# Barrier Free Track and Field Meet at Variety Village

Media were on hand as more than 950 students who require assistance (i.e. students with wheelchairs, walkers, a developmental delay, visual impairment, etc.) came together as part of the TDSB’s 12th Annual Barrier-Free Track and Field Meet. Due to the popularity of the event, it was scheduled over three days this year and involved students from over 55 schools. Events included a Fitness Challenge, Running Dash, Obstacle Course, Rollersledge Hockey, Wheelchair Basketball, Throwing, Jumping, Curling / Boccia, Parachute Games, Kung Fu and Tai chi.One student who attended the event captured it in the following way:

*“On May 24th, I went to the Barrier Free Track and Field meet at Variety Village. This event is for people with different abilities, like cerebral palsy so that it is fair for everyone to compete in physical challenges. The first thing we did was Groove Dancing. We did poses, dabs and danced to the beats like no one was watching. The next game was wheelchair basketball. At first, I failed at putting the ball in the basket but after a few tries I shot it in the hoop! I played many other games like racing, curling, boccia, javelin, sledge hockey, tai chi and an obstacle course. I also met an Olympian who did the fitness program with me.  I enjoyed these games a lot. I was very excited when I won 4th place in one of the races and was given a golden ribbon. I am very thankful that my teacher and classmates helped plan this trip for me. It was one of the best days I’ve ever had.”*

# Coordinated Services Update

The goal of Coordinated Service Planning (CSP) is to improve service experiences and outcomes for children and youth with multiple and/or complex special needs and their families, through the support of a Service Planning Coordinator who will connect them to the multiple, cross-sectoral services they need as early as possible, and monitor their needs and progress through a coordinated service plan (known as the “Single Plan of Care” or SPOC). As described in the Special Needs Strategy Policy Document, Coordinated Service Planning is comprised of the following key components:

► A single Coordinating Agency in each service delivery area through which families can access coordinated service planning for a range of services across sectors;

► Dedicated Service Planning Coordinators, through each Coordinating Agency, who will lead coordinated service planning for families of children and youth with multiple and/or complex special needs by working with children’s services, health and education sectors;

► Coordinated Service Planning Providers who employ individuals who coordinate services for children with multiple complex needs; and

► One coordinated service plan (or Single Plan of Care) for each child/youth that takes into account all of his/her goals, strengths, needs, as well as all of the services that the child/youth is and will be receiving.

In all 34 planning communities around the province, Lead Agencies for Coordinated Service Planning are required to have signed partnership agreements with all their major community partners, including School Boards, before they can sign an agreement with MCYS and receive funding to help with implementation of this strategy. Toronto is now one of only three communities in the province that have not signed an agreement with MCYS, in our case, because we do not have signed agreements with the GTA Boards. All the other planning communities have moved on.

# Engagement Guide for the Development of an Accessibility Standard for Education

The Ministry of Education has provided an opportunity to engage in a survey process for the development of an accessibility standard for education. The following information is taken from the guide:

“Engagement will run from May to July 2017. The feedback we receive will be used to help design an accessibility standard for education. You can provide your feedback in several ways:

* Complete the online survey: English: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EducationSurveyEN>; French: <https://fr.surveymonkey.com/r/SondageAccessibilite>
* Email your comments to aoda.input@ontario.ca
* Host your own discussion group using this Engagement Guide”

Five potential themes for discussion:

1. Accessibility Awareness and Training
	* Ensuring all members of the school community have differentiated training to provide an accessible and inclusive educational experience
2. Awareness of Accessibility Accommodations – Policies, Processes, and Programs/Supports
	* Ensuring parents, students, and instructors have access to information about programs
3. Information, Communication, and Inclusive Decision-Making
	* Ensuring people with lived experience have a voice during planning processes
4. Transition Planning
	* Supporting children entering school from child care and planning for entry into post-secondary education or employment
5. Inclusive and Accessible Learning Spaces
	* Ensuring that K-12 schools, colleges and universities include accessibility features throughout the built environment.

We are always looking for creative, innovative and evidence-based solutions to help us do a better job in providing services to the people who need them”.

# Special Education Plan Update

The annual Special Education Plan is a living document of sorts. It is constantly being reviewed, undergoing draft revisions especially during the staff allocation process that operationalizes special education program delivery for the next school year. During staff allocation meetings, the previous year’s input into the Special Education Plan is reconsidered and addressed where practicable or as directed by the board. Additional input offered throughout the year from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and other stakeholders is given consideration by staff and where possible, woven into the first draft of the next year’s Plan.

The 2017 revision process included the following steps:

* Public input into the Plan was invited between September and March, through a statement posted on the Special Education pages of the TDSB website. Input received was carefully reviewed and addressed where immediately possible.
* At the October, December, March and April 2017 SEAC meetings, SEAC was invited to provide input into the Special Education Plan. In addition to individual member input received at meetings, the SEAC chair directed that the five multi-component SEAC motions to the board, developed over the past two school years, be considered as SEAC input into the Plan.
* Where deemed immediately possible by the Executive Superintendent, aspects of the motions were incorporated into the 2017 draft Plan. More complex aspects of the motions require further investigation or board decision.
* Beginning in April of 2017, the different components of the draft 2017 Special Education Plan were distributed to operational and regional staff, for their review and further suggestions.
* In June, the different components of the Plan are recombined into a single document for review by the Executive Superintendent and special education leadership team for equity, fairness, inclusion as well as for clarity and systemic consistency across processes and procedures.
* By the end of June, a final draft will be provided to the Director of Education for review and submission to the Ministry of Education in July (as is required).

So far, revisions have been made to reflect changes related to the following:

* The Special Education component of the Integrated Equity Framework Action Plan
* Changes to the Home School Program support delivery model
* Updates to Support Service Partnerships and Section 23 Program offerings
* Revisions to the delivery of Regional Services by the Autism Team, brought about by funding changes to the “Connections” program
* The foci for Staff Professional Learning Planning

Changes have also been made throughout the Plan to reflect a greater emphasis on inclusion and inclusionary language, as outlined in the Equity Framework Action Plan and suggested by SEAC and other public input. There is greater emphasis on the expected use of Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction to support students. We are also working on greater clarity around roles and responsibilities in such processes as Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) and Special Education Program Recommendation Committee (SEPRC).

Some sections are still undergoing review by the regional special education teams, including the sections on Exceptionalities, Individual Education Plan (IEP) and In-School Team (IST)/ School Support Team (SST). Changes will also be required to the provision of Specialized Health Support Services once the Special Needs Strategy is finalized with TDSB.

In terms of organizational changes reflected in the Plan for the 2017/18 school year, the Special Education /Section 23 Programs will maintain the current administrative structure, with the following exceptions:

* One Centrally Assigned Principal (Central Office)
* Four Centrally Assigned Principals (in place of 2 Supervising Principals – one in each Learning Centre)
* Four additional Special Education Consultants (so there is one for each of the 28 Learning Network school clusters)

A Special Education and Section 23 Staff Organization Chart will be shared at the September SEAC meeting.

# Funding update

TDSB Senior Business Officer Craig Snider joins me in providing the following Briefing Note on funding enhancement for special education:

Date 5 June 2017

To Special Education Advisory Committee

Subject: LABOUR ENHANCEMENTS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education, together with the Ontario Public School Board Association (OPSBA), signed two year extension agreements with all of their collective bargaining units, including those at the TDSB, this spring. In addition to wage and benefit increases, enhanced funding was made available to support additional staffing for both Regular Program and Special Education programs, after considering in-year grant reductions. We are currently rolling out these new resources and are working with our employee groups to gather input on how best to spend the additional dollars. Through these agreements, the TDSB is allocating approximately 7.9 million additional dollars for Special Education.

# Home School Program Letter

Following SEAC consultation, the letter advising parents of changes to the Home School Program was revised and is undergoing translation into multiple languages. See the Appendix A for the final version of the HSP letter.