



Learning Centres



Improving School Effectiveness and Student Achievement & Well Being

The TDSB is embarking on a new strategy to improve school effectiveness and student achievement. This strategy is being led by Director of Education John Malloy in consultation with the Board of Trustees, senior management, superintendents, principals, vice principals and our central teaching, learning and instructional leaders and professionals. This strategy is important because it is in response to feedback received from the TDSB community. Here are highlights of some next steps.

Learning Centres

One significant step in this strategy is the creation of four new Learning Centres. Learning Centres are designed to allow the TDSB to be more responsive to schools and support school administrators and teachers in improving student learning outcomes. By rearranging resources so that they are closer to schools, superintendents and school administrators will be better positioned to identify teaching and learning supports required for classroom teachers and students.

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Our vision is that despite the size of Canada’s largest school system, the TDSB can act and feel local when our schools are well-supported and highly responsive and our parents and communities are more connected.

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John Malloy
Director of Education



Learning Centres will embody the following guiding principles:

- Improve student achievement and well-being and ensure equitable access and outcomes.
- Ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to system goals while responding to the needs of diverse communities.
- Support collaborative learning teams in every part of the system, including the senior team level and support the school/department improvement process effectively.
- Support Learning Centre superintendent/principal relationships, working closely with the trustees so that the perspectives of schools and communities influence the Board's strategic work.
- Bring human and material resources such as special education, teaching and learning, and central service functions, where appropriate, closer to schools to minimize bureaucracy and strengthen responsiveness to serve students.
- Ensure there is an executive authority at the Learning Centre level to support superintendents and principals to make decisions on behalf of schools that are aligned with Board direction, and to assist our parents/guardians and communities to navigate our system.
- Minimize the isolation that can come from individual Families of Schools.
- Decrease the number of schools for which each superintendent is responsible and guaranteeing only one point of contact for the principal.
- Provide opportunities for all Learning Centre superintendents to have a system responsibility and minimize the number of central senior leadership positions.
- Ensure there are enough central senior leadership positions to coordinate the work, realizing that the important improvement work is at the school level. This will mean a decrease to central senior team positions.
- Improve processes for the experiences of students, staff, parents and communities to authentically influence system direction.
- Enhance service excellence and responsiveness to our communities.
- Improve curriculum delivery and the implementation of evidence-based practices.

Learning Coaches, Coordinators and Professional Support Services

A key component of Learning Centres will be newly created learning coach positions to support teachers in classroom instruction. The effectiveness of learning coaches is well supported by research that shows that this role can positively impact teaching and learning and improve student achievement. Though the primary responsibility of these coaches will be to support instruction, coaches will also have different specialties in areas such as the arts or digital literacy.

To support the four Learning Centres, a minimum of 80 learning coach positions have been created – approximately 20 will support Early Years learning and approximately 60 will support Kindergarten to Grade 12 learning.

The centres will also be supported by the Board's professional support services such as psychologists, social workers, counsellors and other education workers. In addition, coordinators will be connected to centres and will help lead and support cross-curricular and system-wide events and activities such as in the arts and athletics.

Learning Centres will offer a collaborative and dynamic hub of teaching, learning and instructional leadership and professional staff resources. The centres will be more closely connected to and able to respond more quickly to serving the needs of local school staff, parents and students.

Currently, the TDSB is in the design stage of the Learning Centres. Decisions about whether the centres will be physical buildings or virtual, collaborative centres have not been made at this time. Learning Centres will become operative for the start of the 2016-17 school year.

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While the Board will continue to be guided by a strong central governance structure and central administration support, Learning Centres will offer a more responsive, flexible and localized support to schools that will have a direct impact on classroom instruction and student achievement.

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Robin Pilkey
Chair of the Board

Superintendent Leadership in Learning Centres

Each of the four Learning Centres will include seven superintendents, led by an executive superintendent with additional system-wide responsibilities. This model will mean fewer schools per superintendent allowing them more time to spend with schools and the community. Each superintendent in the centre will also have central responsibilities to help ensure the coordinated delivery of board-wide and local Learning Centre services. TDSB's Model Schools will continue to be served by superintendents and students will continue to receive the tools, resources and the opportunities they need to participate fully and equally in their schools and communities.

Examples of services and programs that will also be led/supported within the Learning Centres include:

- Model Schools
- Early Years
- School Effectiveness and Leadership
- Aboriginal Education

Enhanced Service Delivery

One example of a centrally-coordinated program area where the Learning Centre strategy will provide enhanced service delivery to schools is in Special Education. It is anticipated that the Learning Centre model will result in:

- An increase in the number of school-based consultants;
- A change to our Behaviour Resource Support Team (teacher/Child and Youth Worker) to ensure easier access to principals;
- Increased support of Special Education staffing in our EdVance Programs;
- Enhanced consultant capacity to support the use of Assistive Technology to support direct service to students;
- Greater success of students who will return to a regular classroom setting; and
- Superintendent of Education support at each Learning Centre to assist the coordination of the Special Education portfolio.

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Our plan will allow superintendents, school administrators, staff, parents and students to provide their insights into what is needed and allow the school system to respond more directly.

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John Malloy

Director of Education

Fostering Better Relationships, Connectivity and Responsive Decision-making

Learning Centres will enhance the one-to-one relationship between school administrators and superintendents and give school administrators a single source of contact and decision-making. This responsiveness will mean teachers get the help they need when they need it.

For parents, the Learning Centre model aims to:

- Identify and better respond to learning needs
- Improve communication with parents/guardians
- Resolve disputes in a more timely manner

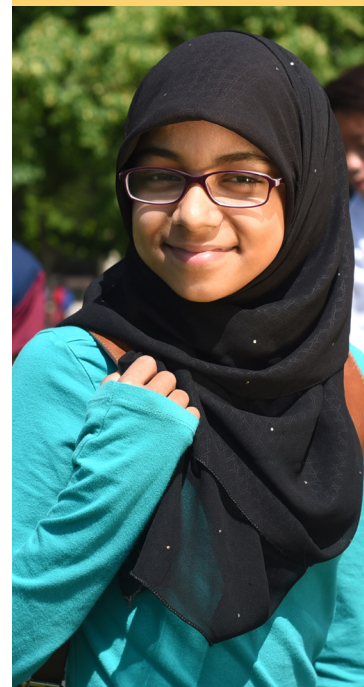
Trustees play an important role as advocates for the community and for schools. The collaborative nature of Learning Centres, coupled with more responsive decision-making will assist Trustees in helping parents/guardians and students navigate the school system.

Through Learning Centres, school communities will be more connected, and have better opportunities to shape the future of how the school system serves them.

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Learning Centres
will place the
learning needs
of students and
engagement
with parents as
the focal point.”

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Robin Pilkey
Chair of the Board



Central Guidance and Coordination

The TDSB will continue to be guided by a central governance and policy-making structure supported by a central management team. At the Board level there will continue to be executive superintendents/executive officers to deliver Board-wide services and programs that will include:

- Equitable, Safe and Accepting Schools
- Special Education and Section Programs
- Teaching and Learning, Alternative Education, Continuing and International Education Programs
- Research and Information and Central Partnership Office
- Employee Services
- Government, Public and Community Relations
- Information Technology
- Board Services

Board-wide activities and events in areas such as the arts and athletics will continue and will continue to be organized by central teaching staff.

Further, in each Learning Centre, each Superintendent will coordinate one area. The seven areas are:

- Teaching and Learning
- Leadership and School Improvement
- Employee Services
- Equity and Inclusion
- Special Education
- Global Competencies and Technology
- Early Years

In this way, the experience and perspectives of students, staff, parents and communities may inform system directions in these areas and we can support coherent implementation across all Learning Centres.

Next Steps

We are in the early design stage of Learning Centres, but we are following a vision that we believe will have a very positive outcome for our schools and for student learning and achievement levels. To work effectively through this change process, we are taking very intentional steps and will be working further on refining our approach with our senior management team, school administrators and our teaching, learning and instructional leadership teams. Immediate next steps include:

- Continue to review all central departments and staff to determine how they can support the Learning Centre model.
- Determine the geographic location and boundaries of Learning Centres.
- Create protocols, roles and responsibilities, accountability relationships, expectations, and work locations within the Learning Centres.
- Assign superintendents and administrative supports for the Learning Centres.
- Finalize the recruitment of Learning Coaches and assign them to the Learning Centres.
- Consult regularly with staff, students and communities about implementation.
- Clarify how system-wide programs will be organized.
- Determine system standards and training for all positions of leadership to create a “Leadership for Learning Culture”.
- Keep employees and communities informed of the progress we are making with these important changes.

Please visit
www.tdsb.on.ca/learningcentres
for further updates on the
implementation of the Learning Centres.