# Special Education and Section 23 Department Update

Executive Superintendent Uton Robinson

SEAC Meeting of September 11, 2017

**WELCOME BACK**

We trust that everyone had a great summer. We are looking forward to working with SEAC to better meet the needs of all students.

We want to thank Maria Lo Bianco, Rebecca Hollingsworth-Moffitt, Wendy Roberts and Juliet Jones for all the hard work and dedication shown to make a positive difference for students in Special Education and Section 23 Programs over the past few years.

The Special Education and Section Programs Department welcomes the following individuals to their new roles. The new Special Education Centrally Assigned Principals are:

Lori Moore Central

Janine Small Learning Centre 1

Susan Moulton Learning Centre 2

Cynthia Zwicker-Reston Learning Centre 3

Jennifer Newby Learning Centre 4

In addition, there are now 28 Special Education Consultants, one for each Learning Network, who will work closely with Superintendents of Education. This alignment supports our focus on placing resources in our schools.

We look forward to the 2017-2018 school year. We will continue to take steps that will embrace the vision of Equity, Student Achievement and Well-Being.

**ANNUAL SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN 2017-18 UPDATES**

We have:

* Highlighted the TDSB Equity Foundation Statement and the vision and actions outlined in the Integrated Equity Framework Action Plan (on the TDSB website at: <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/161026IntegratedEquity2932.pdf> )
* Updated Special Education Placements to reflect changes to Home School Program
* Incorporated suggestions from SEAC and advocates to improve clarity and assist parents in understanding the TDSB continuum of special education support, the special education programs and services available and placement criteria
* Up-dated staffing figures and included support staff standards and targets
* Reported on consultation with SEAC and other stakeholders
* Updated SEAC membership, contact information, input and recommendations to the board
* Updated Staff Development to outline targeted professional learning for 2017-2018
* Updated Accessibility (AODA) to provide information on steps taken to meet AODA requirements
* Added new Q&As to the Parent Guide to Special Education

**TRANSPORTATION UPDATE**

Senior Manager Garry Green will provide an update at the meeting.

**HOME SCHOOL PROGRAM**

This school year, we will start phasing out primary grade placements in HSP, beginning with no Grade 1 students admitted to the program. In the 2018-2019 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.

**GRADE 3 UNIVERSAL SCREENING**

Last year, the Toronto District School Board introduced a universal screening process for all Grade 3 students across the board. 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
* 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 test administration date will be the week of Monday, October 2, 2017, to Friday, October 6, 2017. The CCAT-7 will be administered by teaching staff for students who have returned a signed consent form by their parent/legal guardian.

For more information, please refer to the additional handout accompanying this update: Q & A Universal Screening Process - Revised

**DRAFT SPECIAL EDUCATION IN ONTARIO: KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 12**

**(Policy and Resource Guide)**

The Ministry of Education has released a draft version of the Special Education in Ontario: Kindergarten to Grade 12 in electronic form. The focus is on students who require Special Education Programs and Services. The guide provides more comprehensive information and greater consistency in the legislation, regulations, policies and program planning.

The guide has been organized into sections:

Part A Legislation, policy and funding

Part B Standards for school board's special education plans

Part C Early Identification, assessment and transition planning

Part D The Identification, placement and review committee (IPRC) process

Part E The Individual Education Plan

Part F Other Programs and Services

Glossary

This draft guide supersedes the following documents:

Special Education: A Guide for Education (2001)

Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans (2000)

Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning and Implementation (2000)

Transition Planning: A Resource Guide (2002)

The Individual Education Plan (IEP): A Resource Guide (2004)

Please note that IEP Standards and the Standards for the Special Education Plan remain the same.

The document can be downloaded at <http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/os/onschools> 2017e pdf

## INTEGRATED EQUITY FRAMEWORK ACTION PLAN 2016-2019

In the first year (2016-2017) of the [TDSB Integrated Equity Framework Action Plan 2016-2019](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/161026IntegratedEquity2932.pdf), we:

* Began developing comprehensive, user-friendly, plain-language resources to provide parents and students with information about special education programs, services and supports and the process for participating in consultations related to the annual review of the TDSB Special Education Plan.
* Provided school staff with learning opportunities to support a shift in attitudes and practice in order to create a more inclusive environment (in advance of the Home School Program remodel).
* Developed and implemented a process for parents and students to raise concerns regarding programming for students with special educational needs.
* Developed and conducted ongoing training sessions throughout the school year on:
* Ministry of Education PPM156, including transition of students from Section 23 programs back into a regular classroom (Elementary) or academic program of study (Secondary); and
* Ministry of Education Regulation 181/98, with specific focus on developing and implementing [Individual Educational Plans (IEPs)](file:///C:\Users\040575\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\UQZLJVHJ\2017%20SpecEdPlan%20July%2031FINALrevisedAug28.docx#_Individual_Education_Plan_1) and the [Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)](file:///C:\Users\040575\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\UQZLJVHJ\2017%20SpecEdPlan%20July%2031FINALrevisedAug28.docx#_The_Identification_Placement) process.
* Developed a plan for remodelling the [Home School Program (HSP)](file:///C:\Users\040575\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\UQZLJVHJ\2017%20SpecEdPlan%20July%2031FINALrevisedAug28.docx#_Home_School_Program) to ensure support is provided in the regular classroom throughout the 2017-2018 school year

For 2017-2018, the above activities will continue and be added to through the:

* System implementation of the new model for Home School Program (HSP)
* Provision of communications support to schools (administration and staff) for explaining changes to parents and community members
* In preparation for Year Three, development of a plan for building consistency among all TDSB educators in the strategic use of Differentiated Instruction and [Universal Design for Learning](file:///C:\Users\040575\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\UQZLJVHJ\2017%20SpecEdPlan%20July%2031FINALrevisedAug28.docx#_Instructional_Accommodation)

**SERVICE ANIMALS**

This item was requested by the Chair of SEAC - Staff is prepared to provide SEAC with a presentation on this area. The Draft Guidelines are provided in the following pages.



**Draft Guidelines for the Use of Service Animals within the Toronto District School Board (TDSB)**

**Part 1: General Information**

1. **Purpose:**

These guidelines have been developed in accordance with PR 549 Animals in Classrooms, PR 604 Use of Service Animals by the General Public, and Workplace Accommodation Procedures for Employees with Disabilities and the Protocol for Entry of Assistance Dogs into the Toronto District School Board (TDSB).

The use of a specifically trained service animal is **one strategy** used to accommodate the needs of individuals with special needs as listed below. These guidelines provide direction regarding the admittance and implementation of the use of service animals in the school/work environment. The individual(s) making the request for a service animal must follow these guidelines **on a yearly basis as approval** for the use of a service animal as an accommodation must be renewed at the beginning of each school year not a calendar year.

Service animals are trained to provide a wide range of assistance for personal health reasons including matters related to: vision, hearing, mobility, diabetes, seizures and mental health as well as providing support for individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

In October 2016, the TDSB Board of Trustees approved the “Integrated Equity Framework Action Plan”. This framework guides the TDSB’s strategic efforts by ensuring the ongoing alignment of the TDSB operations and organizational culture, with goal of improving achievement and well-being outcomes for all our students.

“We believe that equity of opportunity and equity of access to our programs, services and resources are critical to the achievement for all those whom we serve, and for those who serve our school system… The TDSB is therefore committed to ensuring that fairness; equity and inclusion are essential principles of our school system and are integrated into all our policies, programs, operational practices.”

*(TDSB Equity Foundation Statement)*

These guidelines are also in alignment with this framework.

1. **Definitions**

There are 2 recognized groups of trained service animals to accommodate the needs of individuals with special needs.

These include:

1. **Guide Dog:**

Effective July 1, 2016, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 is now part of the Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards Act which refers to the definition of a guide dog.

The Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards Act, Part IV.2, Subsection 80.45 (3) states; “A Guide dog” means a guide dog and is defined in Section1 of the Blind Persons’ Act Rights Act which states a “guide dog” means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and has the qualifications prescribed by the regulations.

1. **Service Animal/Assistance Dog/Emotional Support Dog:**

The Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards Act, Part IV.2, defines a service animal in Subsection 80.45(3) which states in:

Section 4: For the purposes of this Part, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability;

1. If the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person’s disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal: or

1. If the person provides documentation from one of the following **regulated health professionals** confirming that the person requires the service animal for reasons relating to the disability:

* A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech- Language Pathologists of Ontario
* A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario
* A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario
* A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
* A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario
* A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
* A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
* A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario
* A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Mental Health Therapists of Ontario. (Ontario Regulation 165/16, s. 16)

1. **Under Subsection 80.47 - Use of Service Animals and Support Persons:**

Section 3: If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the provider shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. (Ontario Reg. 165/16, s. 16)

Section 4: If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the provider shall ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the provider’s goods, services or facilities. (Ontario Reg. 165/16, s. 16)

**For the purpose of these TDSB guidelines, all trained service animals will now be referred to as “service animals” which includes the category of guide dogs described above.**

1. **Background Information and General Information:**
   1. These guidelines outline the procedure for the use of “service animals” within the TDSB. A service animal performs specific tasks related a person’s specific disability and people are often issued a public access card.

* 1. The Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 section 75 (1): and The Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) provides the authority for service animals to accompany their handlers in all public places including schools and buses.
* Service Animals and their handlers receive specialized training to work together and consequently these animals should present minimal risk to, or impact on, other people.
* All service animals adhere to the Minimum Standards for Training Service Dogs as outlined by Assistance Dogs International (ADI). ADI is a coalition of non-profit organizations that train and place service animals specifically dogs. The purpose of ADI is to improve the areas of training, placement and utilization of service animals and to provide staff and volunteer education.

For further information visit:

[www.assistancedogsinternational.org/Standards/ServiceDogStandards.php](http://www.assistancedogsinternational.org/Standards/ServiceDogStandards.php)

* 1. The term “handler” refers to the person for whom the animal is provided. The responsibility, the care of the service animal and the handling routines of the service animal rest solely with the handler and the family of the handler.
  2. In some situations where the individual student is unable to meet the needs of the service animal, a designated handler may be required to support the student with the service animal. In this case, the student may be tethered (harnessed) to the service animal. Staff members who come in direct contact with the service animal will be provided training by the Service Animal Association in order to act as the handler.
  3. For the purpose of this guideline, the use of a service animal by an employee with a disability will be allowed when such use is necessary as a reasonable accommodation to enable the individual to perform the essential functions of their job as an employee or to access benefits of employment provided to all employees in the same job classification.
  4. For the purpose of this guideline, the use of a service animal by a student with a disability will be allowed when such use is necessary as a reasonable accommodation to enable the student to access the Ontario Curriculum and to access other benefits of school as provided to all other students within that same school.
  5. Service animals must wear the distinctive harness/vest or saddlebag while working in any area where applicable. The service animal must be on a leash at all times while “working”.
  6. “Non- working” time may occur when the service animal is not allowed by law in areas where food preparation occurs and in other areas involving machinery or chemicals etc. where it may be unsafe for the service animal. In these situations, the service animal is in its crate with its collar, vest, harness removed.

1. **The definition of “Disability” from the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC)**

**Disability means:**

a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or physical reliance on a service animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;

b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;

c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;

d) A mental disorder, or

e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; ( handicap)

**5.0** **Service Animals must be Adults:**

**Service Animals must be adult animals.** For example: service dogs should be at least 12 months old. Service dogs must have the maturity and temperaments to behave calmly at all times in all TDSB settings and under in all situations of emergency or any unforeseen circumstances. Service animals must have toileting control.

1. **Established Relationship between the Service Animal and the Employee/Student:**

The relationship (bond) between the service animal and the employee/student must be established **PRIOR** to the service animal’s arrival at school/workplace.

1. **Bus Loading**

**If bus loading** is necessary, the parent/guardian/support person will be responsible with the service animal provider in establishing routines and seating procedures to ensure safety for all stakeholders on the bus.

The parent/guardian/support person will be responsible for loading/unloading of the service animal.