

Placement Process for Secondary Gifted Intensive Support Programs (ISP)

Questions and Answers

Q1. What were the approved recommendations at the Board meeting on October 28th, 2015?

A. At the Board meeting on October 28th, the following recommendations were approved:

1. "That the placement of students with a Gifted Exceptionality in Secondary Gifted Intensive Support Programs (ISPs) be based on home address and be determined through an IPRC Review Process;
2. That students currently in existing 2015-2016 Secondary Gifted Intensive Support Programs (ISPs) will be unaffected and will remain in their current school until graduation or withdrawal from the program; and
3. That this new placement process will begin this year in time for the September 2016 school year."

Q2. Why was a process initiated during the Spring of 2015 to review the placement process for Secondary Gifted Intensive Support Programs (ISP)?

A. The review was initiated to:

- Address equity of access to secondary Gifted ISP programs across the District;
- Introduce the program in regions of the city where no program currently exists with a more reasonable proximity to student home addresses;
- Address accommodation pressures at a number of the current Gifted ISP secondary schools due to the increased growth at the elementary level.

Q3. What are the school locations for the Gifted ISPs at the Secondary level?

A. The following schools are the Gifted Secondary ISPs for September 2016:

- Albert Campbell Collegiate
- A. Y. Jackson Secondary School
- Birchmount Park Secondary School
- Don Mills Secondary School
- Martingrove Collegiate Institute
- Northern Secondary School
- Thistletown Collegiate Institute
- Western Technical – Commercial Institute
- William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute
- Woburn Collegiate Institute

Q4. How will the new programs be supported?

A. Gifted ISPs will be supported by the Special Education Department and by existing Secondary Gifted ISPs through a professional learning community to share best practices.

Q5. How are the Secondary Gifted ISPs distributed throughout the District?

A. The distribution of the Secondary Gifted ISPs was shared at the 4 community consultation meetings. After the Board meeting on October 28th, 2015, a letter and copy of the map titled *Gifted Secondary Attendance Areas and Junior Attendance Areas 2015-2016* was provided for every student with a Gifted Exceptionality, whether currently attending a Gifted ISP or not. This map shows the location and attendance boundary for each of the ten (10) sites. A copy of the map can also be found using the following link <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/Elementary/docs/SpecED/SecondaryGiftedMap.pdf>

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Q6. Is there a tool available to help me locate the Secondary Gifted ISPs relative to my home address?

A. Our Planning Department is preparing a tool that families can use to locate the Secondary Gifted Intensive Support Program relative to their home address; for the time being, please use the map at the following link <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/Elementary/docs/SpecED/SecondaryGiftedMap.pdf>

Q7. *How were Secondary Gifted Intensive Support Programs determined?*

A. The locations of Secondary Gifted Intensive Support Programs were determined by analyzing the home addresses and attending schools of students attending the Gifted ISP programs and /or identified with a Giftedness Exceptionality at the elementary and secondary levels, matching home addresses with schools with Gifted ISPs within the 4.8km walking distance set by the Transportation Policy, and by balancing the projected Gifted program enrolments with the space available at the identified Gifted secondary sites.

The analysis was done to ensure an equitable distribution of Secondary Gifted sites across the city, to minimize the instances of students attending a different secondary program than their peers, and to ensure an adequate size of the Gifted program at each site. The location of the Gifted ISPs was also an attempt to follow geographic barriers that are challenging for students to traverse.

Q8. *Who would be affected by the placement process for students in a Secondary Gifted ISP?*

A. All students identified with a Giftedness Exceptionality by the end of this school year 2015/16 who are entering Grade 9 and wish to attend a secondary Gifted ISP, for September 2016, as part of an Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meeting, will be placed using home address to determine placement location.

The implementation of this placement process will be for the school year September 2016. The first group of students to be placed using this process will be students currently in Grade 8.

Q9. *What is the impact for placement of students in Secondary Gifted Intensive Support Programs on the splitting of students that are currently in the same cohort at the elementary level.*

A. The impact of the placement process on the splitting of students in the same cohort is projected to be the same regardless of the year of implementation. Historically, a third of Grade 8 students in Gifted ISPs currently do not continue to a Grade 9 Gifted ISP and instead elect to attend their home composite school or alternative or specialized programs.

Q10. *How will students with a Gifted Exceptionality that do not currently attend a Toronto District School Board school and wish to attend a secondary school be affected?*

A. Students with a Gifted Exceptionality that do not currently attend a Toronto District School Board school would participate in a Special Education Placement Review Committee (SEPRC) meeting to determine a placement recommendation. Placement in a Secondary Gifted ISP would be based on the student's home address and available space.

Q11. *What will happen to the students that are currently attending a Secondary Gifted Intensive Support Program (ISP)?*

A. Students that are currently attending a Gifted Secondary ISP would be allowed to remain unaffected at their current secondary school until graduation or withdrawal from the program as determined through an annual IPRC Review.

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Q12. *How do I access the meeting notes from the four Community Consultation meetings that occurred this past June?*

- A. To access the meeting notes from the Community Consultation meetings go to <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/aboutus/strategyplanning/communityinvolvement.aspx?id=83> and click on 'Meeting(s) – Community Engagement'.

Q13. *How was Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) involved?*

- A. Presentations were made at SEAC meetings throughout this past spring and fall to share information on the need for the review, the process for consultation and next steps going forward.

Q14. *What are the timelines for implementation?*

- A. Implementation begins for the school year 2016/2017. Essentially, implementation would be for students who are starting secondary school in Grade 9 during 2016/2017 and those students that are currently in Grade 8 during the 2015-2016 school year.

Q15. *How will this affect Elementary Gifted ISPs?*

- A. The placement of students in Elementary Gifted ISPs will continue as per our current practice. Through the IPRC and SEPRC processes, students will be placed in the closest Gifted program to the student's home school with available space.

Q16. *What will happen if the number of students with a Gifted Exceptionality requesting a particular secondary school exceeds the spaces available each year?*

- A. When the number of students with a Gifted Exceptionality within a particular Secondary Gifted ISP location exceeds the spaces available, students who live on the edge of the boundary for a Secondary Gifted site are offered a placement at the nearby Secondary Gifted site where space is available. This is called 'placement by proximity'. For some students the new site may be closer to their home than the secondary site based on their home address.

If the number of students within a particular Gifted ISP location continues to exceed the spaces available, after a proximity process has been exhausted, then a randomized lottery will be conducted.

Q17. *If the number of requests for a particular secondary school site is not resolved through a proximity process, how would a lottery be conducted?*

- A. Randomized computer software would be used to create an equitable process whereby students would be placed based on the results of the lottery until the available spaces are filled.

All remaining students would be placed on a numbered waitlist based on the results of the lottery. Students on the waitlist would be placed at the particular school site as space becomes available. The waitlist would expire the first day of the upcoming school year.

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Q18. *Does a sibling rule apply to placement at a secondary Gifted ISP?*

- A. Placement of a student with a Gifted Exceptionality is through an IPRC process. The location of the Secondary Gifted ISP for each student would be based on their home address. Placement is not based upon the school location of her/his sibling. Further to this, the sibling category within the Optional Attendance Policy does not apply because the sibling in the Gifted ISP class was placed through an IPRC Process.

Q19. *Does the Optional Attendance Policy apply to the placement of secondary students in a Gifted Intensive Support Program?*

- A. Secondary students are placed in the Secondary Gifted Intensive Support Program (ISP) based on their home address within a prescribed catchment area through an IPRC Review Process. Each of the ten (10) secondary schools with a secondary Gifted ISP has their own catchment area. An Optional Attendance process does not exist for the placement of secondary students with a Gifted Exceptionality.

Q20. *How have parents shared their views through the consultation process?*

- A. Last spring four (4) regional Community Consultation meetings were held to provide information to the public and to receive feedback from the community. We have also received e-mail correspondence from and participated in telephone calls with parents and community members expressing their thoughts throughout the process.

Q21. *How were parents informed of these changes?*

- A. After the Board meeting on October 28, 2015, every parent that has a child with a Giftedness Exceptionality received a letter and map titled *Gifted Secondary Attendance Areas and Corresponding Junior School Regular Program Attendance Areas 2016-2017* from their school detailing the Board approved process for placement of students in Secondary Gifted Intensive Support classes beginning September 2016. A copy of the letter and map sent home can be found using the following links:

Letter: <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/Elementary/docs/SpecED/SecondaryGiftedLetter.pdf>

Map: <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/Elementary/docs/SpecED/SecondaryGiftedMap.pdf>