

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

March 17, 2025

Leadership Report

Learning Innovation and Equitable Outcomes

Louise Sirisko, Associate Director, Learning Innovation and Equitable Outcomes

Nandy Palmer, Executive Superintendent, Special Education Programs and Equitable Outcomes

Welcome, System Superintendent Dr. Debbie Donsky!

We would like to welcome Dr. Debbie Donsky to the position of System Superintendent, Special Education and Inclusion. Dr. Donsky is a dedicated leader with over 30 years of experience in special education, inclusion, equity and curriculum development. She has served in various roles, including Special Education teacher, principal, and system leader at the district and provincial levels. As a Family of Schools Superintendent in the TDSB, she has focused on collaborative relationships with families, community partners and advocacy groups. Her work emphasizes supporting educators through professional learning and implementing strategies that create equitable, inclusive, and forward-thinking learning environments for all students.

New Guides for Parents: Special Education Support Video Series

The TDSB's Special Education and Inclusion Department is excited to share their Guides for Parents/Guardians/Caregivers [video series](#). These videos provide an overview of our Guides to Special Education, designed to help families understand the programs, services, and supports available to students. From learning about Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to navigating the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) process, these resources are here to support you every step of the way. We also encourage you to explore the full guides on the [Special Education and Inclusion Website](#), where you will find additional Special Education resources for families.

March Learning Sessions for Staff and Families

Learning and engagement sessions continue to be made available for both staff and families, providing valuable opportunities to explore inclusive and anti-ableist practices and implement concrete strategies in the classroom and at home. These sessions are designed to support student achievement and well-being. Please click this [link](#) to access the sessions being offered.

Special Education and Inclusion Summer School

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is once again offering summer school programs from July 2nd to 25th for students who are currently enrolled in ***Developmental Disability, Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Physical Disabilities Intensive Support Programs (ISPs)***.

These half-day programs will be held in-person at various locations throughout the TDSB.



Students will be supported to develop their independence through programming in the areas of functional literacy and numeracy skills, activities of daily living, communication, and social skills through a creative curriculum that can include technology, physical fitness, art, music and drama.

Visit our [summer school website](#) to find out more information.

ASD After School Skills Development Program – Spring 2025 Session

The Spring session of the ASD After School Leisure Program, available both in-person and virtually, will run every Tuesday from March 25, 2025 to June 10, 2025 from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. The program is available to students in Grades 4-10 who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. This program provides an opportunity for students to develop, build and enhance their social communication skills through either weekly in-person or weekly virtual sessions.

School administrators were asked to forward this [information letter](#) which includes the link for registration to the parents of Grades 4 – 10 students with ASD in their schools. The registration period will remain open until Friday, March 7, 2025.

Life After High School Toolkit

The [TDSB Beyond High School Toolkit](#) includes specialized resources for families supporting children with Physical Disabilities (PD) and Developmental Disabilities (DD) as they transition beyond high school. It provides guidance on post-secondary education, employment opportunities, community programs, financial planning, and supported living options. The toolkit helps families navigate essential services, access funding supports, and explore individualized pathways to ensure a smooth and meaningful transition into adulthood. Please see the [link](#) to the Word version.

March Is Easter Seals Month

Easter Seals Ontario dedicates March to raising awareness and support for children and youth with physical disabilities through Easter Seals Month. This year, they are shining a light on the stories, perspectives, and contributions of individuals with physical disabilities. Join this March to help create a more inclusive, accessible, and equitable society for children and youth with physical disabilities at MarchIsEasterSealsMonth.org.

World Hearing Day [WHO.INT FACT SHEET](#)

March 3rd is World Hearing Day. The World Health Organization hosts this day each year to promote awareness of hearing related challenges and the importance of hearing health care. The theme for 2025 is [Changing mindsets: Empower yourself!](#)



To learn more about the positive impact of identification and management of ear and hearing issues, please visit [World Hearing Day](#).

Neurodiversity Celebration Week - March 17 -23, 2025

Neurodiversity Celebration Week is a global initiative that aims to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions about neurological differences. This week provides schools, universities, organizations, and others with the opportunity to recognize the skills and talents of neurodivergent individuals, while fostering inclusive and equitable cultures that celebrate differences and empower everyone.

For more information, please visit the [neurodiversity week website](#).

World Down Syndrome Day 2025

[#WorldDownSyndromeDay](#) is marked each year on March 21. The 21st day of the 3rd month signifies the triplication of the 21st chromosome which causes Down Syndrome. TDSB staff and students are encouraged to 'Rock Your Socks' to raise awareness and create a single global voice advocating for the rights, inclusion and well-being of people with Down syndrome. We encourage students to wear mismatched socks, or draw pictures of mismatched socks to stir up conversation and remind people that things that are different are still beautiful and wonderful! Down-syndrome-fact-sheet ([dsat.ca](#)). For more information, please click [here](#).

Epilepsy Awareness Month

Epilepsy Awareness Month is here, and **Purple Day on March 26** is a global movement to increase awareness about epilepsy. Spread awareness in fun and creative ways - encourage students to wear purple, create purple art, bake purple treats, learn about epilepsy and show their **Purple Spirit!**

Check out the [Epilepsy Awareness Classroom Kits](#) provided by [Epilepsy Toronto](#), created to bring awareness to your school all month long; including lesson plans for K- 12, printable posters, morning announcements and more!

Let's show support for the 1 in 100 people living with epilepsy—together, we can make a difference! Share examples of your class' Purple Spirit on Instagram or X using #PurpleSpirit2025.

IPRC Data - February 2025

February IPRCs	
Learning Centre 1	166



Learning Centre 2	109
Central	4
IPRCs Completed	279
IPRC Cumulative since August 2024	
IPRC Cumulative since August 2024	1016

Psychological Assessment Data - February 2025



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and Inclusion

Psychological Services Assessment Statistics February 2025

Month-By-Month	Total
Completed	491
Referrals	167

Cumulative (since September 2024)	
Completed	1675
In Progress	1104
Removed	302
Waiting*	1328
Total Referrals**	4409

**78.4% of total waitlist are comprehensive/DK assessments, and 21.6% are gifted assessments*

*** 73.5% of total referrals are for comprehensive/DK assessments, and 26.5% are gifted assessments*



