# TDSB Staff Responses to Questions Raised in the SEAC Chair’s Report

# for the October 24, 2016 SEAC Meeting

In advance of the October 24th, 2016 SEAC meeting, the following staff responses were provided to SEAC, for 5 of the 7 questions outlined in the Chair’s Report under item 5, with regards to Universal Design for Learning (UDL):

1. What is TDSB doing to include principles of Universal Design in Learning (UDL) in curriculum in mainstream classes, to enable students with special education needs to be able to be mainstreamed as much as possible?

*TDSB staff continues to support teachers and support staff with effective approaches to respond to all of our students in ways that are tailored to the unique strengths and needs of each student. These include Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Differentiated Instruction and a Tiered Approach to prevention and intervention. Ministry of Education resources such as “Learning for All” and “Growing Success” provide staff with strategies that allow for the following:*

* *Universality and equity*
* *Flexibility and inclusion*
* *Simplicity and focus*
* *An appropriately designed learning space*

2. How is TDSB ensuring this at the Board-wide curriculum level?

*We are asking each school to engage in a process to determine a learning focus in three areas:* ***achievement, well-being****,* ***and equity****. This process will include:*

* *identifying these three focus areas, engaging in the learning that will allow each school to support student improvement in these areas,*
* *determining the evidence/data the school will collect,*
* *monitoring progress, and*
* *reflecting on what is happening in an ongoing way to support next steps.*

*All departments will support this effort in a responsive way by examining their own processes and procedures to be sure that they are providing a high standard of service to the schools. In this way, the focus on learning will not be interrupted.*

3. What is TDSB doing to ensure this in the way teachers design their lesson plans?

*The TDSB uses a variety of resources to support teachers in the design of lesson plans. These curriculum documents are found on line and they foster rich, culturally authentic learning experiences in diverse and accepting environments. Student voice is included in creating belonging and their experience is honoured. The lessons are designed to engage students through:*

* *Sharing new learning and solving challenging issues*
* *Promoting questioning*
* *Working in collaborative teams*
* *Encouraging innovation and creativity*
* *Infusing global competencies through the lens of equity using rich authentic learning tasks*
* *Holding high expectations for all learners*
* *Building relationships that are positive leading to increased engagement and empowerment of students, staff, parents and communities*

4. How is TDSB monitoring for this?

*The TDSB monitors for this through a process. The process is a cyclical one that supports thinking as well as action. Six Key Conversations have been identified:*

* *Where are we now? By examining data we determine where we are now. We look*

*at who is not learning and why*

* *Where are we going? We will develop foci in the areas of equity, well being*

*and achievement*

* *What do we need to learn? In order to achieve our goals what do we need to learn together*
* *How do we know? What will be the evidence of the impact of our actions?*

*How will we know we have achieved our goals?*

* *Act! We take action to achieve the results we are working toward*
* *What change will we make to our thinking and behavior? We reflect on what*

*we have accomplished and we begin the cycle again to determine if we need to shift our thinking or actions*

5. What supplemental training are teachers receiving on how to design lesson plans to accommodate students with special education needs?

*In addition, coaches, consultants and coordinators are available to work with teachers in their design of lesson plans. Teachers and support staff also participate in Professional Development opportunities on a continuous basis.*