

Inclusion/Special Education

What is our goal?

Each school will welcome all students, providing an open and inclusive learning environment that recognizes that most students can be served effectively within their community school. To continue to provide intensive support programs for students with more specialized learning needs.

How will we achieve it?

- Build capacity of educators to support students with special needs in the most inclusive learning environment and to create and use effective Individual Education Plans (September to June)
- Establish Inclusion Coaches in each Learning Centre to increase teacher capacity so instruction is responsive and personalized to the strengths and needs of all students (Fall 2019)
- Identify learning needs of classroom teachers so effective and engaging professional learning opportunities can be designed and delivered through a variety of models that include: informal study groups, collaborative professional development sessions, online and multimedia format, exploration classrooms, and school-based Professional Learning Communities (ongoing)
- Support students to develop advocacy skills to know their strengths and needs and understand strategies that support their learning
- Support and leverage evidence-based practices through the support of learning networks of educators (N4L) engaged in collaborative learning focused on increasing capacity to support inclusive classrooms (October to June)
- Research and review the effectiveness of our Intensive Support Programs and Home School Programs (Grades 4-8) focusing on student outcomes (September to June)
- Study the recommendations in the Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy "Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities" in order to incorporate these recommendations into practice

How will we know we are successful?

- The achievement and well-being gap will decrease for our students with special needs while expectations remain high for all students because we are providing access to the programs, resources, and learning opportunities that all students require.
- A decrease in the number of students in Intensive Support Programs in Grades 4 to 8 where appropriate.
- Schools are better supported in their efforts to create inclusive learning environments monitored through school visits by Superintendents of Education as well as school-based student learning data.
- Participation in network learning (N4L) is increased and teachers feel more confident in supporting the needs of all students effectively in the classroom.
- Progress will be measured through student achievement data, student and parent surveys, Student Census data, focus groups, participation rates, educator surveys, Superintendent of Education school visits, professional learning feedback.

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What is our goal?

To strengthen collaboration with parents and engage effectively in the decision making process regarding their child's program, placement and well-being.

How will we achieve it?

- Support Principals and teachers to engage parents collaboratively and effectively in the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) process and development of Individual Education Plans (IEP) (ongoing)
- Review the effectiveness of the Special Education Program Recommendation Committee (SEPRC) (Winter 2019)
- Create an internal process, aligned with the Parent Concern Protocol, to deal with any conflicts and issues (Winter 2019)
- Review the effectiveness of school-based Special Education support roles, school teams and system staff in order to support students and parents effectively (Winter 2019)
- Enhance communications with parents to improve our effectiveness and invite feedback (ongoing)

How will we know we are successful?

- The achievement and well-being gap will decrease for students with special needs while expectations remain high for all students because we are providing access to the programs, resources and learning opportunities that students require.
- Parents feel supported and report a higher level of collaborative engagement.
- IEPs are written collaboratively with classroom teacher, Special Education staff, and parents to better address the necessary supports to address student strengths and needs.
- Educator participation rates in network learning is increased and this learning is shared across the system.
- Progress will be measured through school Climate Surveys, teacher surveys, program reviews, focus groups, Student Achievement Data, Student Census Data and parent surveys.

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What is our goal?

To increase employment opportunities and outcomes for all students with Low Incidence Exceptionalities (Intellectual Disabilities, Physical Disability, Low Vision, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Health/Medical)

How will we achieve it?

- Review data from 2017 Student Census and other sources to better understand the post-secondary pathways of students with special education needs (Fall 2019)
- Complete an inventory of employers, within our own system and beyond, identifying those that can accommodate students with various disabilities (e.g., intellectual, blind/low vision, deaf/hard of hearing, physical disability), and those that are located at an accessible site (Fall/Winter 2019)
- Support school leaders and liaise with community partners to explore creative ways of increasing the number of students served through the Special Education Experiential Learning Program and continue to seek out opportunities for additional partnerships with business and various levels of government (ongoing)
- Leverage the Continuous Intake Co-op (CIC) Program and investigate additional co-op opportunities for students with Intellectual Disabilities (ongoing)
- Communicate the findings of our initial efforts by January 2019 so that realistic and concrete targets can be created (January 2019)

How will we know we are successful?

- More students with Special Education needs are employed upon completion of secondary school.
- Co-op program options are increased for Students with Special Education needs.