

WHO ARE OUR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN THE TDSB? A DESCRIPTIVE OVERVIEW 2013-14

Who are Students with Special Needs?

Students with Special Needs have unique strengths and needs (behavioural, communication, intellectual and physical) that may require more specialized or intensive programs and supports.

How are Students with Special Needs Identified?

1. Through a formal Identification, Placement, and Review Committee, or **IPRC**. Students are identified into one or more of 14 “exceptionalities”.
2. “**Non-identified**” students may not be formally identified through an IPRC, but are identified through the School Support Team and receive programming through Special Education. These students should have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), although some do not.
3. Some students are identified by their teachers and the School Support Team, and have a current **IEP**. They are receiving direct assistance in the classroom, rather than in a Special Education program.

How Many Students with Special Needs are in the TDSB?

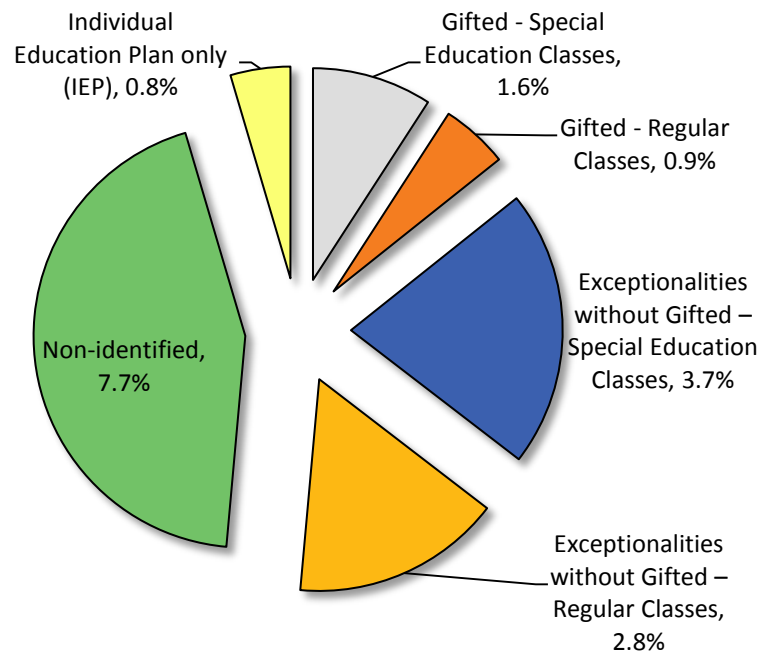
In 2013-14, 43,580 students out of 248,343 (**17.5% of the TDSB**) were classified as students with Special Needs (see Figure 1):

- **Gifted – Special Education Classes:** 4,078 students (**1.6%**) (taking 50% or more of their classes in Special Education).
- **Gifted – Regular Classes:** 2,315 students (**0.9%**) (taking 50% or more of their classes in the TDSB regular day classrooms).
- **Exceptionalities without Gifted – Special Education Classes:** 9,173 students (**3.7%**) (IPRC’d as one of the 13 Exceptionalities without Gifted, and taking 50% or more of their classes in Special Education).



- **Exceptionalities without Gifted – Regular Classes:** 6,845 students (**2.8%**) (IPRC'd as one of the 13 Exceptionalities without Gifted, and taking 50% or more of their classes in the TDSB regular day classrooms).
- **Non-identified:** 19,239 students (**7.7%**) (i.e., no IPRC but receiving Special Education programming during the 2013-14 school year).
- **Individual Education Plan only (IEP):** 1,930 students (**0.8%**) (i.e., had an IEP and were receiving direct assistance in the classroom, rather than programming in Special Education).

Figure 1: TDSB Special Needs, 2013-14



Selected Key Findings

- There are 14 Ministry Special Education exceptionalities. The majority of the TDSB IPRC students are in these five categories: Learning Disability (LD), Giftedness, Mild Intellectual Disability (MID), Autism, and Developmental Disability (DD).
- Males (49%) and females (51%) are nearly equally represented in students without Special Needs. However, nearly two thirds of students with Special Needs (64%) are *male*.
- Students with Special Needs are *less likely* to be born outside of Canada (16%), compared to students without Special Needs (25%).
- Looking at a variety of achievement results, Gifted students achieve at a much *higher level* than the TDSB average. On the other hand, all students with Special Needs excluding Gifted (Exceptionalities without Gifted, Non-identified, IEP only) achieve at a much *lower level* than the TDSB average. To illustrate, Figure 2 shows the outcomes for the EQAO Grade 6 Mathematics assessment administered in May 2014 along with the outcomes for the EQAO Grade 6 Mathematics assessment administered in May 2006.
- Many students who received full-time Special Education programming in Grade 8 are integrated into regular secondary classes when they enter Grade 9. Many of these students however *remain highly at-risk* and their progress should be monitored over time to determine their long-term outcomes.



Figure 2: EQAO Grade 6 Mathematics Results, Students at Level 3/4, 2005-06 and 2013-14

