**Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting**

**January 16, 2023**

**Leadership Report**

**Learning Transformation and Equity - Special Education and Inclusion**

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Nandy Palmer, System Superintendent of Special Education and Inclusion

***Senior Team Mandatory Special Education and Inclusion Professional Learning***

To support capacity building of senior leaders, on December 16th, Special Education and Inclusion led a mandatory professional learning session for Senior Team (academic as well as business). This comprehensive session made connections to the TDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan and Equity, Anti-Oppression and Anti-Ableism and focused on working collaboratively with parents/guardians/caregivers and other partners to support students with special education needs.

***Toronto School Administrators Association Conference - Demystifying Special Education***

The Toronto School Administrators Association (TSAA) Conference in early December provided an opportunity to bring principals and vice principals together to learn more about connecting special education and inclusion to the school improvement plan. Focusing on using school and classroom walkthroughs to identify practices in the classroom that support students with special education needs, administrators engaged in deepening their knowledge and leadership in the area of inclusion.

**Ontario Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Annual Special Education Conference**

On December 2 and 3, staff from Special Education and Inclusion presented the following sessions at the 66th Annual CEC Conference:

* ***Developing Rich Workplace Pathway Learning for Students in Special Education Programming:***This session profiled work done by TDSB educators to support rich numeracy and literacy learning opportunities for students in the workplace pathway. Focusing on students who have intellectual (MID) and developmental (DD) exceptionalities, the project builds on the skills necessary for post secondary employment through high expectations and rigorous curriculum connected to employability skills.
* ***A Transdisciplinary Approach to Working with Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB): an Evidence-based Approach to a Collaborative Integration of Support:*** A student-centred approach is essential to supporting the strengths and areas for growth of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Through a transdisciplinary approach, various professional disciplines collaborate to implement cohesive strategies, thereby reducing fragmented and duplicated service. The primary purpose of this approach is to coordinate and integrate the expertise of team members, therefore providing a more holistic, efficient, and comprehensive assessment and intervention service. Inclusion of family members as part of the team is essential in order to extend support across the multitude of environments students experience daily (Rieske et al., 2019).

***Professional Learning Sessions for Educators of Intensive Support Programs (ISPs)***

Intensive Support Program (ISP) specific professional learning sessions (e.g., ASD, DD ISP, MID, Gifted etc.) were held in December and provided an opportunity for educators and support staff to learn and explore inclusionary practices specific to the exceptionality in an ISP setting. Participants deepened their understanding of the intersection of anti-ableism, anti-oppression and anti-racism and discussed ways in which students can effectively be integrated. Educators also explored assistive technology tools available to assist students with their daily programming.

**IPRC Data - December 2022**

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| --- |
| **December IPRCs** |
| **Learning Centre 1** | **36** |
| **Learning Centre 2** | **40** |
| **Learning Centre 3** | **23** |
| **Learning Centre 4** | **62** |
| **IPRCs Completed** | **161** |
| **IPRC Cumulative since August 2022** |
| **IPRC Cumulative since August 2022** | **558** |

**Psychological Assessment Data - December 2022**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Month-By-Month** | **LC1** | **LC2** | **LC3** | **LC4** | **Total** |
| Completed | 72 | 59 | 57 | 69 | 257 |
| Total Referrals | 174 | 216 | 134 | 283 | 807 |
| **Cumulative (since September 2022)** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Completed | 185 | 171 | 145 | 176 | 677 |
| In Progress | 152 | 174 | 205 | 222 | 753 |
| Waiting\* | 329 | 304 | 256 | 548 | 1437 |
| Removed  | 30 | 43 | 45 | 71 | 189 |
| Total Referrals\*\* | 696 | 692 | 651 | 1017 | 3056 |
| *\*63% of total* ***waitlist*** *are comprehensive/DK assessments, and 37% are gifted assessments* |
| *\*\*75% of total* ***referrals*** *are for comprehensive/DK assessments, and 25% are gifted assessments* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

Since September 2022, the total number of referrals is **3056** (*DK-212; Gifted-755; Comprehensive-2089*

* **177 Comprehensive (incl. DK) were removed** (*2124*) & **12 Gifted were removed** (743).
* Gifted and DK referrals begin in late October, November and continued into December.

For Comprehensive Assessments: October 2022 had 737 Waitlist; November 2022 has 727 and December it is 824. There has been an increase which we expect due to this time of year. The Comprehensive assessments are continuing even though this is a 1.1% increase on the waitlist.

* As the DK and Gifted get completed, this waitlist for comprehensive will decrease throughout the school year.

This chart indicates the breakdown of the **3056 psychological referrals (*Gifted, Comprehensive & DK*)** received since September 2022 to December 2022.

* End of December 2022, **901 Compressive & DK Assessments are on the waitlist** (***824 and 80 are Comprehensive & DK Assessments respectively*)**
* **We went from 184 Gifted Assessment Referrals to 755 Gifted Assessment Referrals at the end of December 2022.**
* **677 Referrals (*Comprehensive & Gifted*) have been completed since September 2022.**
* **753 Referrals (*Comprehensive, DK & Gifted*) are in progress**
* **189 (1 C77omprehensive & 12 Gifted referrals) have been removed for some these following reasons:**
1. *The parent/guardian has not consented to the assessment*
2. *The student has left the board*
3. *The student moved out of the city/region/providence/country*
4. *Other supports were provided that supported the initial needs which initiated the assessment (trauma therapy; outside private psycho-educational assessment by parent/guardian; supports/differential strategies provided to the educators in the classroom that have positive outcomes etc.)*

**Total Referrals**

**651**

**Total Referrals**

**696**

**This chart showcases total referrals (Comprehensive, DK & Gifted) for each LC.**

**The chart below showcases the breakdown of the waitlist per LC for Comprehensive, DK and Gifted.**

**\*\*The waitlists do vary, and part of this variance includes the following (2021 numbers)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Learning Centre** | **Number of Schools** | **\*Elementary Student Population** | **\*Secondary Student Population** | **\*TOTAL****Student Population** |
| 1 | 134 | 42, 430 | 20, 258 | 62, 688 |
| 2 | 136 | 41, 428 | 16, 877 | 58, 305 |
| 3 | 133 | 40, 878 | 15, 589 | 56, 467 |
| 4 | 157 | 49, 445 | 17, 837 | 67, 277 |

**Higher referral numbers in LC4 are attributed to:**

* LC4 has 20 plus schools more than the other LC’s
* LC4 has 5000-10,000 more students than the other LC’s

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Comprehensive Assessments** **Aged Waitlist**  | **0-3 Months** | **4-6 Months** | **7-9 Months** | **10+ Months** | **TOTAL** |
| **December 2022** | **639** | **55** | **125** | **85** | **904** |

Psychological staff are continuing to put effort in to comprehensive assessments, that are 6 plus months plus.

\*DK referrals were received in late October 2022 and have 212 total **DK referrals as of December 2022**.

Below are some rationales why 6-month comprehensive referrals remain on the waitlist:

1. Parent/Guardian want to continue with the assessments and the students are in virtual school where only a portion of psychoeducational assessments can be completed virtually. These students and parents/guardians a being offered local school spaces and administrative buildings to support the completion of in person testing but have declined.
2. Students who left, in between testing, to go out of the country/city/province and want to remain on the wait list.
3. Student who enrolled into virtual school in between testing and want to remain on the waitlist.
4. Student and parents/guardians who are not responding to the staff and staff are working with the school and Attendance Counselors to locate.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gifted Assessments** **Aged Waitlist**  | **0-3 Months** | **4-6 Months** | **7-9 Months** | **10+ Months** | **TOTAL** |
| **December 2022** | **527** | **6** | **0** | **0** | **533** |

\*Gifted Assessment Referrals increased from **184 in November 2022 to 755 in December 2022.**