

**Leadership and Learning Department Update**

Associate Director Dr. Kathy Witherow

Executive Superintendent Dr. Brendan Browne

**SEAC Meeting of September 12, 2018**

**WELCOME BACK**

We are looking forward to working with each member of SEAC and the local community organizations and partners to continue to meet the needs of all students in TDSB. Our intention is to partner with you in the on-going refinement of our programs and practices in order support and serve students and families to allow each student to reach his or her greatest potential.

Our Teaching and Learning and Special Education/Section 23 Departments are now one department called the “Leadership and Learning Department”. We are excited about this alignment of departments and services as we recognize that special education is all of our work: every teacher and staff member in TDSB. Our goal is to work toward diminishing silos across the system in order to better serve students locally and meet their needs with exceptional teaching, appropriate programming, and access to services and expertise. We recognize that great teaching matters and envision the alignment services as a move toward shared responsibility and shared leadership for all students, particularly students with special needs. We will continue to rely on key partners and internal expertise and recognize each student as unique in our approach to programming, placement, support, and success. The Leadership and Learning Department aligns our shared belief that we are all responsible for all students and that great teaching, timely smart support, and access to appropriate programs and placements will allow TDSB students to achieve to their greatest potential. We look forward to doing so in partnership with and the support of SEAC as we begin to reconsider not only what is being done in TDSB to support students with special needs, but what is possible for all students.

We welcome the following individuals to their new roles:

Kathy Witherow – Associate Director, Leadership, Learning and School Improvement

Brendan Browne – Executive Superintendent, Leadership, Learning, and School Improvement

We are excited about the work of our Inclusion Coaches who have begun their work in each of the four Learning Centres to support locally focused programming and support for students with special needs. This work and their leadership will continue to evolve throughout the year. We look forward to keeping you updated with more information as the year progresses.

**ANNUAL SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN 2018-2019**

The Special Education Plan was submitted to the Ministry and we are awaiting their approval to post it to the public website.

**MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN – TRANSFORMING STUDENT LEARNING ACTION PLAN**

(See attachment distributed with agenda)

For more information, please visit http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/Multi-Year-Strategic-Plan

**HOME SCHOOL PROGRAM**

This school year, HSP will only support students in Grades 4 to 8. Teachers and educational assistants who currently assist HSP students will continue to do so, but ‎ schools will have greater flexibility in deciding how to deliver HSP support.

Transitioning towards inclusion will require collaboration and the creation of positive and welcoming classroom environments that will enable all students to succeed.

Professional learning will continue to focus on supporting educators in developing the skills and knowledge needed to respond to student’s areas of strengths and/or needs through differentiate instruction and assessment practices, and engagement of families as partners in education.

**GRADE 3 UNIVERSAL SCREENING**

This is the third year that all Grade 3 students across TDSB will participate in the CCAT-7 universal screening process. The purpose of this universal screening test is to:

• Provide information to classroom teachers about the strengths and learning needs of each student in order to better support teachers in programming for students locally in their home schools.

• Help teachers to know when to bring a student forward to In School Team (IST) or School Support Team (SST) for programming suggestions.

• Improve equity of access for all students to differentiated programming including the potential identification of students with a gifted exceptionality.

The main change to the process this year is that the CCAT-7 will be administered by teaching staff to ALL Grade 3 students. Consent will NOT be required. Only students whose parents advise the principal in writing that they do not want their child to participate will be excluded from the assessment. The test administration date will be the week of Monday, October 1, 2018, to Friday, October 5, 2018.

For more information, please refer to the additional information available on the public website - http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership-Learning-And-Special-Education/Special-Education/Universal-Screening.

**MINISTRY PILOT PROJECTS – SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER IN SCHOOLS**

Our board is participating in two pilot projects:

Targeted Education Assistant Training

Thirty spots were available to our Board for Educational Assistant (EA) training. Sessions consisted of a presentation, with the main objectives focusing on hands-on application based on behaviour principles on the Registered Behaviour Technician (RBT) Tasklist, approved by the Behaviour Analyst Certification Board. Check-ins were done to target sessions based on the needs of the EA in developing a better understanding of the fundamental knowledge components of the RBT Tasklist. Tangible supports were provided to effectively promote the application and transfer of knowledge into classrooms.

Real-life examples and scenario exercises were used to engage group discussions. The group walked through the necessary steps required to complete board certification, and hands-on practice of data collection and assessment was delivered with consistent feedback until staff felt comfortable with each aspect being taught.

A variety of visual supports were used to capitalize on building staff competence in the RBT content. Ongoing email correspondence with participants was provided to promote ongoing support in the completion of the RBT modules, along with additional multiple choice and scenario-based examples, to further enrich their knowledge base.

In the spring of 2018, the Ministry of Education advised that this project would be extended to the 2018-2019 school year.

Dedicated Space for Autism Services

In this pilot project, one school, Westmount PS, has been selected to house a “dedicated space”. At Westmount PS practitioners/clinicians (either private or center based) will work directly with students who are currently receiving Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) services privately or through Ministry of Child and Youth Services-funded behaviour intervention programs. Practitioners/clinicians will be allocated this “dedicated space” (a separate room) in the school. They will not have access to the rest of the building or any classrooms . The goal of this pilot project is to streamline daily transitions that students who are currently enrolled in school and receiving ABA services experience. The project is scheduled to run until June 2019, and we are one of eighteen boards that have been chosen to participate.

We were directed by the Ministry to select a single “dedicated space” location. However, due to the size of our Board, we were granted some flexibility. In several instances, we have agreed to allow external practitioners to use non-classroom spaces (e.g. meeting rooms) for a few hours per day or a few times during the week to work with students who are already at school and receiving 1:1 service at a different location.

During the 2017-2018 school year, four students at four different schools received therapy in non-classroom spaces. There are currently three students at three different schools going through the information gathering process .

For more information, please visit http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/autismpilot.html