffing requested.*

Learning Disabilities Specialized Intervention Program (LD SIP)

In order to comply with public health guidelines as a result of the measures to control the pandemic (e.g., student cohorts), the LD SIP moved from a partially integrated to a fully self-contained model for the 2020-2021 school year. In line with the OCDSB planning strategy for the 2021-2022 school year, LD SIP will be staffed assuming the continuation of pandemic response measures (e.g., continuation of student cohorting). At such time that the integration portion of the program can resume, the staffing associated with the fully self-contained model can be shifted to a team teaching model in the context of the regular class. There is a negligible financial impact to this shift given additional staffing requirements to support student integration will not be required.

Approximately 40 students presently in LD SIP classes will be returning to the regular program for the 2021-2022 school year. Due to pandemic measures, many students have not had the full opportunity to participate in the integrated portion of the program. In order to facilitate their transition out of LD SIP and to support educators receiving these students, an itinerant LD teacher is recommended for the 2021-2022 school year.

<u>LD SIP Elementary</u>

- *1.0 FTE Elementary teacher contingency staffing requested.*

Blind-Low Vision

Support and services for students who are blind, or have low vision, is provided through an itinerant teacher model and the level of service is based on individual student needs (e.g., direct service versus monitoring). Currently, these supports and services are also offered to the Ottawa Catholic School Board through a partnership agreement.

There has been an increase in the number of students arriving in the Ottawa area with complex profiles requiring braille, EyeGaze technology, or deaf/blind services; therefore requiring increased levels of support provided by the Blind-Low Vision team.

- *0.5 FTE Elementary teacher contingency staffing requested.*

Primary Special Needs (PSN)

The District currently has 11 PSN specialized program classes. A higher number of vacancies than expected was observed this year in these classes. Based on student movement and anticipated referrals, 10 PSN specialized program classes are expected to meet system needs for the 2021-2022 school year. The closure of the PSN specialized program class at W.E. Gowling Public School is recommended as it will impact the smallest number of current students (n<5) and will not impact the geographic distribution of classes across the district.

- *close one PSN class at W.E. Gowling Public School.*

Developmental Disabilities (DD)

The District currently has 35 specialized program classes for students with Developmental Disabilities with 25 classes located at our specialized schools (i.e., Clifford Bowey Public School and Crystal Bay Special Education Centre). The remaining 10 classes are distributed across the District in our community schools. Significant vacancies in our DD specialized program classes located in community schools have been observed. Based on student movement and anticipated referrals, 9 DD specialized program classes in community schools are expected to meet system needs for the 2021-2022 school year. The closure of the junior/intermediate DD specialized program class at Queen Elizabeth Public School is recommended as it will impact the smallest number of current students (n<5) and will not impact the geographic distribution of classes across the District.

- close one DD class at Queen Elizabeth Public School.

General Learning Program (GLP)

Existing secondary GLP classes will not have sufficient capacity to accommodate all the grade 8 students moving from intermediate GLP specialized program classes to secondary GLP. The District currently operates 14 secondary GLP classes as well as the Storefront program to support students with mild intellectual disabilities. Aligned with the provincial direction regarding opportunities for secondary credit pathways, the opening of a partially integrated GLP specialized program class at Ottawa Technical Secondary School (OTSS) is recommended for September 2021. This additional class would provide the placement capacity for the student cohort moving from grade 8 as well as create increased credit pathway options for some grade 9 and 10 students within the current structure of the secondary GLP specialized program classes. LSS and the team at OTSS would work in collaboration to assess and analyse the staffing and timetabling considerations in order to learn from this approach and consider replicating it in other sites to support students with this learning profile.

GLP Secondary

- *1.25 FTE plus prep Secondary Teacher contingency staffing requested.*

Resource Implication

The proposed staffing adjustments to specialized program classes and for intensive supports for students in regular program classes represents an approximate increase of $330,000 associated with 1.31 FTE elementary teachers and 1.67 FTE secondary teachers. No new Educational Assistant (EA) costs are associated with this plan.

In addition, increased costs associated with new specialized program classes are typically incurred through facilities modifications, new classroom resources, professional support services personnel and transportation. These costs will be covered through the existing departmental budgets.

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

Attach.

cc Senior Staff
Manager Board Services
Corporate Records

Summary Table

Description	Additional Information	Elementary Teacher FTE (including prep)	Secondary Teacher FTE (including prep)	EA
ELEMENTARY				
Open one ASD class	Increase from 35 to 36 elementary ASD specialized program classes. Add 1 class at Queen Elizabeth Public School moving from 2 to 3 classes (Improved transition configuration: Kindergarten/Primary, Junior and Intermediate).	1.19		2.0
Increase of one Itinerant Teacher for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ITASD)	LSS currently has 1.0 FTE ITASD. Served ~30 students in an inclusion model this year yielding positive outcomes. Recommended increase from 1 to 2 ITASD to serve expected student needs in 2021-2022.	1.0		
Itinerant Teacher for Learning Disabilities (ITLD)	~40 students anticipated to leave LD SIP without an opportunity for integration due to pandemic.	1.0		
Itinerant Teacher for Blind-Low Vision (ITBLV)	Increased number of students requiring intensive BLV support (e.g., braille, EyeGaze technology).	0.5		
Close one Primary Special Needs (PSN)	Reduce PSN from 11 to 10 classes. Close class at W.E. Gowling Public School.	-1.19		-1.0
Close one Developmental Disabilities (DD) class	Reduce DD specialized program classes located in community schools from 10 to 9 classes. Close class at Queen Elizabeth Public School	-1.19		-2.0
SECONDARY				
Open one General Learning Program (GLP)	Open a Partially Integrated GLP at OTSS. The class opening will accommodate the student cohort of GLP students moving from grade 8 to grade 9. The structure will offer increased credit pathway options for students with this learning profile.		1.67	1.0
Totals:		**1.31**	**1.67**	**0**