



Mental Health and Addiction Strategy (2027–2030)



The TDSB Mental Health and Addictions Strategy (2027–2030) is grounded in a coordinated, system-wide approach that positions attendance as a mental health outcome, belonging as the core strategy, and targeted supports as essential to student well-being and achievement. Through a strengthened S.T.E.P.S. framework—Strengthen, Transform, Expand, Sustain, and System Coherence—the strategy builds on existing system successes while deepening impact and accountability. This progression reflects a deliberate focus on strengthening relationship-based and mental health-informed practices, transforming school environments through identity-affirming and inclusive approaches, expanding equitable access to Tier 2 supports, sustaining system-wide capacity in mental health literacy and trauma-informed care, and systematizing partnerships, data, and coordinated pathways to care. Together, these priorities create an integrated and measurable pathway to ensure every student experiences belonging, engagement, and well-being within mentally healthy school communities.

STRENGTHEN *Attendance as a Mental Health Outcome*

PRIORITY DESCRIPTION:

Strengthen system-wide, relationship-based, and culturally responsive practices that support student attendance, re-engagement, and connection to school, recognizing attendance as a key indicator of student well-being and engagement.

ACTIONS / TARGETS

1. **Strengthen and expand the work of Professional Support Services staff, Mental Health Leads, and school staff** to deliver coordinated, relationship-based, and mental health-informed supports that improve student attendance, re-engagement, and overall well-being of all students.
2. **Strengthen early identification, intervention, and re-engagement approaches** through the alignment of attendance, well-being, and referral processes, ensuring timely, responsive, and data-informed supports for students experiencing barriers to engagement.

TRANSFORM *Belonging as a Core Strategy*

PRIORITY DESCRIPTION:

Transform school environments to ensure all students experience identity-affirming, inclusive, and safe spaces where they feel seen, valued, and connected, with student voice and lived experience embedded across all aspects of mental health and well-being.

ACTIONS / TARGETS

3. **Deepen student voice, leadership, and engagement opportunities by expanding student-led initiatives (e.g., MHSA, Students4Wellbeing, Chat CVT)** and centring the lived experiences and identities of students in all aspects of mental health planning and implementation.
4. **Strengthen identity-affirming, culturally responsive, and inclusive school environments through targeted resources**, wellness presentations, and collaboration with school staff, families, and identity-affirming community partners to ensure students feel seen, valued, and connected across all school spaces.

EXPAND *Tiered Mental Health Supports*

PRIORITY DESCRIPTION:

Expand access to timely, differentiated, and culturally responsive Tier 2 mental health supports, ensuring early intervention and targeted responses for students with emerging and complex needs.

ACTIONS / TARGETS

5. **Expand access to differentiated, culturally responsive Tier 2 mental health supports** targeted group programming, and classroom-based supports that respond to emerging student needs.
6. **Enhance targeted supports for priority student groups and key transition periods** including students with special education needs, newcomer students, and those experiencing disengagement, with a focus on Grades 6, 8, and 9 transitions and pathways to re-engagement.

PRIORITIZE *Capacity Building & Mental Health*

PRIORITY DESCRIPTION:

Prioritize system-wide capacity building in shared language mental health literacy, trauma-informed and healing-centred practices, and emerging areas of need to support consistent, inclusive, and effective responses across all schools.

ACTIONS / TARGETS

7. **Strengthen system-wide capacity in shared language mental health literacy and trauma-informed, healing-centred practices** for staff, students, and families, building on existing professional learning and ensuring consistent, inclusive, and identity-affirming approaches across all schools.
8. **Expand evidence-informed learning and capacity building in emerging mental health areas including suicide prevention, anti-sex trafficking, anti-vaping, substance use and addictions, digital safety, and healthy relationships**, ensuring relevance to students' lived realities.

SYSTEM COHERENCE *Systems Coordination, Partnerships & Accountability*

PRIORITY DESCRIPTION:

Strengthen system coherence through coordinated, data-informed, and equity-centred approaches that align partnerships, improve pathways to care, and embed monitoring and accountability to ensure sustained impact and continuous improvement.

ACTIONS / TARGETS

9. **Enhance collaboration with parents/caregivers/guardians and identity-affirming community partners** to improve access to culturally relevant mental health services, reduce barriers to care, challenge stigma, and align with the Ministry's *Right Time, Right Care* approach.
10. **Establish and continue building system processes for monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement** by aligning with TDSB Research, data systems and qualitative information to track the impact of mental health literacy, Tier 2 supports, student engagement, and well-being outcomes across the system.