

TAB 5

Program Priorities

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The Context for TDSB

Building innovation in the program area and developing program priorities is an evolving process that supports what students need to be successful both at school and beyond. Equity of access and opportunity, fair distribution of specialized schools and programs, and program viability continue to be drivers that underpin the work done in the Program area.

As a diverse system with approximately 233,250 students (October 31, 2022), it is essential that students see themselves reflected in their schools and their learning. Along with that, we need to create learning spaces that are effective, respectful, and celebrate and honour students as well as their families and their diverse communities.

Multi-Year Strategic Plan and Vision for Learning

The Multi-Year Strategic Plan approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2018 sets direction and identifies five system goals:

- Transform student learning
- Create a culture for student and staff well-being
- Provide equity of access to learning opportunities for all students
- Allocate human and financial resources strategically to support student needs
- Build strong relationships and partnerships within school communities to support student learning and well-being

The Multi-Year Strategic Plan is a high-level statement of intent for the TDSB and drives all other work as outlined in our Vision for Learning and Service and connects to Leadership, the School Improvement Process, Service Excellence and Governance. Together, these strategies set direction and provide support for how we work but the real change happens when each unique school and each unique department examines their specific data, determines actions for their improvement, measures impact and communicates progress. The entire system improves when classrooms, schools, and departments focus their improvement efforts within the context of system direction.

The Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy is an important part of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan. It advances the system goal to “provide equity of access to learning opportunities for all students”.

The Multi-Year Strategic Plan is currently being reviewed. Given that the current plan is nearing the end of its fourth year of implementation, it is time to collaboratively reflect on what has been achieved and which commitments will require more time to address fully (i.e., eliminating

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disparities and disproportionate outcomes for students who have been historically marginalized, equity of access, and ensuring a culture of human rights for everyone).

Staff is proposing that it is time to begin planning for the renewal of the next strategic plan to reflect the ongoing and new realities of the current educational landscape, including:

- Indigenous Education
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, 2015
- Pandemic recovery and student, family and staff re-engagement
- The Board’s current financial situation; and
- The recommendations in the “Results of the Self-Assessment Tool” by Charles Ungerleider.

Integrated Equity Framework

A key component of the Vision for Learning is the Integrated Equity Framework, a major directional framework that sets out a series of coordinated, strategic actions to focus and align every facet of the Board’s work including policies, practices, program, culture through an equity lens, and anchor all of it within a coherent, comprehensive framework of Equity. This equity action plan provides us focus and ensures that the work we are doing at the system level has a direct impact in classrooms. A large part of this work is having conversations and dialogue as well as understanding how bias and perspective can create or remove obstacles.

The TDSB is committed to providing programs through a process that understands the central role of student voice in creating equity, inclusion, and enhanced learning cultures.

Program Priorities

The following program priorities will be discussed in more detail below:

- Secondary Program Review
- Building the Workforce of Tomorrow
- French Language Review
- Elementary and Secondary Alternative Schools
- Elementary Academies
- Indigenous Education
- Special Education and Inclusion

Secondary Program Review

How Do We Support Secondary Program Review?

Staff conducted the Secondary Program Review to develop a new vision for secondary program and access which will include fewer schools, stronger programming, and increased access to courses that support all pathways, including apprenticeship and the workplace. Further, the vision supports the revitalization of neighbourhood secondary schools with a breadth of programs, many of which, over time, have experienced significant enrolment declines.

Current and projected enrolments at the secondary panel do not support the number of facilities currently in operation. The vision addresses both under and over-utilized schools since changes to any delivery model will have some degree of impact on all schools in a geographic cluster.

2022-2023 Update

- Eight Pupil Accommodation Reviews were included in the most recent LTPAS document to take place over a 3-year period.
- The moratorium on Pupil Accommodation Reviews remains in place. The eight Pupil Accommodation Reviews are now slated to be conducted over the next two years.

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Should the moratorium continue through the 2023-24 school year, an application for exemption will be considered.

- The Secondary Program Review also includes the implementation of changes to policy and procedure.
 - The revised Out-of-Area Attendance Policy and the new Student Interest Program Policy were implemented, governing applications for admission in September 2023.
 - The Procedure associated with the Student Interest Program Policy (PR612) is currently being drafted based on the learning that has come from the first year of implementation.
 - These new and updated policies reflect the Board’s commitment to equity, inclusion, and human rights, and support the vision for strong neighbourhood schools. Students from the four identified underserved racial groups (First Nations, Métis and Inuit in addition to Black, Middle Eastern and Latina/Latino/Latinx) make up just over 25% of incoming students in all Central Student Interest Programs.
- York Memorial Collegiate Institute and George Harvey Collegiate Institute are now consolidated in the George Harvey Collegiate Institute building until the completion of the rebuild of York Memorial Collegiate Institute in September 2026. Proposed new procedures regarding a mandatory Implementation Team to support any future consolidation of two school communities have been recommended and approved by the Board of Trustees on June 14, 2023.
- Models for visibly promoting Technical and Commercial schools as viable and competitive options for all students in the board, within the constraints of the current website, are being developed. These models support the review of legacy technical and commercial school boundaries that remain in some parts of the city. Due to the extreme enrolment pressures at Northern Secondary School, the Commercial Boundaries are being dissolved in the Fall of 2023.

Next Steps

- The landscape for secondary schools and programs across the City may experience a shift over time as the revised Out-of-Area Attendance and Student Interest Programs policies take effect.
- There are several action items that will occur over the 2023-24 school year to support the implementation of the new policies.

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- Changes to Central Student Interest Program offerings:
 - The six CyberARTS programs were brought under the larger umbrella of Arts Central Student Interest programs for the fall 2023 application cycle
 - PARTs were completed in the Spring of 2023 and two new Secondary Arts-focus programs were established. The first cohort of Grade 9 students will apply in the fall of 2023 for admission in September 2024.
 - To improve equity of access, eight new Secondary Math, Science and Technology programs will be available for September 2024 admission. Many programs were previously offered as local programs that will now be available to applicants from across the city.

- Work to support the development and strengthening of programming available in local schools across the city:
 - Twelve new local Math, Science and Technology programs are being supported for September 2024.
 - An interactive listing of all Arts offerings will be available online. Students, parents/guardians and caregivers will be able to learn more about the specific art forms offered at each school at each grade.

- Staff will continue to undertake program coherence studies for 2023-24. These studies will ensure that Student Interest Programs meet the criteria outlined in the policy. Additionally, the program coherence studies will support the review of delivered curriculum through a lens of equity, ensuring that content is culturally relevant and reflective of the students in the TDSB. The study for the Elite Athlete programs was started June 2023 and recommendations will be brought forward to the Director of Education in the 2023-2024 school year. The following programs will be reviewed in Year 2:
 - International Baccalaureate
 - CISCO/Nortel (currently a local program)
 - Law in Action Within Schools (LAWS) (currently a local program)
 - Math, Science and Technology – deferred to year 3
 - Professional Learning plans have been established and will continue for schools offering Math, Science and Technology programs. A Learning plan will be initiated for the schools offering Arts-focus programs (Elementary and Secondary).

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Building the Workforce of Tomorrow

The Premier's "Highly Skilled Workforce Report" of 2016 made recommendations on how the province can build on its world-class skills, education and training systems to prepare Ontario's current and future workforce for the technology and knowledge-based jobs of today and tomorrow.

The report, which is still relevant today, includes several recommendations for education and industry partners. The following recommendations from the report are specifically related to education:

- Building stronger partnerships between educators and employers to drive solutions for skills and talent development, and for experiential learning;
- Increasing access to job market information;
- Expanding opportunities for learning by experience by funding more placements so that every student completes at least one experiential learning opportunity before graduating from high school;
- Promoting both traditional and non-traditional career paths by increasing students' exposure to options including the arts, science, engineering, technology, skilled trades and entrepreneurship; and
- Closing gaps in skills and competencies by finding ways to teach and recognize the skills that students learn, such as teamwork, problem solving and entrepreneurial spirit.

How do we Support a Highly-Skilled Workforce?

- By expanding the Specialist High Skills Major Program and Facilitated Access to Skilled Trades (F.A.S.T.)
- By expanding Co-operative Education and Dual Credit Programming
- By promoting careers in technology and skilled trades as a viable pathway to students in Grades 5 to 12
- By expanding participation in Skills Competitions

2022-2023 Update

- Due to facility constraints, skilled trades-based courses are not available in all secondary schools. In order to better support student access to skilled trade-based SHSM

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programs, the TDSB has initiated the Facilitated Access to Skilled Trades (F.A.S.T.) application. Students in Grades 10, 11 and 12 who are interested in a skilled trade-based SHSM can apply through a central application, outside of Out-of-Area Admissions, to join programs in schools where space is available. 2022-2023 was the first full year of the F.A.S.T program. Families, students, and educators expressed interest in learning more about the program. A small number of students applied for access to Skilled Trades based SHSM programming through F.A.S.T.

- Expansion of Specialist High Skills Major Program
 - The Ministry's Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program provides secondary students an opportunity to focus on a career path that matches their skills and interests. It also helps with their career development by exposing them to opportunities in the workforce. SHSM programs are offered in 17 sectors including ICT, Arts & Culture, Transportation, Sports, Construction, Health & Wellness, and Environment.
 - In the 2022-2023 school year, seven new SHSM programs were approved by the Ministry of Education to be launched in the 2023-2024 school year. Five of the programs are in first time SHSM schools.
 - The Experiential Learning Department continues to work with the French Department on supporting schools in developing and applying for the new Not-for-Profit-Education French SHSM.
 - There is an on-going review of the distribution and location of SHSM programming across the District.
- Expansion of Experiential Learning Opportunities
 - The Expansion of Experiential Learning Grant, or Connected Community Experiential Learning (CCEL) Grant, is designed to increase the amount of experiential learning opportunities that students and teachers can engage with, by providing funding to enable student- based experiential learning projects and learning opportunities. In the 2022-2023 school year the program was expanded to include students from Kindergarten through to Grade 12. Recent TDSB examples include the creation of outdoor learning spaces that embed Indigenous perspectives, supporting robotics in the classroom, pollinator and food gardens, and revitalization of existing/creation of new learning spaces that incorporate skilled trades and technology career exploration for students.

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- Expansion of Co-operative Education Programming
 - The SPEEL (Special Education Experiential Learning) program and Project SEARCH provide cooperative education opportunities for students with low-incidence exceptionalities to support increased access to employment upon graduation. The Experiential Learning Department, in collaboration with the Special Education and Inclusion Department, has partnered with community agencies (e.g. Discover Ability and Abilities Centre) to enhance Cooperative Education Programming which supports the transition to employment for students with special education needs.
 - The Experiential Learning Department, in collaboration with the Special Education and Inclusion Department, Professional Support Services (OT/PT) and Central TDSB Departments, has developed a cooperative education pilot project to provide students with special education needs with supported placements in TDSB Administration sites.
 - The Experiential Learning Department continues to support schools in the development of work-site visits and work experiences that prepare all students for Cooperative Education placements and support career exploration prior to Grade 11.
 - In collaboration with GTA Colleges, the TDSB has developed programming which further enhances cooperative education experiences by pairing the placement with sector specific Dual Credit courses. Students gain valuable work skills while also gaining post-secondary experience and credits at the college. For example, students attending the STEP to Construction or STEP to Transportation central Cooperative Education program also earn a Dual Credit in Health and Safety which prepares them for employment.
- Promoting careers in technology and skilled trades as a viable pathway to students in Grades 5 to 12.
 - The Experiential Learning and OYAP Departments continues to work in collaboration with Science, STEM and Robotics Department to increase awareness and participation in career exploration of technology and the skilled trades through professional learning opportunities for educators, community outreach, the provision of learning resources for classrooms and facilitation of student participation in activities through skills competitions, work experience opportunities, partnerships with industry and post-secondary institution partners.
 - The TDSB continues to work in consultation with the Ministry of Education regarding the newly announced technology credit graduation requirement to be implemented for the 2024-25 school year. TDSB has identified only ten schools that are not currently offering any Grade 9 or 10 technology-based courses. Supports will

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become available, as needed to ensure that all Grade 9-12 OSSD-granting secondary schools are able to provide the required technological programming.

Some additional logistical implementation challenges include:

- Classroom space to address the significant increase in the number of tech courses that will be required to meet the needs of all students
- The Technological Education staffing shortage that is being experienced across the province
- Ministry funded Professional Learning for Guidance Counselors focused on improving access to accurate, up-to-date information about the careers in the Skilled Trades and opportunities available through the apprenticeship pathways. 2022-2023 was year one of this project. Secondary School guidance counsellors attended a tour of the trades which included a visit to a Training Delivery Agent and a College program that supports apprenticeship pathways. The TDSB has also developed a series of information modules that can be accessed by individual counselors for their own knowledge and/or be shared with other staff, students, parents to share information and promote the apprenticeship pathways.
- Central Experiential Learning and Student Success Departments support schools to provide access to workshops and learning sessions to students in Grades five to eight through our college partnerships. These opportunities range in variety and could include experiences that are:
 - Virtual or In Person in the school or on college campus
 - Trades or Skill based
 - Focused on Pathway Planning
- Expansion of Participation in Skills Competitions
 - The skills competitions provide SHSM students with the opportunity to receive a certification and reach ahead for the SHSM components. Students in technological education courses are provided with authentic learning opportunities where they apply their learning from the classroom. The skills competitions help prepare students for future career opportunities.
 - In 2022-2023, TDSB returned to in-person participation in Skills Ontario competitions. TDSB students performed exceptionally well and earned a total of 22 Skills Ontario medals. The seven gold medalists joined Team Ontario at the Skills Canada National Competition in Winnipeg the week of May 22. The TDSB was also awarded the School Board Award of Distinction which is presented to the School

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Board that shows dedication to the promotion of skilled trades and technology careers. Staff will continue to capitalize on the opportunities, student interest and SHSM programming and careers in the skilled trades to continue to increase and support participation in the skills competitions for secondary students and challenges for elementary students.

Next Steps

- A plan has been implemented to continue to increase awareness and promotion of the F.A.S.T. program across the district for 2023-2024.
- Professional Learning opportunities for educators (K-12) to support early awareness of careers in the Skilled Trades, STEM, and the Apprenticeship Pathway through connections to curriculum will be made available throughout the school year.

French Immersion and Extended French

How Do We Support French Immersion and Extended French?

- French is one of Canada's official languages and it is a language used widely around the world.
- Proficiency in French is a valuable skill and an element of student achievement.
- Teaching and learning French as an additional language strengthens English language skills, enhances reasoning, problem-solving and creative thinking skills and develops understanding and respect of other cultures.

Having over 91,000 students in Core French and another 28,000 students in French Immersion/Extended French programs comes with system successes and challenges. We are proud of the Board's successes in retention rate, inclusion of students with special education needs as well as accessibility, transportation, and streamlining of entry points. At the same time, challenges include, equity of access, and transportation.

2022-2023 Update

- In September 2022, four (4) new Early French Immersion Programs opened in Wards 6, 11, 18, 19 to increase equity of access, reduce catchment size and travel distance.
- In September 2022, two (2) middle school pathways were introduced in Wards 2, 18 to reduce some of the longest student commutes.

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- In September 2023, three (3) additional new Early French Immersion Programs opened in Wards 1, 4, 21 to increase equity of access, reduce catchment size and travel distance.

Next Steps

- Identify opportunities to make efficient use of Early FI resources in areas that have larger enrolment where there is more flexibility in program offerings.
- Initiate two Local Feasibility Team processes to identify new secondary pathways for French programs to increase equity of access.
- Continue to work through the process of shifting from a series of associated catchment areas to an address-based system. Staff will undertake an analysis of the address-based system and possible implications regarding implementation. This change will require revisions to Operational Procedure PR 597 once complete.
- To provide staff with the tools necessary to increase equity of access to Early French Immersion programs, additional procedural changes may be necessary. The impact of the shift to an address-based system will be reviewed to determine if additional procedural changes may be necessary.
- After reviewing the impact(s) of these changes, consider other changes which allow for higher growth of programs in areas that are underserved relative to areas that are currently well served by the current distribution of programs.
- Moving forward, staff will continue to engage in Local Feasibility Team processes to identify areas of Toronto for potential new Early French Immersion programs, as required. Monitoring the impact of opening seven (7) new programs is critical to implementation.

Elementary and Secondary Alternative Schools

How Do We Support Elementary and Secondary Alternative Schools?

Alternative schools are highly engaged, smaller school environments. These schools are characterized by community collaboration, choice, inclusivity, and flexibility. Alternative schools use flexible methods of teaching in distinct learning environments to meet the needs of learners. They use diverse hands-on approaches to learning the required Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum.

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Each school has its own identity and focus, such as democratic education, holistic learning, physical art, mindful living, entrepreneurship, social justice, community outreach and more. These schools are ideal for students seeking an alternative to mainstream education and who want to take an active role in their own learning.

Alternative schools provide students with an opportunity to succeed in a different educational setting that emphasizes student-centred and differentiated methods in teaching and learning.

2022-2023 Update

- The four secondary Year-Round Alternative Centres have been renamed to better reflect program delivery. These schools continue to provide a quadmester structure for students who benefit from taking two courses intensively throughout the quadmester.
- A review of Secondary Alternative Schools is expected to begin in Fall 2023.
 - Will include an environmental scan of the Secondary Alternative Schools, including demographics and history, and
 - An analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by students, staff and communities connected to Secondary Alternative Schools.

Next Steps

- Review of admission procedures for elementary and secondary alternative schools to complement the revised Alternative Schools Policy (P062) that was approved by the Board in October 2022.
- Review of enrolment projections and space capacity for Elementary Alternative Schools is also underway.

Elementary Academies

2022-2023 Update

- The elementary academies were introduced in 2012 to increase the number of choices available for families.
- A total of nine programs were established: four 'standalone' schools; Boys Leadership Academy, Girls Leadership Academy, and two Vocal Music Academies.

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- Five involved a rebranding of existing neighbourhood schools to infuse a theme, health and wellness or sports and wellness.
- Standalone academies were established as their own schools and were accommodated at locations with available space. Transportation was not provided.
- Enrolment at the four standalone academies has declined since 2014, only two years after they were introduced. For the 2023-24 school year, only one standalone academy remains in operation.
- The schools that were infused with a theme continue to operate as neighbourhood elementary schools and operate like any other within the city. Admission into these schools is governed by the attendance boundary and the Out-of-Area Admissions process.

Next Steps

- Staff will undertake a system-wide study of the Elementary Academies during the 2023-24 school year. The study will include both standalone and those where themes have been embedded within neighbourhood schools.
- The four standalone academies will be reviewed as the first phase of the study. These schools have been prioritized due to the state of enrolment decline.
- The second phase of the study will address the neighbourhood schools with an infused theme.

Indigenous Education

2022-2023 Update

The TDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan will be reviewed. Among the factors that will be considered are Indigenous Education as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, 2015.

On June 29, 2022, the Board of Trustees passed the following motion regarding the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action.

Whereas, the Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Council met on Tuesday, May 17, 2022; and

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Whereas, the Elders Council passed a motion that was unanimously supported by the representatives of the Indigenous communities of Toronto (UICAC); and

Whereas, it is the stated goal of the Toronto District School Board to ensure that Indigenous staff and students are not deprived of their rights and are provided with a learning and working environment that is free from racism and discrimination of any kind;

Therefore, be it resolved:

- (a) That the Toronto District School Board commit by resolution to the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the governing framework for reconciliation;
- (b) That the TDSB acknowledge that Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) are distinct with inherent rights, laws, and institutions;
- (c) That the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples be embedded in policies, bylaws and Board governance structures;
- (d) That Truth and Reconciliation be set in the Board's strategic directions.

Next Steps

- Continue to move forward with the identification of a capital funding source for the construction of a new, standalone Kapapamahchkwew Wandering Spirit School with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre.
 - A new, standalone, and fully Indigenized facility has been proposed to provide a truly decolonized environment for Indigenous students and Communities across Toronto. The new facility would accommodate Kapapamahchkwew - Wandering Spirit School and the Urban Indigenous Education Centre (UIEC).
 - The funding previously allocated for the project in 2018 (\$11M) reflects the standard approach to Capital Priorities funding allocations. The grant was allocated based upon a proposal to retrofit and expand the existing building at 16 Phin Avenue. Through the course of design, and informed by the Indigenous Communities, the original proposal to invest in the 16 Phin Avenue building is no longer appropriate due to its resemblance to a residential school.
 - A standalone facility used exclusively by Indigenous programs and services is required. Additional capital funding is required to support the cost of the new facility. This will provide a truly decolonized environment where Indigenous

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programs can exist without the interference of other user groups with colonial practices.

- This project was submitted during the 2022 Capital Priorities process but was not funded. Since that time, staff, working together with input from the Superintendent and others close to the school and Indigenous Communities to revise the scope of the project. The project has been phased, beginning with the replacement school and child care, which will be the focus of the capital submission. Future phases include a new facility for the UIEC, potential pool and future expansion.
- Continue moving forward with the Boyne as a site of Indigenous Land -Based Pedagogy led by the Urban Indigenous Education Centre and guided by the Elders Council.
- Gradually implement the Grade 11 NBE 3 English: Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices course across the system.
- Continue to engage community through the Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee.
- Provide mandatory training to all formal leaders on The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Integrate professional learning about anti-Indigenous racism, trauma informed approaches and cultural safety into all leadership development opportunities learning from and working with Indigenous peoples and perspectives.
- Initiate and lead Indigenous Education Administrator Collaborative Inquiry in order to support the enhancement of Indigenous Education in schools, as well as support to inform School Improvement Plans.
- Support school leaders with the creation of Indigenous Education foci in School Improvement Planning.
- Continue to build upon the Indigenous Aspiring Leadership Network for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit staff.
- Develop and implement focused professional learning inquiries for Principals, Vice Principals, and teachers on creating conditions for enhancing Indigenous student well-being and achievement within Grade 7-10 classrooms.
- Create and provide ongoing access for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students to Indigenous Student Leadership Groups.

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- Develop structures, in collaboration with the Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee and the Council of Elders, for peer and community mentorship programs.
- Continue and enhance system-wide referral process through the Urban Indigenous Education Centre.
- Establish communication processes to ensure the presence of an Indigenous advocate (e.g., UIEC Student Success Team member) at all IPRC meetings that involve First Nations, Métis and Inuit students and families.
- Create supports for non-Indigenous Special Education staff to work with Indigenous wholistic approaches.
- Continue to build and enhance professional learning for all staff in trauma informed practices and cultural safety from Indigenous perspectives.
- Provide professional learning for all central Special Education staff on anti-Indigenous racism.
- Work with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre and the Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee to identify barriers and develop strategies for removing systemic processes that impede First Nations, Métis and Inuit well-being and learning.
- Provide professional learning for Caring and Safe Schools Centrally Assigned Principals and Advisors on Indigenous Education contexts, anti-Indigenous racism, and Indigenous approaches to restorative practices and student engagement.
- Provide professional learning for school leaders on Indigenous Education contexts, anti-Indigenous racism, and Indigenous approaches to restorative practices and student engagement with a focus on decision making.
- With the support of families and community partners, support Principals and Vice Principals in developing whole-school Indigenous approaches to restorative practices.
- Work with community partners to create an Indigenous focused pre-Kindergarten program for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students and families.
- Support the mobilization of Indigenous community members and Indigenous Early Years educators with expertise in Indigenous approaches to Early Years education in order to create and implement professional learning for all early years educators.
- Work with the Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee to develop and share strategies to support First Nations, Métis, and Inuit families with formal school-entry processes.

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- Provide culturally-relevant resources and access to the Council of Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Indigenous language speakers.
- Create Early Years curriculum writing opportunities that centre Indigenous perspectives.
- Provide all Early Years practitioners (school-based teams – Designated Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten teachers, administrators) with professional learning on how to engage with and support Indigenous students and their families/caregivers with reference to an anti-Indigenous racism framework.

Special Education and Inclusion

How Do We Support Special Education and Inclusion?

The Vision of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), as outlined in the TDSB's [Special Education Plan](#), in line with Regulation 181/98, is that students with special education needs be welcomed, included and supported within well-resourced neighborhood schools. Some students with unique strengths and needs may require more specialized or intensive programs and supports. It is our goal that these intensive programs and supports will be available in sites that are equitably located throughout the District.

The Vision includes a commitment on the part of the Toronto District School Board to make, where possible, facilities fully accessible to students, families, staff and communities. [Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities](#).

A further commitment is made to continue to search out effective practices as evidenced in research and practice in collaboration with the departments of the Board and in partnership with the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) to ensure equity of access and equity of outcome for students with special education needs.

The Integrated Equity Framework for Special Education and Inclusion includes the following Equity Goals:

Students are successfully included, supported, and empowered when:

- All students experience a sense of belonging and social citizenship (e.g., membership, inclusion, shared power and value (Parekh, 2014))
- The learning environment is modified to fit the student, not the student to fit the environment (Parekh & Underwood, 2016)
- All identities and cultures are celebrated within the learning environment (Parekh & Underwood, 2016)

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- The right to participation and establishing a positive climate where social engagement and friendships can be promoted is prioritized (Underwood, 2013)
- Deficit thinking is rejected and students are not organized within and outside the classroom by perceived ability (Parekh & Underwood, 2016)

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- Continue our commitment to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students, especially students with special education needs and intersecting identities. This includes our ongoing commitment to human rights, equity, anti-ableism, anti-racism, anti-oppression, and our commitment to combating anti-Indigeneity and anti-Black racism. This commitment is the foundation of the TDSB Equity Policy. It is the basis of everything we do and underpins all programming across all grade levels.
- Continue to implement inclusion practices:
 - We will work to optimize professional learning that promotes inclusive models of education and that deepens awareness of anti-oppression, anti-ableism, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Differentiated Instruction (DI) and Culturally Relevant and Responsive (CRRP) pedagogy and teaching practices.
 - We will work to confront and challenge unconscious bias within our schools, and work closely with principals and superintendents to interrupt, interrogate and strategize to ensure that students from historically marginalized groups are treated equitably. This strategy will be closely informed by data and shaped in close collaboration with all stakeholders.
 - We will implement a variety of communication strategies to provide parents/students and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) with information about services and programs offered by Special Education and Inclusion and the Education and Community Partnership Programs (ECP).
- 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) by:
 - Reviewing data to better understand the post-secondary pathways of students with special education needs;
 - Supporting school leaders and liaise with community partners to explore creative ways of increasing the number of students served through the Special

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- Education Experiential Learning Program and continue to seek out opportunities for additional partnerships with business and various levels of government;
 - Continuing to provide staffing and collaborating with partners in Project SEARCH to support our school-to-work transition initiative;
 - Working with support staff to better support students with Developmental Disabilities in experiential learning settings; and
 - Leveraging the Continuous Intake Co-op (CIC) Program and investigating additional co-op opportunities for students with Intellectual Disabilities.
- Review Congregated Special Education Sites in Phase 2 of the Secondary Program Review (2025-26):
 - This review will explore further opportunities for inclusion into the network of secondary schools across Toronto
 - This review will consider whether K-21 models are appropriate
 - Review Intensive Support Programs (ISPs) (ongoing):
 - Opening/closing/moving programs will align with student enrolment changes in these programs
 - In following with the TDSB commitment to inclusion, our focus will remain on ensuring appropriate levels of service based on individual student needs, and as per Regulation 181/98, always looking at placement in the regular class with support before placing a student in an ISP

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