

## Section F: EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS



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### ***Purpose of the Standard***

*To provide details of the board's assessment policies and procedures to the ministry and to make parents aware of the types of assessment tools used by the school board, the ways in which assessments are obtained by IPRCs, and the ways in which assessments are used.*

Ensuring assessment practices and learning conditions are rooted in critical consciousness ensures that no groups of students are marginalized or discriminated against ([hooks, 2003](#)). The primary purpose of student assessment and evaluation is to improve learning. Assessment has the greatest potential to improve student learning when it is an integral part of all classroom activities and when it is used to identify students' strengths and needs to determine the next steps for learning. The Ontario Ministry of Education policy documents [Growing Success: Assessment Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools \(2010\)](#) and [Growing Success – The Kindergarten Addendum](#) provide guidance to schools on policies and procedures for assessment, evaluation, and reporting for Kindergarten and Grades 1 to 12. The policies outlined in Growing Success, described below, reflect the current state of continuously evolving knowledge about learning.

When a teacher observes a student who has some areas of need at school (e.g., academic, social/emotional, behavioural), the teacher will seek support through the Special Education Resource Teacher/Methods and Resource Teacher (MART) or Assistant Curriculum Leader of Special Education, the principal/vice-principal and the Special Education and Inclusion Consultant. Collaboratively, they will ensure that instructional intervention strategies focus on the student's identity, lived experiences, strengths and areas of need. Strategies need to include the following:

- Evidence of Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy, Cultural Safety and Trauma-Informed practices and assessment that reflects the student's identity and lived experiences
- Evidence of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Strategies, Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction
- Evidence of an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) that records and tracks any strategies implemented by the teacher(s)
- Evidence of implemented strategies recommended by the Special Education and Inclusion Consultant

Most student needs can be met in the regular classroom with Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions that consider the student's identity, lived experiences, strengths and areas of need. If this is not possible, after careful consideration of the above and communication with parents/guardians/caregivers, the teacher may refer the student to IST and/or SST.

## Assessments by Teachers

Assessment findings provide information relevant for classroom programming, Individual Education Plans, the Provincial Report Card and Identification Placement and Review Committees. Teachers collect assessment information in a variety of ways: formal and informal observations, discussions/conversations/questioning during the learning process, student-teacher conferences, homework, group work, demonstrations/performances, projects, portfolios, developmental checklists/continua, peer and self-assessments/reflections, essays and tests. Assessment is planned at the same time as instruction, to determine what needs to be taught, guide next steps and help both teachers and students monitor and evaluate progress towards achieving learning goals.

### Kinds of Educational Assessment

Teachers carry out educational assessment as part of their on-going work with all students and for students with special education needs and disabilities, throughout the development, implementation and review of Individual Education Plans (IEP). Teachers use terms such as *diagnostic*, *formative* and *summative* to describe the kinds of educational assessment that can be used for different purposes: *assessment FOR learning*, *assessment OF learning*, and *assessment AS learning*.

**Assessment FOR learning** is the process of collecting information to decide where learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. It is integral to the IEP process and can be diagnostic and/or formative in its use:

- **Diagnostic assessment** occurs before instruction begins so teachers can determine students' readiness to learn new knowledge/skills and identify their instructional needs.

Teachers use the information to determine what students already know and can do with respect to the knowledge and skills outlined in the curriculum expectations. Teachers then work with students to set appropriate learning goals and plan differentiated and personalized instruction/assessment.

- **Formative assessment** is frequent and ongoing, carried out while students are gaining knowledge and practising skills. Teachers use the information to monitor students' progress towards achieving expectations, to provide students with descriptive feedback and coaching for improvement, to plan next steps and to differentiate instruction and assessment in response to student needs.

**Assessment OF learning** is the process by which teachers record and report on student learning. This assessment is summative, occurring at or near the end of a period of learning. The information gathered is used by teachers to evaluate and communicate achievement at a given point in time, on the basis of pre-set criteria. It may also be used to plan further instruction.

For most students in Grades 1 to 12, this kind of assessment looks at achievement of the provincial curriculum expectations against Ministry established rubrics.

- For students with special education needs and disabilities, and for English language learners who require accommodations but do not need to have grade expectations modified, evaluation of achievement is based on the Ministry grade/course expectations and achievement levels.
- When students require modified or alternative expectations, evaluation of achievement is based on the expectations outlined in their IEPs. For this reason, it is important that IEP goals be expressed as specific and measurable outcomes.

**Assessment AS learning** is the process by which teachers help students learn how to be their own best assessors, to become independent learners. This assessment is **formative**, requiring teacher support, modelling and guiding structured opportunities for students to assess themselves. Students learn how to monitor their own progress, recognize when they need help, advocate for themselves, adjust their approaches to learning and set new goals. These are increasingly important skills for students with special education needs and disabilities as they progress through the grades.

## Diagnostic Assessment Tools for Teachers

The Ministry of Education released [Policy Program Memorandum No. 155 Diagnostic Assessment in Support of Student Learning](#) to outline how diagnostic assessment tools may be used in support of student achievement. It specifies the shared and individual responsibilities of teachers, principals, and school board staff and their collective accountability for student achievement. PPM 155 guidelines are focused on the effective use of diagnostic assessment tools to inform teaching and learning practices in the classroom. The guidelines direct that teachers must use diagnostic assessment during

the school year, selecting tools from the Board's approved list and that they are to use their professional judgment when selecting and using diagnostic assessment tools.

PPM 155 guidelines do not apply to:

- Individual educational and/or professional assessments conducted to determine the special education programs and/or services required by students with special education needs and disabilities
- Large Scale Assessments like EQAO (Grade 3, 6, 9 and OSSLT), Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRL), Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) and other Ministry mandated assessments.

## **Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT-7)**

The purpose of the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT-7) for Grade 3 students is to provide comprehensive information to classroom teachers about the learning strengths and areas for improvement for all students. Teachers will use the data to plan differentiated assessment and instruction for students.

The results from the CCAT-7 may also be considered by the School Support Team (SST) to determine, along with other information, if further assessment is warranted.

Central staff may also use test results to establish a basis for the evaluation of existing programs and assist in planning appropriate curriculum and instructional programs at the system level. Individual test results will be treated confidentially and any data used for purposes of reporting to the public will be done generically without disclosure of identifying information.

Information about the CCAT-7 administration process is posted on the [TDSB website](#).

## TDSB Approved List of Diagnostic Assessment Tools

Literacy			
Assessment/ Tool	Grades/ Division	Purpose	Recommended Timelines
<a href="#">TDSB Literacy Success Diagnostic Kit (Grades 7-10)</a>	7 - 10	The <a href="#">TDSB Literacy Success Diagnostic Kit (Grades 7-10)</a> is designed to help teachers identify students' strengths in relation to literacy expectations outlined by the Ontario Ministry of Education for all subjects. The kit is a diagnostic tool to assess students' reading and writing skills, aiding teachers in developing individual and class profiles of students' literacy skills. With these profiles, teachers can differentiate instruction to meet individual needs with explicit teaching of the reading and writing skills and strategies that will make students successful.	To be administered 3-6 weeks into the course/term.
<a href="#">TDSB Phonological Awareness Inventory</a>	K-12	The Phonological and Phonemic Awareness Inventory is a student response tracking booklet that includes information and scripts about how to administer the inventory and score student responses. Phonological awareness and phonemic awareness are speaking and listening tasks.	Beginning of the year for all students and repeated at the middle of the year and/or at the end of the year based on student needs.
<a href="#">TDSB Phonics and Decoding Inventory</a>	K-12	The Phonics and Decoding Inventory is designed to provide educators with information about their students' current level of knowledge on the letter-sound continuum and the word structure hierarchy. It will provide information about students' discrete skill sets in the area of alphabetic principles. It helps teachers know where students are on the skill development trajectories and use this information to guide intentional literacy instruction..	Beginning of the year for all students and repeated at the middle of the year and/or at the end of the year based on student needs.

French			
Assessment/ Tool	Grades/ Division	Purpose	Recommended Timelines
ÉCLAIR	French Immersion K-8	ÉCLAIR focuses on phonological awareness, phonics, and word reading skills. Aligned to CEFR levels (PreA1 to A1) as opposed to grades to be responsive to the needs of each learner, honouring their diverse social, cultural, and linguistic identities and entry points. To be used by classroom educators to provide meaningful insight into the next steps for teaching and learning phonological awareness, phonics, and word reading skills.	<p>Early French Immersion K-2: Beginning of year for all students and repeated at middle of year and/or at end of year based on student need.</p> <p>Early French Immersion Gr 3 and up: Choose the measures and the frequency of use based on student need.</p> <p>Middle French Immersion 4-8: Choose the measures and the frequency of use based on student needs.</p>
TDSB Phonological Awareness Inventory for French Immersion (Primary Division)	Early French Immersion K-3	TDSB Phonological Awareness Inventory for French Immersion (Primary Division) is designed specifically for French Immersion. This resource focuses on phonological and phonemic awareness skills. Aligned to the continuum of skill development as opposed to grade.	Early French Immersion K-3: Choose the measures and the frequency of use based on student needs.
TDSB Phonological Awareness Inventory for French Immersion (Junior/Intermediate Division)	French Immersion 4-8	TDSB Phonological Awareness Inventory for French Immersion (Junior/Intermediate Division) is designed specifically for French Immersion. This resource focuses on phonological and phonemic awareness skills. Aligned to the continuum of skill development as opposed to grade.	Early & Middle French Immersion 4-8: Choose the measures and the frequency of use based on student needs.
TDSB French Immersion Phonics & Decoding Inventory	Early French Immersion K-3	TDSB French Immersion Phonics & Decoding Inventory (Primary Division) is designed specifically for French Immersion. This resource focuses on phonics and decoding skills. It is aligned	Early French Immersion K-3: Choose the measures and the frequency of use based on student needs.

French			
Assessment/ Tool	Grades/ Division	Purpose	Recommended Timelines
(Primary Division)		to the continuum of skill development as opposed to grade.	
TDSB French Immersion Phonics & Decoding Inventory (Junior/Intermediate Division)	French Immersion 4-8	TDSB French Immersion Phonics & Decoding Inventory (Junior/Intermediate Division) is designed specifically for French Immersion. This resource focuses on phonics and decoding skills. It is aligned to the continuum of skill development as opposed to grade.	Early & Middle French Immersion 4-8: Choose the measures and the frequency of use based on student needs.
À pas de géant (version française de Leaps and Bounds)	Early French Immersion Gr 1 – 8 & Middle French Immersion Gr 4-8	À pas de géant (version française de Leaps and Bounds) identifies significant gaps in understanding to enable teachers to build on what students know, to close critical gaps. The resources help teachers make informed instructional decisions and offer strategies to address learning gaps.	Early & Middle French Immersion: Choose the measures and the frequency of use based on student needs.
Portrait Mathématiques (Ontario) (version française de Nelson Math Pre-Assessment)	Early French Immersion Gr 1 – 8 & Middle French Immersion Gr 4-8	Portrait Mathématiques (Ontario) (version française de Nelson Math Pre-Assessment) is designed to support pre-assessment in procedural knowledge and conceptual understandings for the grade-specific curriculum. The resource offers activities for the next steps for instruction, gap closing, or intervention.	Early & Middle French Immersion: Choose the measures and the frequency of use based on student needs.

Mathematics			
Assessment/ Tool	Grades/ Division	Purpose	Recommended Timelines
What To Look For: Understanding and Developing Student Thinking in Early Numeracy	K-3	What to Look For: Understanding and Developing Student Thinking in Early Numeracy is a professional learning resource with a developmental continuum for early numeracy and sample tasks that can be used to gauge students' numeracy skills and plan effective next steps.	Use at the beginning of the school year and as needed.



<b>Mathematics</b>			
<b>Assessment/ Tool</b>	<b>Grades/ Division</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Recommended Timelines</b>
		<p>What to Look For contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research-based developmental continua for addition and subtraction in early numeracy</li> <li>• Descriptions of strategies, along with access to videos of students displaying those strategies</li> <li>• Games to push student thinking forward</li> </ul> <p>Additional professional learning resources, activities, and assessment details are available on the internal TDSB Math for Educators website.</p>	
What to Look For 2: Understanding and Developing Student Thinking in Multiplicative Reasoning	3-5	<p>What to Look For 2: Understanding and Developing Student Thinking in Multiplicative Reasoning is a professional learning resource with a developmental continuum for multiplication and division, as well as lessons and tasks that can be used to gauge students' multiplicative reasoning skills and plan effective next steps.</p> <p>What to Look For contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research-based developmental continua for multiplication and division for junior-grade students</li> <li>• Descriptions of strategies, along with access to videos of students displaying those strategies</li> <li>• Games to push student thinking forward</li> <li>• Additional lessons and assessments</li> </ul>	Use at the beginning of the school year and as needed.
Rethinking Fractions: 8 Core Concepts to Support Assessment and Learning	1-12	Rethinking Fractions provides teachers with assessments to uncover students' understanding and possible misconceptions of fractions understanding via the use of targeted, field-tested questions and recommended next steps that reveal student understanding and respond to student	Use at the beginning of a unit or block of learning.



Mathematics			
Assessment/ Tool	Grades/ Division	Purpose	Recommended Timelines
		<p>needs through precise and differentiated tasks and instruction.</p> <p>Additional professional learning resources, activities, and assessment details are available on the internal <a href="#">TDSB Math for Educators website</a>.</p>	
Math Pre-Assessment (Nelson)	1-8	<p>Math Pre-Assessment provides short, whole-class diagnostic assessments to determine the procedural knowledge and conceptual understanding of students ahead of specific grade-level learning units.</p> <p>Math Pre-Assessment contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmental trajectories that provide a picture of math development</li> <li>• Diagnostic assessments help to identify where a student is on the developmental trajectory</li> <li>• Analysis charts to score pre-assessments and next steps for instruction, remediation, and intervention</li> </ul>	Use at the beginning of a unit or block of learning.
Mathology (Pearson)	K-9	<p>Mathology is an instructional program that provides ongoing assessment opportunities within games, books, and other learning activities, driven by the big ideas in mathematics.</p> <p>Mathology contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnostic activities that begin with an initial lesson or readiness tasks, based on the previous year's expectations, to support instructional decisions</li> <li>• Mathology "Little Books," activity kits, and math mats to support mathematics learning in different modes</li> </ul> <p>French: Mathologie currently supports K-Grade 8 students</p>	Use at the beginning of a unit or block of learning.

<b>Mathematics</b>			
<b>Assessment/ Tool</b>	<b>Grades/ Division</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Recommended Timelines</b>
MathUP Classroom (Rubicon)	K- 9	<p>MathUP Classroom is a comprehensive, online, K–8 instructional solution that helps build teachers’ knowledge and understanding of mathematics.</p> <p>MathUP Classroom contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnostic assessments using open and closed tasks for each topic</li> <li>• Activities, online games, lessons, and ongoing assessments for learning</li> </ul> <p>French: K-Grade 6 materials are currently available</p>	Use at the beginning of a unit or block of learning.
Core Mathematics Resources	K-12	<p>Trillium-listed core mathematics resources include materials to assess students’ prerequisite skills, concepts, and vocabulary.</p> <p>Core resources contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnostic assessments for every chapter or unit (e.g. Getting Ready sections).</li> <li>• Additional practice resources</li> </ul> <p>French: Core mathematics resources are available</p>	Use at the beginning of a unit or block of learning.
Knowledgehook	K-10	<p>Knowledgehook is an instructional guidance system that leverages formative assessment in a game-based environment to provide insights into student mathematical learning and intervention materials to support enhanced understanding of math concepts.</p> <p>Knowledgehook contains:</p> <p>“Warm-Ups,” diagnostic assessments that cover expectations from the previous grade and provide teachers with information to determine the readiness of students for particular concepts</p> <p>Differentiated activities to assess students’ understanding using visual prompts and</p>	Use at the beginning of a unit or block of learning.

Mathematics			
Assessment/ Tool	Grades/ Division	Purpose	Recommended Timelines
		<p>virtual manipulatives</p> <p>Teacher supports, including, a background document to build teachers' math content knowledge for teaching, a misconception chart to support addressing specific errors, and intervention questions to consolidate new learning.</p> <p>French: Grades 3-10 activities and materials are available</p> <p>Knowledgehook is a district-provided tool. Click here to access Knowledgehook,</p>	

ESL/ELD			
Assessment/ Tool	Grades/ Division	Purpose	Recommended Timelines
<a href="#">TDSB Initial Assessment</a>	ESL/ ELD – Elementary and Secondary	The TDSB Initial Assessment enables teachers to provide the appropriate programming, resources, modifications and/or adaptations for MLLs based on STEP level. The TDSB Initial Assessment secondary is aligned with ESL courses of study. It supports secondary schools with ESL programming and placement decisions.	The assessment is used once upon enrollment of newcomer students (Ideally completed within 6 weeks of arrival).
<a href="#">STEPS to English Language Proficiency</a>	ESL/ELD Elementary and Secondary	STEPS to English Language Proficiency is a framework for assessing and monitoring English language learners' language acquisition and literacy development across the Ontario curriculum (oral, reading, writing).	Grade 1 to 12 initial diagnostics and ongoing assessments at reporting intervals.

# Assessments by Professional Support Services (PSS)

All recommendations for an individual assessment by PSS staff comes through the School Support Team (SST). The SST also considers requests for assessments from parents/legal guardians, qualifying students (of age and with the cognitive capacity to understand), or outside agencies.

School-based community services are offered to students, either in-person or remotely:

- School-Based Rehab Services (Speech Therapy and OT/PT) services provided by the respective Community Treatment Centre (i.e., Children's Treatment Network or Grandview Kids)
- Nursing services for students presenting with medical needs of specific eligibility criteria as determined and provided through Ontario Health at Home (OHaH)

School-based community services staff follow the safety procedures and protocols of TDSB and may access a safe, private space in schools to provide services. A recommendation for individual assessment requires the agreement of parents/legal guardians or qualifying students. PSS staff will contact parents/legal guardians or qualifying students to seek informed consent before beginning the assessment. This ensures shared understanding of the reasons for the assessment, the nature of the assessment, the risks, benefits and possible outcomes of the assessment, as well as how information from the assessment will be managed and shared.

Throughout the PSS assessment process, parents/legal guardians or qualifying students are involved and at the conclusion are offered verbal and/or written feedback about the assessment findings. The services of a cultural or communication facilitator will be offered where necessary. Written reports are provided to parents/legal guardians or qualifying students at, or close to the time of, verbal feedback.

## Child and Youth Services

Child and Youth Workers (CYWs) and Child and Youth Counsellors (CYCs) are members of PSS working in the school/program community. They collaborate with teachers, special education staff and other school community members to identify strengths and needs and offer professional support for students and families. They participate in In-School Team (IST) and School Support Team (SST) meetings by contributing specialized knowledge. Services are provided through a referral process or through the Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) decision for placement in a classroom with CYW support. A signed referral and the informed consent of the parents/legal guardians or of a student who is 12 years of age or older is always required.

CYWs and CYCs provide specialized support to students. Their work is culturally responsive, strength-based and collaborative. Services may include counselling and interventions on matters of mental health and well-being, crisis de-escalation, social and life skill development, behavioural support, and school avoidance. An assessment informed by developmental, culturally relevant, ecological, and strength-based perspectives is completed to identify areas for programming. CYWs and CYCs build therapeutic relationships and set clear goals to ensure all students find their own path to success.

Team members are supervised by a principal for operational/day-to-day matters and their managers on professional matters. All Child and Youth Services staff are expected to adhere to the [Code of Ethics](#) of the Ontario Association of Child and Youth Care and the TDSB Child and Youth Services Standards of Practice. The required qualification for CYWs is a Child and Youth Care Diploma, while CYCs are required to have a Degree in Child and Youth Care or Social Work.

Child and Youth Services may include:

- Use of daily life events to develop skills, understanding, and goals through genuine co-created relationships
- Assessment of strengths and areas of need
- Provision of social and life skill building programming
- Discussions with students to establish relationships, identify strengths and areas of growth and encourage student voice
- A review of the student's school records [with parent/legal guardian or student consent (if older than 12 years)]
- Classroom observations
- Discussion with family to obtain relevant history and information about current strengths and areas of growth at home
- Collaboration with school personnel and other professional support services colleagues
- Contact with external agencies and service providers
- Group and individual short-term counselling
- Behaviour management support

## **Management of Records**

Records of identified strengths and needs, goals, interventions, programming and supports are maintained in a confidential file of Child and Youth Services as per the TDSB Child and Youth Services Standards of Practice. Rather than an assessment report, Child and Youth Services staff develop student goals, proactive strategies, and programming to meet student needs and enhance student success based on assessment outcomes.

CYCs complete a summary report at the conclusion of support. This is maintained in the confidential Child and Youth Services file and in the Ontario Student Record (OSR), with consent. CYWs on the Autism Services Team also complete reports. These reports are maintained in the Special Education File, the confidential Child and Youth Services file and with consent in the OSR.

## **Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy (OT/PT)**

Occupational Therapists/Physiotherapists (OT/PT) collaborate with educators to provide consultative, culturally relevant and responsive therapeutic programming support and identity-affirming, anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and anti-ableist accommodation strategies for students with physical and/or developmental disabilities, and/or for students presenting with safety/accessibility needs that impede access to programming and/or curriculum. Occupational Therapists/Physiotherapists provide timely tiered support, build capacity and provide professional learning for educators, in addition to conducting individualized assessments providing relevant neurodiverse and identity-affirming recommendations, where necessary. OT/PT recommendations may include, but are not limited to, providing strategies to support students' adaptive/daily life skills, social and play skills, executive function skills, behavioural function, pre-vocational and community living skills, transitional skills, and gross motor, fine motor and sensory motor development skills. They can provide physical-management, sensory-motor, and programming recommendations, and assist schools with referrals to, and adherence to medical recommendations from Ontario Health at Home (OHaH), as needed.

## **Referrals for OT/PT Assessments**

OT/PT Services assessments are accessed through the SST, where OT/PT staff may attend. Alternatively, OT/PT services assessments may also arise through consultation with the attending Special Education and Inclusion Consultant after the SST meeting.

The referral and assessment processes require the informed consent of the parents/legal guardians and/or students 18 years of age or older who possess the cognitive capacity for decision making. This ensures shared understanding of the reasons for the assessment, the nature of the assessment, the risks, benefits and

possible outcomes of the assessment, as well as how information from the assessment will be managed, implemented, and shared.

Assessments are conducted under the [Regulated Health Professions Act](#) by either Occupational Therapists or Physiotherapists registered in the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario and College of Physiotherapists of Ontario, respectively.

OT/PT services assessments may include, but are not limited to:

- A review of the student's school records
- Classroom observations
- An interview with parents/legal guardians and relevant caregivers to obtain developmental and culturally relevant and responsive family and medical history
- An interview with school personnel, the student, and support service colleagues
- Contact with hospitals, rehabilitation centres, and community agencies
- Provision of specific school-based identity-affirming recommendations pertaining to gross/fine motor function, mobility (school/community), sensory motor/behaviour, mental health and well-being, visual motor integration and perception skills, social and play skills, executive function skills, and pre-vocational and community living skills
- Assessment and recommendations to promote safety and culturally responsive independence with activities of daily living skills (e.g., feeding, dressing, personal care), where applicable
- Assessment for equipment needs such as Special Equipment Amount (SEA) and/or supporting community access to the Assistive Devices Program (ADP)

## **Management of OT/PT Assessment Results**

The results of OT/PT Services assessments are communicated with parents/legal guardians through an interview and/or a written report - utilizing translational and/or communication facilitators where required. Written reports are provided to the parents/legal guardians and/or students 18 years of age or older who demonstrate the cognitive ability to understand at the time of verbal/written feedback. Reports may include, but are not limited to, recommendations for physical management (e.g., mobility, seating and positioning for function), activities of daily living skills, motor skills, executive function skills, behavioural function, social and play skills, pre-vocational and community living skills, physical and mental health and wellness, and sensory integration all considered with reverence through an identity-affirming, culturally responsive and relevant, anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and anti-ableist lens. As outlined during the informed consent process, the results may be discussed with relevant teachers and professional support staff for educational planning and programming purposes.



Records from OT/PT services assessments are kept in confidential files, which are maintained in accordance with the regulations and provisions of the Professional Colleges and the [Regulated Health Professions Act](#). Locations of copies of the report are discussed with parents/legal guardians. The consent of parents/legal guardians is required for referral to community services for which the student may be eligible (e.g., Local Hospital Authority, School-Based Rehabilitation Services) or for a student's TDSB OT/PT report to be released to an outside agency.

## **Community Resources**

For any in-school nursing support, the school team refers to the [Ontario Health at Home - School Health Support Services](#) (formerly known as the Home and Community Care Support Services and the LHIN).

For any in-home support required, families may self-refer to the [Ontario Health at Home - Home Care](#). Students with significant medical needs may also access [Holland Bloorview Kids' Rehabilitation Hospital](#) for clinical services within the community; a referral must be generated by a family physician or dentist to access the medical or dental services at this site.

The Ontario Health at Home Community Services also offers Mental Health and Addictions Nursing support; these referrals are generated by school staff.

## **Psychological Services**

Psychological Services staff includes Psychologists, Psychological Associates and Psychoeducational Consultants, who consult with teachers and School Support Teams (SST) about effective classroom programming to address socio-emotional, behavioural and/or learning needs. After going through the Board's referral process, and with informed consent, they conduct a comprehensive individual Psychological Assessment of students' learning, social-emotional, and behavioural functioning to diagnose disorders, identify students' learning strengths and areas of growth, and recommend effective intervention strategies. They also have a role on Identification Placement and Review Committees (IPRCs) in identifying exceptionalities and recommending program placement.

### **Referrals for Psychological Assessments**

The purpose of a psychological assessment is to better understand the learning, socio-emotional and/or behavioural strengths and areas of growth of a student, in order to help in the delivery of the most appropriate programming.

When a child demonstrates difficulties in the classroom, an In-School Support team meeting is held with classroom teachers to provide strategies in the classroom that may be effective. If these strategies are not effective, the School Support Team meeting, including the professional supports available, convene to discuss the current strengths and areas of need for the student.

Psychological assessments are accessed through the School Support Team (SST) (which includes a Psychological Services professional) using a referral process that requires the informed consent of the parents/legal guardians of a student under the age of 18, or of a student who is 18 years or older and has the appropriate level of cognitive ability to understand to what they are consenting. The informed consent process ensures a shared understanding of the reasons for the assessment, the nature of the assessment, the risks, benefits and possible outcomes of the assessment, as well as how information from the assessment will be managed and shared.

The staff conducting the assessment is either a member of the [College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario](#) (CPBAO) or works under the direct supervision of a member of the CPBAO. Psychological Services staff are governed by the [Psychology Act](#), the [Regulated Health Professions Act](#), the [Health Care Consent Act](#), the [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(MFIPPA\)](#), and the Education Act when working in a school board.

A psychological assessment may include the following:

- A review of the student's school records
- Interviews with the parents/legal guardians and student to obtain developmental, family, and medical history
- Interviews with parents/legal guardians, school staff and the student
- Observations in structured and unstructured settings
- Administration of appropriate standardized and informal measures of the student's cognitive/intellectual abilities, academic skills, processing skills, adaptive behaviours, and social-emotional functioning to assess learning strengths and areas of growth. Other tests as needed to determine sources of learning difficulties and to identify strengths may be necessary.

Wait times for a psychological assessment can range from several months to up to a year. Assessments are provided for students according to prioritized needs within each school.

## **Management of Psychological Assessment Results**

As outlined during the informed consent process, the results and recommendations of a psychological assessment are discussed at a feedback meeting with the parents/legal guardians or student (where appropriate) and with staff of the TDSB who are directly

involved with the student. An interpreter will be offered and arranged, if necessary. A copy of any written report is provided to the parents/legal guardians and/or student, at or close to the time of verbal feedback meeting. A copy is also given to the school, to be placed in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR).

The original written report, assessment measures, notes, and other information obtained during the assessment are maintained in the confidential files of Psychological Services in accordance with the [Psychology Act](#) and the [Regulated Health Professions Act](#). An electronic copy of the report is uploaded to a confidential records management system within the TDSB.

Psychological Services will not release any information to persons or facilities outside of the TDSB without written consent, except as may be required by law.

## **Reviews of External Reports**

TDSB psychology staff review all relevant psychological and/or medical reports completed externally that have been provided to the school by parents/legal guardians. Following the review, psychology staff summarizes the findings in a Consultation Note. The purpose of this process is to document that psychology staff have read the external report so as to inform next steps for school staff.

Once a parent/legal guardian provides the school team with a copy of an external assessment report, the school administrator will generate a permission form to be signed by the parent/legal guardian, giving permission for the principal to share the report with the TDSB psychology staff, and to allow the psychology staff to review the report and provide written and verbal consultation to the school team.

A decision will be made by the school administrator as to whether the team will need to convene the School Support Team (SST) to discuss the assessment report and recommendations, and any appropriate next steps, such as whether to proceed to an IPRC.

A copy of the Consultation Note will be provided to the parent/legal guardian, and a copy is placed in the student's OSR. The Consultation Note and a copy of the external report are maintained in the confidential files of Psychological Services in accordance with the [Psychology Act](#) and the [Regulated Health Professions Act](#).

## **Social Work & Attendance Services**

School Social Workers are members of Professional Support Services (PSS) and are closely affiliated with schools to provide mental health assessment and intervention support to students, families and school staff. School Social Workers participate in School Support Team (SST) meetings, contributing specialized knowledge, culturally responsive and relevant practices and resources, and mental health and wellness

strategies to support student well-being. Social work assessments and interventions help to support and identify mental health, psychosocial and emotional factors that may impact student well-being.

## **Referrals for Social Work Assessments**

A referral to Social Work Services can be initiated through the SST or, in consultation with the social worker for crisis or other imminent need. Social work assessments require the informed consent of the parents/legal guardians of students under the age of 18. In consultation with a Social Work Manager, a student who is 12 years of age or older may be able to consent to the social work referral.

The informed consent process ensures a shared understanding of the reasons for the assessment, the nature of the assessment, the risks, benefits and possible outcomes of the assessment and the types of service that may be provided with recommendations.

TDSB School Social Workers possess a Master of Social Work degree, with a minimum of three years' experience working with children, youth and families. All Ontario Social Workers are registered with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers and adhere to a set of [professional ethics and standards of practice](#).

There is typically no wait time for social work since service is initiated as soon as possible upon receipt of a referral for service.

## **Management of Social Work Assessment Results**

As outlined during the informed consent process, recommendations and reports are discussed with the parents/legal guardians and/or students (dependent on the nature of the referral, the age of the student or where professionally determined as appropriate by the social worker). With permission, relevant information is shared with school personnel and, where applicable, professional staff from community agencies.

[Standards of Practice of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers](#) regulating Social Work records are adhered to. Registered Social Workers ensure that records are current, accurate, contain relevant information about students/families, and are managed in a manner that protects the student/family privacy. All Social Work records are stored in confidential Social Work files in secure locations.

## **Speech Language Pathology Services**

Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) offer specialized knowledge and resources to aid deeper understanding of the connections between oral language, early literacy, speech and social communication development to educators, students and parents within the TDSB community. SLP Services provide a collaborative, tiered service

delivery approach to best serve the observed speech, language, early literacy and social communication needs across the system. This evidence-based approach to service delivery allows SLPs to maximize impact by providing both prevention and individualized support for students with special education needs and disabilities. Tier 1 (School-Wide Support) includes professional learning opportunities targeted at building capacity in both educators and parents related to school or system wide related needs. Tier 2 (Group Support) includes in-class support, whether whole class or small group co-instruction. School principals, in consultation with their school assigned SLP, may request generalized tier 1 or 2 supports without having to identify individual student concerns and/or proceed through the In-School Support Team (IST) and School Support Team (SST) processes.

## **Referrals for Speech and Language Assessments**

If concerns cannot be addressed through tier 1 or 2 SLP supports or the IST, schools may proceed to the SST for consideration of tier 3, individualized, SLP services. A referral for tier 3 SLP support is initiated at the SST, with a process involving the informed consent of the parents/legal guardians, or of the student 18 years of age or older. The informed consent process ensures everyone has a clear understanding of the purpose and nature of the SLP assessment, as well as any potential risks, benefits, and outcomes. It also outlines the types of services that may be provided to the student and explains how assessment information will be managed and shared.

Assessments are conducted by SLPs, registered in Ontario with the College of Audiologist and Speech Language Pathologist of Ontario ([CASLPO](#)) and under the [Regulated Health Professions Act](#). SLP assessments evaluate a students' communication skills in the areas of oral language (e.g., comprehension, expression, vocabulary, phonological awareness), speech (e.g., articulation, stuttering, voice/resonance), AAC as well as related difficulties in literacy development and functional social communication. Assessments may also include differentiating typical English language learning (ELL, ELD) from language disorders and distinguishing second-language issues (e.g., ELL, ELD) from language disorders.

SLP assessment procedures may include the following:

- A review of the student's school records
- Interviews with parents/legal guardians to obtain developmental, family, and medical history
- Interviews with school personnel and the student
- Classroom observation
- Administration of standardized and/or non-standardized assessments in order to gain an in depth understanding of a student's receptive and expressive language skills, use of augmentative and alternative communication tools,

articulation, fluency, voice skills and reading and writing skills and what strategies or tools best support achievement in the above mentioned areas

- Focused collaboration with educators and parents to design language, literacy, social communication and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) programming to meet the individual student's needs
- Written and/or verbal feedback with educator, parent and, if necessary, the SST
- Referrals to external agencies/services including:
  - School Based Rehabilitation Services (Children's Treatment Network/Grandview) for consideration of speech therapy
  - Surrey Place's Augmentative and Communication Writing Aids Clinic
  - Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital's Communication and Writing Aids Service

SLPs are prioritized to support Tier 3 services for students Kindergarten through Grade 3 who have oral language delays as well as delays or disorders that may affect speech, language, literacy, and social communication development. Average wait times for an assessment vary anywhere from a few months to a year, although the majority of students are seen within six months. Assessments are provided for students according to prioritized needs. The SST determines the priority in which students will be seen relative to the nature and complexity of student need and all referral requests received.

## **Management of Speech Language Pathology Assessment Results**

As outlined during the informed consent process, the results and recommendations of an SLP assessment are discussed at a feedback meeting with the parents/legal guardians and with staff of the TDSB who are directly involved with the student. An interpreter will be offered and arranged, if necessary. A copy of any written report is provided to the parents/legal guardians, at or close to the time of verbal feedback meeting. A copy is also given to the school, to be placed in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR).

The original written report, assessment measures, notes, and other information obtained during the assessment are maintained in the confidential files of SLP Services in accordance with CASLPO's [Records Regulation](#) and the [Regulated Health Professions Act](#). An electronic copy of the report is uploaded to a confidential records management system within the TDSB.

SLP Services will not release any information to persons or facilities outside of the TDSB without written consent, except as may be required by law.

## Sharing of Professional Assessment Information and Privacy

The [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(MFIPPA\)](#) requires that Professional Support Services (PSS) staff receive explicit written or verbal consent from parents/legal guardians or the student (when of age and with the cognitive capacity to understand), to share information that they collect with school staff (e.g., educational assistants, teachers, principals). This permission is discussed during the informed consent process.

The sharing of assessment findings or information with persons outside of the TDSB will only occur with the expressed written permission of the parents/legal guardians, or qualifying student, except as required by law (as per the [Personal Health Information Protection Act](#)). Further information about the privacy rights of parents/guardians/caregivers is detailed in a [PHIPA Privacy Statement](#), posted on the Board's public website under Professional Support Services.

The TDSB Policy [PR 677 Recorded Information Management](#) requires that PSS files are retained for a minimum of ten years after graduation age (which in most cases are either 18 or 21). This requirement is in accordance with professional guidelines.

Students who are referred for an assessment are often seen within the school year in which the request is made. Referrals not seen by the conclusion of the school year will be prioritized on a waitlist for assessment in the following school year. A variety of factors, such as length of time on the waitlist, nature of the referral question, age of the student and urgency for assessment results, will be used to prioritize referrals on a waitlist.