



Program and School Services Committee Agenda

PSSC:006A

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

4:30 p.m.

Boardroom, Main Floor, 5050 Yonge Street, Toronto

Trustee Members:

Deborah Williams (Chair), Alexis Dawson, Malika Ghous, Debbie King,
Alexandra Lulka Rotman, Farzana Rajwani

	Pages
1. Call to Order and Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands	
2. Approval of the Agenda	
3. Declarations of Possible Conflict of Interest	
4. Delegations	
To be presented	
5. Community Advisory Committee Reports	
5.1 Special Education Advisory Committee Report, June 10, 2024	1
1. Membership Update	
2. Right of Parents, Guardians and Students With Disabilities/Special Education Needs to Know About TDSB Programs, Services and Supports and How to Access Them	
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6.3 Academic Pathways Strategy: Supporting Students From Kindergarten to Apprenticeship, College, University, and the Workplace [4768]	77
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8. Written Notices of Motion

8.1 Latin/a/o/x Task Force (Trustees Williams and King, on behalf of
Trustee de Dovitiis)

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9. Adjournment



Statutory Committee

Name of Committee: Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Meeting Date: June 10, 2024

Directed To: Program and School Services Committee

A hybrid meeting of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) convened on June 10, 2024 from 7: 00 p.m. 9:00 p.m. with SEAC Chair David Lepofsky and Vice-Chair Richard Carter presiding.

Attendance:	<p>Leo Lagnado - Autism Society of Ontario (Toronto Chapter)</p> <p>Richard Carter- Down Syndrome Association of Toronto (DSAT)</p> <p>Steven Lynette- Epilepsy Toronto</p> <p>Nora Green- Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community</p> <p>Beth Dangerfield – Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada</p> <p>David Lepofsky- Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC)</p> <p>Tracey O'Regan - Community Living Toronto</p> <p>Stephany Ragany - (Alternate) VOICE for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Children</p> <p>Alana Bell – Association for Bright Children</p> <p>Guilia Barbuto- Learning Disabilities Association Toronto District</p> <p>Trustee Aarts</p> <p>Diane Montgomery (Alternate)- Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community</p> <p>Aline Chan (Alternate)- Community Living Toronto</p>
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Note: On May 25, 2022, the [Board decided](#), inter alia, that Community Advisory Committees may “report out to any standing committee of the Board” with “recommendations only and all other information and activities are reported annually”.

For more information on the mandates of Standing and Permanent Committees of the Board, and to assist Staff Leads in directing Community Advisory Committee reports, please visit <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/Committees>

	<p>Dana Chapman (Alternate)- Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC)</p> <p>Ann Blanchette – (Alternate) Epilepsy Toronto</p> <p>Reese Macklin – (Alternate) Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada CADDAC</p> <p>Staff</p> <p>Louise Sirisko- Associate Director</p> <p>Nandy Palmer- System Superintendent, Special Education and Inclusion</p> <p>Effie Stathopoulos - Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education</p> <p>Andrea Roach- Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education</p> <p>Katia Palumbo- Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education</p> <p>Alison Board - Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education</p> <p>Elizabeth Schaeffer- Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education</p> <p>Tanya Hazelton - Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education</p> <p>Mun Shu Wong- (Audio/Video)</p> <p>Erin Pallett (Audio/Video)</p> <p>Lianne Dixon- TDSB SEAC Liaison</p>
<p>Regrets:</p>	<p>Jean-Paul Ngana- LC2 Representative</p> <p>Saira Chhibber- LC1 Representative</p> <p>Bronwen Alsop- VOICE for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Children</p> <p>Jordan Glass- LC2 Representative</p> <p>Kirsten Doyle- LC3 Representative</p> <p>Izabella Pruska-Oldenhoff – LC4 Representative</p> <p>Trustee Patel</p> <p>Trustee Hassan</p>

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	Aliza Chaqpar- Easter Seals Ontario
	Nerissa Hutchinson- Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support

Part A: Recommendations (Appendix A)

SEAC Motion

To address parents' right to user-friendly access to important information about the programs, services, supports, and educational offerings available for them at TDSB and how to access them, at its June 10, 2024 meeting, SEAC passed a motion entitled “The Right of Parents, Guardians, and Students with Disabilities/Special Education Needs to Know about TDSB Programs, Services, and Supports, and How to Access Them”.

SEAC recommends that the TDSB Board should:

1. As a priority, create and implement a strong, comprehensive action plan to fully, effectively, and pro-actively inform all parents/guardians/students, including parents/guardians of students with disabilities/special education needs, about the programs, supports, services and educational offerings that could assist students with disabilities/special education needs, and where and how to access and advocate for them, and
2. Report by the end of 2024 and every six months after that to the Board and to SEAC on their progress.

SEAC Membership Updates

Whereas, the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) has received a nomination from the Association for Bright Children (ABC) for Jessica Miklos to be its alternate representative: and

Whereas, this candidate meets the Ministry of Education and Board criteria for eligibility:

Therefore, be it resolved that:

Jessica Miklos be appointed to the Special Education Advisory Committee as the alternate representative for the Association for Bright Children (ABC) for a term ending November 14, 2026.

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Part B: Staff Supplementary Information

As outlined in the Special Education and Inclusion Department's annual reports for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, a priority has been increasing communication and engagement of parents/guardians/caregivers. TDSB staff has also worked closely with SEAC over the past two years to implement feedback to improve communication with families.

As required by the Ministry of Education, the TDSB Special Education Plan includes all relevant information about the programs, supports, services and educational offerings available to students with disabilities and special education needs, and information on how to advocate for these supports. TDSB's Guide to Special Education for Parents/Guardians/Caregivers also contains this information and is available in multiple languages and in various accessible formats. TDSB also has the following guides: Guide to the Referral Process, Guide to Identification, Placement and Review Committees (IPRCs), Guide to Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and Guide to Special Education Program Recommendation Committee (SEPRC).

The Special Education and Inclusion public website also has a Q & A section, created in collaboration with SEAC, that directs parents to supports offered by the TDSB.

In June 2024, the Ministry approved PPM 170:

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline requirements and provide direction to school boards on communication with parents/caregivers, to strengthen service standards and ensure consistent and reliable information is provided and made available to a parent/caregiver for greater transparency and accountability in the education system across the province. By establishing standardized guidelines, the Ministry of Education enhances communication and the overall engagement between parents and school boards. School boards are required to:

- provide parents/caregivers with information to support their active engagement in their child's education.
- develop and comply with a protocol setting out standards for acknowledging and responding to parent inquiries.

TDSB's [PR 505 Parent Concern Protocol](#) is in the process of being revised for alignment with [PPM 170](#). Community Advisory Committees (CACs), including SEAC, PIAC and School Councils were asked for input into TDSB's changes to align with the requirements of the PPM in June 2024 via a survey.

TDSB staff continues to work closely with SEAC and other stakeholders to improve access to information for parents/guardians/caregivers of students with disabilities and special education needs.

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Report Submitted by:

Louise Sirisko, Associate Director, Instructional Innovation and Equitable Outcomes at
louise.sirisko@tdsb.on.ca

Nandy Palmer, System Superintendent of Special Education and Inclusion at
nandy.palmer@tdsb.on.ca

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Appendix A: SEAC Motion

The Right of Parents, Guardians and Students with Disabilities/Special Education Needs to Know about TDSB Programs, Services, and Supports, and How to Access Them

Whereas students with disabilities/special education needs and their parents/guardians have a right to user-friendly access to important information about the programs, services, supports and educational offerings available for them at TDSB and how to access them. This should be easy to find, written in plain language without education jargon, and available in multiple languages and multiple formats, including accessible formats.

And whereas for over eight years, SEAC has repeatedly told senior TDSB officials that too many families find it hard to find this information. They find this very frustrating. This undermines their ability to advocate for their child's needs.

And whereas TDSB has told SEAC that it is the responsibility of each principal to convey this information to parents and guardians of students with special education needs, and that parents can look to TDSB's website, its Special Education Plan posted there, and some brochures. Yet SEAC has advised TDSB that this is not an effective solution.

And whereas TDSB's 2024 Multi-Year Strategic Plan commits to treating parents as partners and to "Identifying, removing, and preventing systemic, procedural, and attitudinal barriers that stand in the way of equity of access and outcomes in education."

SEAC therefore recommends that the TDSB Board should:

1. As a priority, create and implement a strong, comprehensive action plan to fully, effectively, and pro-actively inform all parents/guardians/students, including parents/guardians of students with disabilities/special education needs, about the programs, supports, services and educational offerings that could assist students with disabilities/special education needs, and where and how to access and advocate for them, and
2. Report by the end of 2024 and every six months after that to the Board and to SEAC on their progress.

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Toronto District School Board 2023-2026 Mental Health and Addiction Strategy

To: Program and School Services Committee

Date: 25 September, 2024

Report No.: 09-24-4730

Strategic Directions

- Commit to the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action.
- Belong: All students belong, are engaged, and valued in an inclusive environment.
- Achieve: All students reach high levels of achievement, success, and personal development.
- Thrive: All students graduate with the confidence, skills, and knowledge to thrive.
- Revitalize: All students and staff learn and work in inclusive, safe, and modern environments.

Equity as a guiding principle: Equity is foundational to all TDSB work and will be embedded throughout the strategic directions.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the three year (2023-2026) Mental Health and Addictions Strategy and one year Action Plan (2024-2025) be received.

Context

[Policy/Program Memorandum \(PPM\) 169 Student Mental Health](#), which took effect on January 1, 2024, prompts all school boards to create a three year Mental Health Strategy Plan with a one year Action Plan (Appendix C).

The TDSB three year Mental Health and Addiction Strategy 2023-2026 (Strategy) will provide clear pathways to services and care, aligning with the objectives outlined in the Ministry's [Right Time, Right Care](#) document to meet the evolving needs of students and parents/caregivers/guardians.

This strategy is grounded in Truth and Reconciliation of Canada: Calls to Action, positive mental health and engagement, belonging for every student and staff, human rights, and equity in action to challenge impacts of stigma, oppression and racism on

mental health. The Strategy's objectives were informed by completed qualitative and quantitative responses (surveys and focus groups) with 295 parents/caregivers/guardians, 21 members of school councils and 13 parent/caregiver/guardian committees, 347 TDSB staff and students and 12 community focus groups.

Further, data from the TDSB 2023 Student Census and other mental health data from Centre of Addiction for Mental Health (CAMH), the City of Toronto and the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)¹ also supported the Strategy objectives. This Strategy grounds the continuation of creating mentally healthy schools which supports every student to achieve success and integrates their intersecting identities by:

- cultivating mentally healthy school environments which promotes well being, positive mental health and engagement, belonging, and feelings of mattering for all individuals.
- developing inclusive, identity-affirming mental health resources and practices that aim to understand and support the unique needs and lived experiences of every student.
- committing to strengthening mentally healthy school spaces and supporting capacity development in areas such as foundational shared language mental health literacy, trauma-informed and healing engagement care, anti-sex trafficking awareness, suicide prevention, and addictions awareness for staff, students and parents/caregivers/guardians.
- strengthening collaboration with parents/caregivers/guardians and identity-affirming community agencies and partners to enhance accessible and culturally relevant mental health services and challenging barriers to care and stigma.
- aligning efforts with the comprehensive approach outlined in the Ministry's [Right Time, Right Care](#) document and service delivery; supporting pathways to access and collaborative high-quality mental health care for children and young people in Ontario.
- collaborating with identity-affirming community partners, agencies, and TDSB departments to ensure a coordinated system of identity-affirming care for students and families which is rooted in the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, human rights, belonging and equity.

TDSB Data from the Student Census

Data from the [Hospital for Sick Kids' Mental Health Strategy](#), [Children's Mental Health Ontario](#) and based on recent Student Census overall results, students' feelings related to mental health and well being are showing recovery compared to data collected during the pandemic ([TDSB Student Census, 2023](#))². In total, 138,240 TDSB students (Grade 4 to 12) and parents/guardians/caregivers of Junior Kindergarten (JK) to Grade 3 participated in the Census. Students in grades 4 to 12 answered questions about their mental health and parents of students in JK to grade answered questions about their child(ren). When considering more nuanced data, the mental health and well

¹ In spring of 2023, approximately 1,100 TDSB students completed the CAMH Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS). Results specific to TDSB should be made available late summer 2024. Overall results are available here: https://www.camh.ca/-/media/research-files/osduhs-summary-drug-use-report_2023.pdf

² <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/research/Research/Parent-and-Student-Census/-2023-Census>

being of different student identity groups might differ. Future Mental Health Strategy updates will provide analysis of this data.

The Census asked students many questions about their learning experience. Results indicate students' enjoyment in school decreases as grades increase. In the 2023 Census, only 35% of secondary students reported they enjoy school “all the time/often” compared to 59% of Grade 7-8 students, and 74% of Grade 4-6 students. With the exception of Grade 4-6 students, compared to previous Census results since 2011, students' enjoyment of school has decreased by 14% in Grades 7 - 8 and by 24% in Grades 9-12 ([TDSB Student Census, 2023](#))³. Furthermore, almost half of students (48%) feel like they need to hide some parts of their identity to fit in all the time, often or sometimes ([TDSB Student Census, 2023](#))⁴.

Given the close association between enjoyment of school and positive learning experiences within school, these proportions are worrying when considering the impact on students' sense of belonging, and students' mental health and well being. Additional important Student Census data related to student mental health and well being indicates the students' mental health and well being is supported by educators, but there are additional areas of support that will be impacted by the actions within the Mental Health and Addiction Strategy as the data indicates:

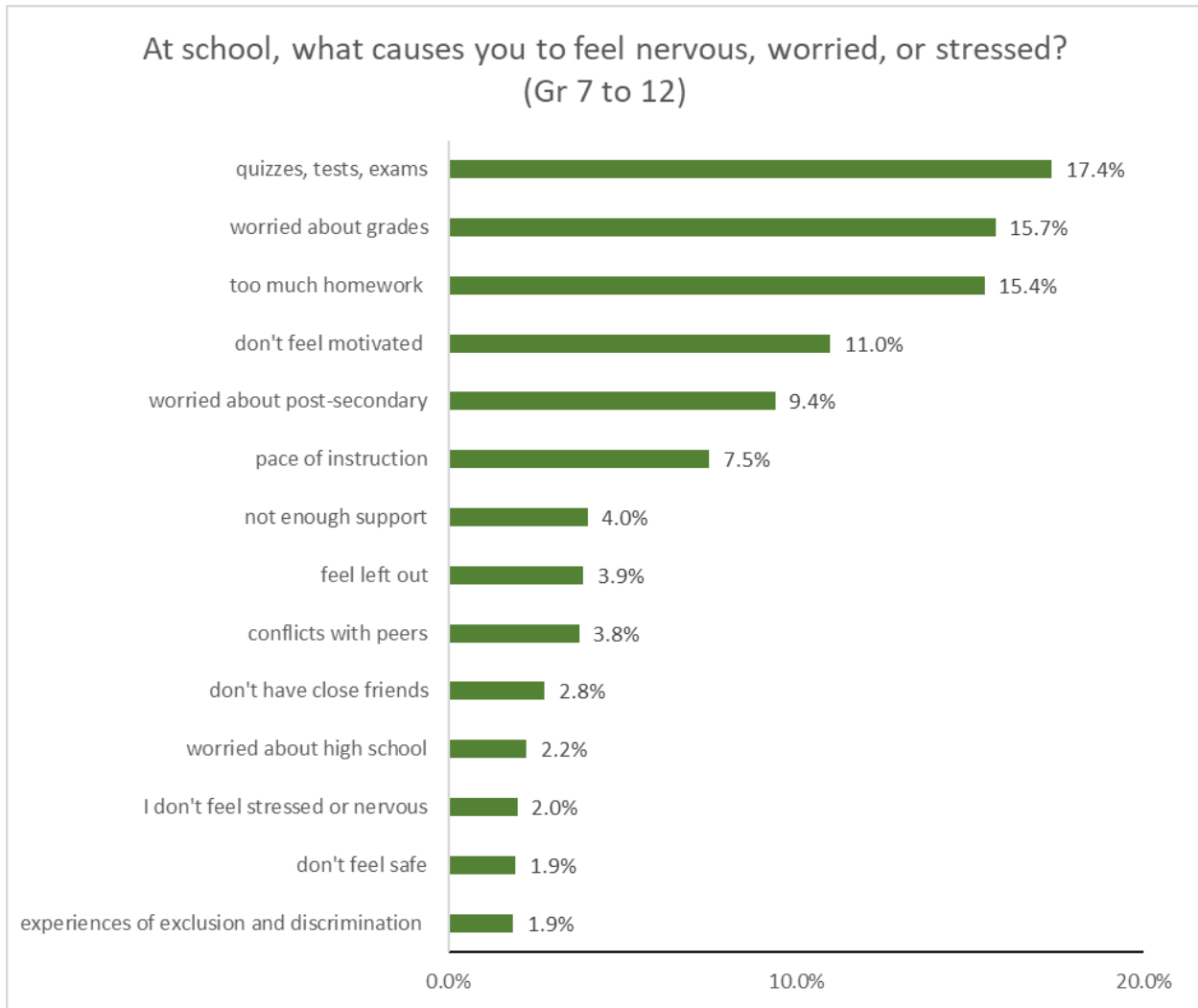
- 88% of students indicated that teachers and other school support staff support students' mental health and well being (all the time/often/sometimes)
- 75% of students indicated that their teacher checks-in with them when they are upset (all the time/often/sometimes)
- 63% of students indicated there is an adult in their school they feel comfortable going to for support; 6% of students indicated that there was not, but they would like one. Similarly, 63% of students indicate they have a mentor; 9% of students do not, but would like one.
- 50% of students indicated that they have opportunities to get involved in promoting mental health and well being (e.g., wellness clubs, campaigns, etc.); 8% said they don't have the opportunity, but would like to.
- 29% of students indicated that their school has spaces they feel comfortable using to de-stress and take care of their mental health.
- Students were asked who they would speak to if they felt they needed help with their mental health: 64% of students would speak to a friend; 51% of students would speak to a parent; 28% of students would speak to a teacher; and 16% of students would speak to a school social worker. 16% of students indicated that they would not speak to any of the people asked about (i.e., friends, parents, teacher, professional support services staff, other staff, coach, Elder, and Faith leader).
- Students were asked what topics related to mental health and well being that they learn about. The most frequent responses included: things I can do to take care of my mental health; how to reach out and ask for help; and who can help me at school.
- Students in grades 7 to 12 were asked the causes of their stress, worry or nervousness at school. Students tend to carry more stress related to their learning and academic experience. When secondary and elementary students' experiences are compared, although both groups had similar

³ <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/research/Research/Parent-and-Student-Census/-2023-Census>

⁴ <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/research/Research/Parent-and-Student-Census/-2023-Census>

concerns, elementary students had a slightly higher proportion of peer related stresses. See figure 1.

Figure 1: Causes of feeling nervous, stressed, and worried at school



Mental Health and Addiction Strategy-2023-2026

The TDSB Children and Youth Mental Health Strategy, launched in 2013, initially aimed to integrate, enhance, and embed mental health and well being practices that would support the building of mental health literacy for students, staff and parents/caregivers/guardians. Building and learning from the initiatives from 2013 has provided great insights into the 2024-2025 Goals, Key Success Indicators and the Resources and Actions of the Strategy (Appendix A). The objective of this strategy is to build mental health capacity for all, so that every student in every TDSB school achieves success and feels well supported with a strong circle of care.

The 2023-2026 Strategy has integrated the continuation of the work already grounded from the first established TDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) in 2018 as well as the initiatives in the renewed 2024-2028 MYSP. As part of the Strategy plan, each school is expected to engage in building shared language mental health literacy along with having knowledge of the goals. This supports the integration of processes within their schools to create mentally healthy school spaces, centring equity, belonging, well being and student achievement.

The creation of the 2024-2025 Resources and Actions (Action Plan) has been informed by integrating input from students', parents'/caregivers'/guardians' voices, identity-affirming community agencies, and collaboration with TDSB departments, including the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement and the Urban Indigenous Education Centre. The Action Plan was further informed through strong partnership and collaboration with School Mental Health Ontario, the Ministry of Education-Mental Health Branch, and Toronto Public Health. This Action Plan encompasses multi-tiered mental health and well being approaches, supports and initiatives.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Commitment to Date

The TDSB has long prioritized mental health and wellbeing capacity building, laying a robust foundation for support services and outreach, even prior to the development of this current Strategy. Spearheaded by our dedicated Professional Support Services (PSS) Staff (i.e. Social Workers, Child and Youth Workers, Child and Youth Counsellors, and Psychology staff) along with Mental Health Leads, we remain dedicated to building and supporting mentally healthy school environments. They focus on building capacity around shared language mental health literacy, providing trauma-informed care, raising awareness about issues such as anti-sex trafficking and addiction, and offering suicide prevention support for staff, students, and parents/caregivers/guardians.

PSS staff and Mental Health Leads remain in the forefront of mental health service promotion, provision and training, playing a pivotal role in nurturing the wellness of students, parents/caregivers/guardians and staff.

The Strategy serves to continue to fortify and amplify the impactful work already undertaken by our Professional Support Services Staff, Mental Health Leads and school staff. We aim to cultivate holistic, inclusive, and multi-tiered actions that support mentally healthy schools by continuing to collaborate and build strong relationships with school staff, administrators, identity-affirming community agencies, and community partners, centring the voices of students and parents/caregivers/guardians. This framework will continue to build from evidence-informed and emerging knowledge which enhances and integrates identity-affirming mental health supports and prioritizes collaborative interventions honouring students' intersecting identities and voices. The Strategy and Action Plan endeavours to support that every student feels that they belong, feel valued and that school spaces reflect their intersecting identities.

Mental Health Goals and Action Plan

Within a multi-tiered approach, (Appendix B), Professional Support Staff (i.e., Social Workers, Child and Youth Workers, Child and Youth Counsellors, Psychology staff), Mental Health Leads, Professional Support Staff from the Urban Indigenous Education Centre and the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement contributed to the 2024-2025 Action Plan.

The five goals of the Mental Health and Addiction Strategy (Appendix A) outline the **S.T.E.P.S.** to Mentally Healthy Schools:

1. *Sustaining and Enhancing Shared Language Mental Health Literacy*

- Shared Language Mental Health Literacy Training for all school staff in 582 schools
- CYC/CYW Relational and Positive Engagement Professional Development SMHO Train-the-Trainer for all Child and Youth Counsellors to provide to 50% of the Child and Youth Workers
- Suicide Protocol Training and Anti-Sex Trafficking Training provided to school staff in 582 schools.
- Train the Trainer program for Professional Support Services Staff for Safe Talk certification, focusing on suicide prevention and intervention skills.
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) for mental health professionals.
- Healthy Relationships program implemented in middle schools, involving child and youth counsellors and student leadership.
- Addictions awareness and prevention initiatives across secondary schools, involving mental health addiction nurses and community collaboration.
- Naloxone Training for staff in various school programs.
- Providing training sessions, symposiums, and programs related to mental health, addictions, and anti-sex trafficking for parents/caregivers/guardians.
- Creation of programming in collaboration with youth outreach workers and Professional Support Services staff.

2. *Transforming Mental Health Delivery*

- Mental health skills building for students, staff and parents/caregivers/guardians through tier 1 and 2 presentations and groups that meet the unique needs and intersecting identities of students including newcomer students and students living with disabilities/special education needs.
- Collaborating with identity affirming community partners as well as TDSB departments such as the Urban Indigenous Education Centre, the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement and Professional Support Services staff for targeted mental health supports.

Tier 1:

- Trauma Informed and Healing Engagement Practices; Suicide Awareness, Intervention and Postvention; Anti-Sex Trafficking; Addictions Awareness and Abuse and Neglect of Students
- Enhancing virtual mental health identity affirming resources for school staff for newcomers, students living with disabilities/special education needs and that are identity affirming. Mental Health Ambassadors in every school (students, staff and parents) to support in implementing daily mental health initiatives and resources in every school.
- Daily announcements to remind students about mental health resources in and outside of the school.

Tier 2:

- Professional Support Staff providing tailored groups to address emerging needs for students, school communities and parents/caregivers/guardians

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to raise awareness of positive mental health, coping and stress management skills, building awareness and connecting students to support within the school and with identity affirming mental health resources in the community.

Tier 3:

- Providing flexible support, counseling and care through in person and virtual modalities.

3. *Equity in Action*

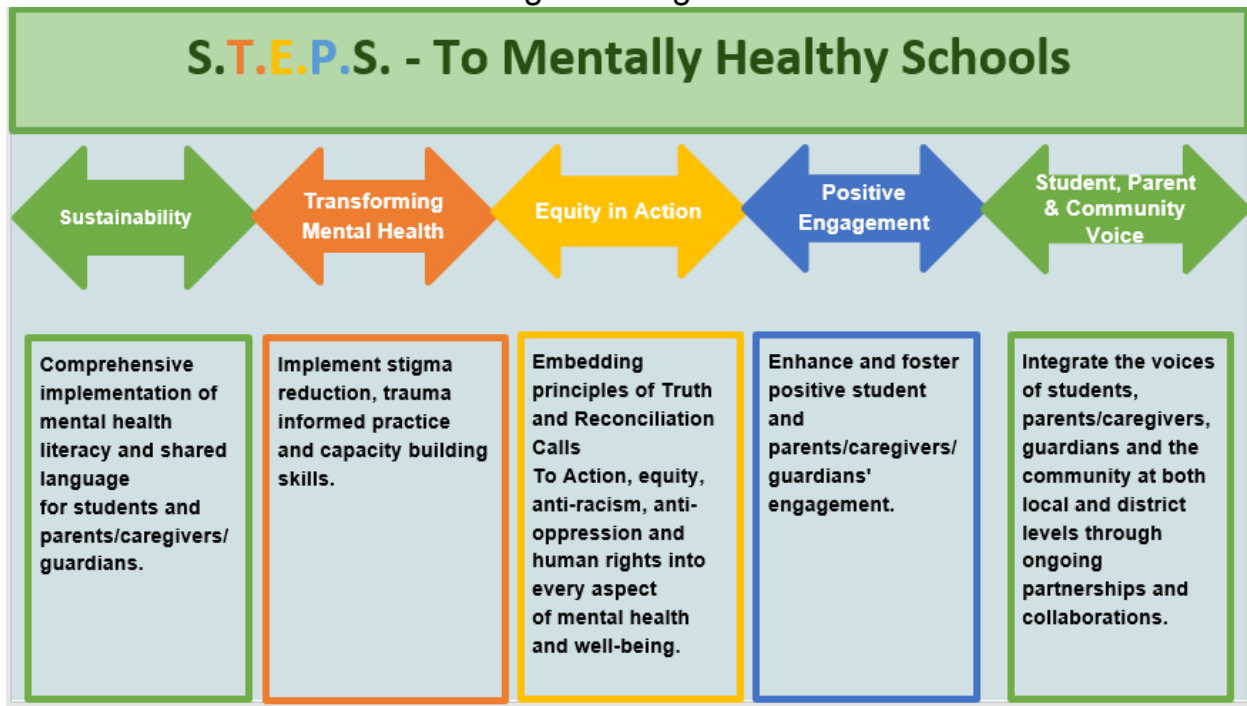
- Integrating impacts of stigma on mental health and well being for students, parents/caregivers/guardians and staff.
- Providing identity affirming mental health supports and collaborating with identity affirming community agencies to provide targeted mental health supports to groups of students (i.e. Substance Abuse Program for African Canadian and Caribbean Youth-S)
- Enhancing programs addressing anti-black racism for elementary students and facilitating courageous conversations about race in middle and high schools.
- Transitional programming for students with disabilities/special education needs in targeted schools to ensure inclusivity and support.

4. *Positive Student Engagement*

- Mental Health Ambassadors in every school (students, staff and parents) to support in implementing daily mental health initiatives and resources in every school.
- Daily announcements to remind students about mental health resources in and outside of the school.
- Providing Administrators and school staff with mandatory learning around positive student engagement, attendance policy and procedures and strengthening collaboration with identity affirming community agencies that can provide support for student engagement.

5. *Student, Parent/Caregiver/Guardian and Community Voice*

- Continue to meet with students, parents/caregivers/guardians, staff, and community members through the Students4Wellbeing, Parents as Partners for Mental Health and Well being and Professional Support Services Mental Health and Well being Committee.
- Facilitating collaboratives 2-3 times during the school year with over 87 identity affirming community agencies and community partners that provide feedback, resources and suggestions about TDSB's anti-sex trafficking, mental health and addiction initiatives and strategies.



The TDSB is implementing an Addictions Strategy alongside a one-year Mental Health Action Plan for 2024-2025. This plan emphasizes a tiered support system led by TDSB mental health professionals, focusing on skill development in suicide prevention, interventions, and mental health literacy for students, staff, and parents/caregivers/guardians. Key aspects include early identification of mental health concerns and the use of trauma-informed, culturally responsive practices to recognize and address students' diverse needs.

Mental health professionals are enhancing their expertise through evidence-based training provided by SMHO and community partners. These trainings cover areas such as Culturally Adaptive Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Safe-Talk, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills, and Newcomer Mental Health Intervention Techniques.

The strategy also focuses on strengthening collaborations with both existing and new identity-affirming community agencies. These collaborations address mental health, addictions, anti-sex trafficking, and provide support for Indigenous students, Black students, newcomers, families, students with disabilities, and other equity-deserving communities. The overall goal is to raise mental health awareness among students, empower them to advocate for their well-being, and promote positive mental health skills and school engagement, aligning with Ministry of Education indicators. Additional indicators may be incorporated as the strategy progresses. Appendix A contains details on the 2024-2025 Key Success Indicators and Resources and Actions.

Resource Implications

With Ministry funding, several identity-affirming Tier 1 and Tier 2 initiatives were developed to strengthen mentally healthy school environments and build capacity in key areas. These areas include foundational shared language for mental health literacy, trauma-informed and healing-centred care, anti-sex trafficking, addiction awareness, and suicide prevention for staff, students, and parents/caregivers/guardians.

The Key Success Indicators will continue into the 2024-2025 school year, with ongoing Resources and Actions aimed at further building and expanding these initiatives to enhance student mental health and well-being.

The following tools and resources support the implementation of the Action Plan:

- City of Toronto: [Our Health Our City: A Mental Health, Substance Use, Harm Reduction and Treatment Strategy for Toronto](#)
- [PPM 166 Keeping Students Safe: Policy Framework for School Board Anti-Sex Trafficking Protocols](#)
- [PPM 169 Student Mental Health](#)
- Children's Mental Health Ontario Facts & Figures: Key Facts and Data Points <https://cmho.org/facts-figures/>
- Hospital for Sick Kids Mental Health Strategy [SickKids-Mental-Health-Strategic-Plan.pdf](#)
- [Right Time, Right Care](#): Strengthening Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions System of Care for Children and Young People.
- School Mental Health Ontario: [Leading Mentally Healthy Schools Reflection Tool Kit](#)
- School Mental Health Ontario: [Foundations for Mentally Healthy Schools Resources and Tool Kits](#)
- School Mental Health Ontario: [Cultural Humility Self-Reflection Tool for School Staff](#)
- School Mental Health Ontario: [Parents and Caregivers](#)
- School Mental Health Ontario: [Actions for Caring Adults in Student Engagement Initiatives Related to Mental Health](#)
- School Mental Health Ontario: [Student Engagement Toolkit](#)
- School Mental Health Ontario: [Mental Health Lesson Plan for Educators-Wayfinder](#)
- School Mental Health Ontario: [Supporting Mental Wellness Amongst Students with Special Education Needs](#)
- [TDSB Student Census 2023](#)

Communications Considerations

Professional Support Services will work with Communications and Public Affairs to establish a communications plan to effectively communicate the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy internally and externally.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

- Toronto District School Board: [Abuse and Neglect of Students \(PR 560\)](#)
- Toronto District School Board: [Anti-Sex Trafficking Policy \(099\)](#)
- Toronto District School Board: [Life Promotion/Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention Protocol](#) (PR 726)
- Equity Policy (P037)
- Human Right Policy (P031)

From

Louise Sirisko, Associate Director, Instructional Innovation and Equitable Outcomes
Louise.Sirisko@tdsb.on.ca

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Shameen Sandhu, System Leader, Mental Health and Professional Support Services
Shameen.Sandhu@tdsb.on.ca

Imani Hennie, Mental Health Lead, Imani.Hennie@tdsb.on.ca
Annette Grossi, Mental Health Lead, Annette.Grossi@tdsb.on.ca

Appendix A

2023-2026

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION STRATEGY

2024-2025 ONE YEAR ACTION PLAN & KEY SUCCESS INDICATORS

S.T.E.P.S TO MENTALLY HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Goal 1 –Sustaining and Enhancing Mental Health Literacy

Compressive implementation of mental health literacy and shared language for students, parents/caregivers/guardians.

Key Success Indicators

1. Provide ongoing updated training and professional development opportunities for staff to enhance their understanding of shared language mental health literacy about students that is grounded in equity, anti-oppression, and anti-racism approaches.
2. Develop, update, and implement evidenced-informed awareness, prevention, and intervention that includes training sessions, workshops, and educational materials for staff for:
 - ✓ Life Promotion and Suicide Prevention and postvention.
 - ✓ Staff trained to support circles of care for students struggling with mental health issues.
 - ✓ Continue to strengthen duty-to-report obligations regarding the abuse and neglect of students.
 - ✓ Continue to increase awareness, prevention, and interventions of anti-sex trafficking strategies and support resources.
 - ✓ Continue to increase awareness and prevention of addictions through targeted school campaigns, events, and resources that promote healthy coping strategies and circle of care networks.
 - ✓ Continue to build capacity and skills for staff about shared language mental health literacy and trauma-informed and healing-centred care, supports, and practices
 - ✓ Continue to provide ongoing and evidence-informed mental health and well being training to build capacity and skills of Professional Support a) and understanding intersectionality, and identity-affirming practices from an equity, anti-racism, and anti-oppression lens.
 - ✓ Continue to build capacity through the integration and implementation of trauma-informed training that prioritizes the mental health and well being of students and staff.
3. Establish a system for monitoring and evaluating the impact of capacity-building initiatives on mental health awareness in collaboration with community identity-affirming agencies that support mentally healthy schools.

4. Bolster a culture of continuous learning, skill building, and improving access to community supports by promoting access, information sharing, open dialogue and feedback from community partners and organizations to stay updated on affirming evidence-informed practices and emerging trends in mental health awareness and support, that is culturally relevant and identity-affirming.

Resources and Actions

Tier 1:

- Annual Creating Spaces of Belonging Conference
 - Focuses on Indigenous approaches to well being.
 - Theme for 2024: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA.
- Aanse: Indigenous Student Well being and Achievement Project
 - Includes Trauma-Informed Practices and Cultural Safety workshops.
 - Focuses on enhancing Indigenous student well being.
- Urban Indigenous Education Centre:
 - Trauma Informed and Culturally Safe Practices Professional Learning Series
 - Consists of 2- and 3-part workshops.
 - Part of the Biidaaban: Truth and Reconciliation Project.
 - Addresses confronting Anti-Indigenous Racism.
- Indigenous Community Resource Guidebook
 - Developed to provide support and resources for Indigenous communities.
- Professional Development for PSS Staff via SMHO
 - Provides Professional Development (PD) on various topics including Culturally Responsive Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Combating Anti-Black Racism, and Substance Use Training via School Mental Health Ontario.
- Professional Support Services
 - Shared Language Mental Health Literacy
 - Presented by Mental Health Leads to all Guidance Counsellors, Aspiring Leaders, PSS staff, and school communities across over 250 schools.
 - Trauma-Informed and Healing Engagement
 - Delivers Trauma-Informed Professional Development to 500 PSS staff, all Guidance Counsellors, Early Years Team, and Aspiring Leaders.
 - Implemented a Train-the-Trainer Model with 100 Professional Support Services staff..
 - Anti-Sex Trafficking:
 - Developed 5 hours of professional development modules and sessions for staff and educators
 - Provides leadership learning sessions and in-school training for educators, reaching over 200 schools.
 - Suicide Prevention:
 - Conducts Suicide Protocol Training for over 400 schools via Social Work staff.
 - Plans to provide ASIST Training and SafeTalk Train-the-Trainer model with PSS staff..
 - Culturally Adaptive Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CA-CBT)
 - Providing CA-CBT for 90 Social Workers.
 - Addictions:

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- Provided Addictions & Naloxone Training for Professional Support Services Staff, expanding to Guidance and Alternative Program Staff.
- Developing the Naloxone Procedure
- Bell Let's Talk Mental Health
 - Curated and provided resources for Students, Parents/Caregiver/Guardians, Support Staff, and Educators.
- Mental Health & Well being Website
 - Updated and revised the internal Mental Health & Well-Being TDSB site for staff.
 - Updated and revised the external Mental Health & Well-Being site.
- Staff Mental Health & Well being Initiatives
 - Provided and facilitated wellness evening initiatives, with over 500 staff members attending.
 - Implemented various Staff Mental Health & Well Being initiatives.

Goal 2 – Transforming Mental Health Delivery Grounding Trauma-Informed Care, Shared Language Mental Health Literacy and Equity

Implement stigma, trauma informed practice and capacity building skills.

Key Success Indicators

1. Develop culturally relevant and identity-affirming programming that centres identities, inclusivity which promotes a sense of mattering and belonging for every student and staff.
2. Build capacity for strategies that promote positive student mental health and engagement, increase student achievement and attendance through culturally relevant and inclusive programming that meets the needs and interests of every student.
3. Empower student voice and perspectives to capture lived experiences through ongoing student informed initiatives and committees that intentionally reflect intersecting identities and uplift student voices focused on equity within mental health and well being, trauma-informed care, addictions, suicide awareness, and anti-sex trafficking.
4. Develop mental health identity-affirming toolkits.
5. Update and enhance the centralized hub for culturally relevant and inclusive mental health support services and resources that is easily accessible to all students, staff, and families.
6. Ensure that culturally relevant and identity-affirming support services and resources are inclusive of all identities (i.e., Black, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+ including other marginalized students and students identified with disabilities/special needs) and intersecting identities.

Resources and Actions

Tier 1:

- Children's Mental Health Week Resources

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- Created a Padlet for staff to share initiatives and activities for Children's Mental Health Week
- Anti-Sex Trafficking Resources
 - Conducted PD and capacity building sessions with community partners.
 - Provided the Onechild.org anti-sex trafficking toolkit.
- Summer Learning Mental Health Initiatives
 - CYW and Social Workers offered daily mental health and well being groups/initiatives during summer school, collaborating with community partners.
- Mental Health & Leadership Portal
 - Collaborated with Executive Superintendents to support Lead Mental Health & Well Being Administrators, providing resources and support in each school community.
- Attendance and Engagement Strategies for Leadership (SOE's and Administrators)
 - Presented attendance engagement strategies, procedures, policy, and legislation to all leaders.
- Mental Health Reach Out to Secondary Students
 - Distributed magnets with Mental Health contact information to all secondary schools.
 - Created daily announcements for principals to remind students about mental health and access to support.
- Anti-Sex Trafficking Community Collaborative
 - Held regular meetings with Mental Health partners and community agencies supporting anti-sex trafficking initiatives.
- Anti-Sex Trafficking Webpage
 - Established an external Anti-Sex Trafficking Website connecting parents, caregivers, guardians, staff, and students with identity-affirming community support.
- Addictions Awareness & Prevention Webpage
 - Developed a Substance Use/Misuse/Abuse external website featuring student voices.
- Telepsychiatry with Hospital for Sick Kids; Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and STRIDES
 - Referrals for students and families to telepsychiatry services for enhanced accessibility and reach.
- Policy/Procedure Updates various policies including Abuse and Neglect, Sexual Misconduct, and creating an Anti-Sex Trafficking Policy.
- Mental Health & Well being App.
 - Supported and consulted in the building of the TDSB Mental Health & Well-being App. for secondary students that provides immediate access to mental health resources.

Tier 2:

- Suicide Prevention Pilot Wellness Program with Sunnybrook Hospital
 - Offered the Harry Potter, MyOwl program to students in grades 7-8 to strengthen wellness and reduce thoughts of suicide and self-injurious behaviours.
- Anti-Sex Trafficking: Healthy Masculinity Pilot Program in Malvern
 - Conducted a workshop on healthy masculinity for male identifying students to build awareness and bring action plans into their school spaces.

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- Students4Wellbeing and Mental Health Leads: Ursula Franklin Academy Wellness Conference
 - Participated and co-facilitated Shared Language Mental Health Literacy presentations during their wellness conference to over 100 students.
- Exercise2Success: Mental and Physical Wellness Group
 - Provides programming in 5 secondary and middle schools to build student mental health and wellness capacity.

Goal 3 – Equity in Action for Mentally Healthy Schools

Embedding principles of Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, equity, anti-racism, anti-oppression and human rights into every aspect of mental health and well being.

Key Success Indicators:

1. Inform, collaborate, and partner with Indigenous affirming community organizations to inform programming and initiatives that meet unique mental health and well being needs and challenges faced by Indigenous students and intersecting identities.
2. Inform, collaborate, and partner with Black affirming community organizations to inform programming and initiatives that meet the unique mental health and well being needs and challenges faced by Black students and intersecting identities.
3. Inform, collaborate, and partner with Indigenous affirming community organizations to inform programming and initiatives that meet unique mental health and well being needs and challenges faced by 2SLGBTQIA students and intersecting identities.
4. Inform, collaborate, and partner with identity-affirming community organizations to inform programming and initiatives that meet unique mental health and well being needs and challenges faced by students identified with disabilities/Special Education Needs and intersecting social identities.
5. Inform, collaborate, and partner with affirming community organizations to inform programming and initiatives that meet unique mental health and well being needs and challenges faced by students from various racial and intersecting identities.

Resources and Actions

Tier 1:

- Urban Indigenous Education Centre:
 - Hosted the Creating Spaces of Belonging Conference focusing on Indigenous well being.
 - Conducted Trauma Informed Practices and Cultural Safety workshops under Aanse project.
 - Offered Trauma Informed and Culturally Safer Practices Professional Learning Series.
 - Developed Indigenous Community Resource Guidebook.
- Professional Support Services
- Black Mental Health:

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- Conducted evening webinars and Talk Series to support Black Mental Health.
- Updated and enhanced Black Mental Health Resources.
- Gender Identity Group (GIG)
 - Held sessions to support families, wellness, and provide mental health resources for GIG members.
- identity-affirming Mental Health
 - Built partnerships with identity-affirming community partners for mental health support.

Tier 2:

- Black Mental Health Literacy-Grades 4-6
 - "Talking About Race & Racism" workshop series in 8 schools.
- Substance Abuse Program for African and Caribbean Canadian Youth
 - Provided addiction awareness seminars for 200 Black identifying youth in 4 secondary schools.
- Transition Supports: Mental Health for Neurodiverse Students
 - Supported students with disabilities/special education needs with transition programming for students and families in over 18 secondary schools.
- Abuse & Neglect of Students-Professional Development
 - Conducted compliance training and provided professional development on Abuse and Neglect to school staff. Supported over 250 schools.
- Child and Youth Services Courageous Conversations
 - Hosted Courageous Conversations on Anti-Racism for staff.

Goal 4 – Positive Engagement for Students

Enhance and foster positive student and parents/caregivers/guardians' engagement.

Key Success Indicators:

1. Develop and maintain mental health identity-affirming toolkits to support student engagement while updating the centralized hub for mental health support services to enhance accessibility for all stakeholders.
2. Collaborate with Professional Support Services staff and community partners to build capacity for student-led mental health initiatives, addressing various aspects such as mental health, addictions, anti-sex trafficking, and suicide prevention.
3. Implement inclusive strategies to foster a welcoming environment where every student and staff member feels valued and respected, regardless of their backgrounds or identities, promoting a culture of belonging.
4. Facilitate opportunities for students and staff to engage with one another, fostering supportive relationships within the school community, while making mental health resources readily available and easily accessible for their well being.
5. Organize initiatives and events that respect diverse identities, promote equity and inclusion, and cultivate a culture of respect and understanding within the school environment.

Resources and Actions

Tier 1:

- Professional Support Services - Children's Mental Health Week Resources
 - Organized a Week of Culturally Responsive Mental Health Activities for Students, Caregivers, Guardians, Support Staff, and Educators.
- Let's Connect About Mental Health & Well being Webinar
 - Conducted virtual webinars addressing mental health and well being, featuring various topics and guest speakers.
- Youth In Care Conference
 - Hosted a conference led by youth voices focusing on mental wellness and well being for youth in care.

Tier 2:

- Human Trafficking Awareness
 - Collaborated with Victim Services of Toronto and Onechild.ca to organize a symposium on anti-sex trafficking awareness and healthy relationships. Over 34,548 students supported, and 188 schools did the 2 hour training.
 - Covenant House presentations: 6548 students and 335 staff and over 30 schools
 -
- Toronto Public Health Nurses: Youth Mental Health & Addictions Champion Pilot Project
 - Implemented a pilot project providing support for addictions and mental health learning to students in 4 secondary schools.
- Youth Substance Abuse Program for Alternative Schools
 - Delivered substance use awareness and support to students in alternative programs, starting with a pilot at Parkview Alternative.

Goal 5: Student, Parent/Caregiver/Guardian and Community Voice

Integrate the voices of students, parents/caregivers/guardians and the community at both local and district levels through ongoing partnerships and collaborations.

Key Success Indicators:

1. Establish a system for monitoring and evaluating the impact of capacity-building initiatives on mental health awareness in collaboration with TDSB Research.
2. Facilitate the Parent as Partners for Mental Health and Well Being Committee, the Students4WellBeing Committee and the Professional Support Services Mental Health and Well Being Committee.
3. Regularly consult and meet with the Mental Health, Anti-Sex Trafficking and Addictions Community Collaborative composed of community and identity-affirming partners two to three times a year to sustain ongoing communication and feedback about TDSB mental health, addiction and anti-sex trafficking initiatives.

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4. Collaborate with external partners and organizations to stay updated on affirming evidence-informed practices and emerging trends in mental health awareness and support, that is culturally relevant and identity-affirming for Professional Support Services Staff and Staff.
5. Strengthen collaborative relationships with local community agencies to build ongoing educational initiatives about mental health literacy, trauma-informed care, addictions, suicide awareness, and anti-sex trafficking.
6. Enhance ongoing collaboration with community partners to incorporate accessible pathways to provide access to culturally responsive and identity-affirming services and programming for students and families such as treatments centres, Educational Community Partnership Programs (ECPP) and hospitals to enhance bridging of mental health and well being supports.

Resources and Actions

Tier 1:

- Professional Support Services - Virtual Office Hours
 - Offered virtual drop-in sessions after school hours for parents seeking support from regulated health care professionals.
- Parent Involvement Advisory Committee Conference
 - Provided access to conferences promoting comprehensive mental health practices, fostering collaboration and innovation for parents/caregivers/guardians.
- Social Work Virtual Fair for Parents/Caregivers/Guardians
 - Conducted virtual community fairs with identity-affirming community agencies to provide resources and care for parents/caregivers/guardians of students with special education/complex needs.

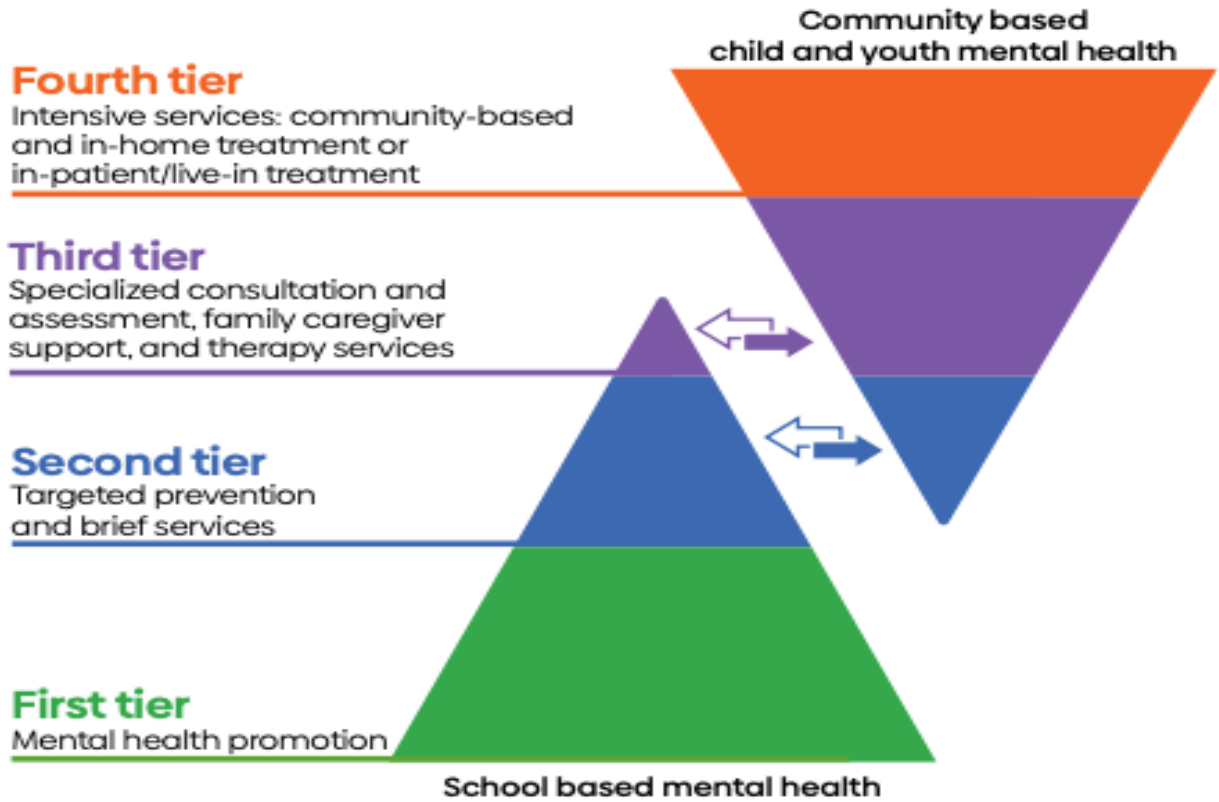
Tier 2:

- Urban Indigenous Education Centre - Indigenous Student Summer Leadership Program
 - Implemented a summer leadership program for Indigenous students aimed at fostering leadership skills and cultural connection.
- Professional Support Services
 - Holds regular meetings with identity-affirming community partners to establish formalized partnerships for students, parents/caregivers/guardians, and staff.

Appendix B

SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH ONTARIO INTERVENTION AND PATHWAYS TO CARE

Retrieved from: School Mental Health Ontario [Intervention and pathways to care \(tier 3\) - School administrators - School Mental Health Ontario \(smho-smso.ca\)](#)



Appendix C

PPM 169 STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENT FOR SCHOOL BOARDS

Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 169

Requirements for School Boards

3 YEAR MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY & 1 YEAR ACTION PLAN

JOINT PLANNING WITH COMMUNITY MH PROVIDERS

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

EVIDENCE-INFORMED BRIEF INTERVENTIONS

SUICIDE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION & POSTVENTION

VIRTUAL CARE

ENHANCE EDUCATION & STAFF MH LITERACY

MANDATORY MH LITERACY FOR STUDENTS

FAMILY MH AWARENESS

SOCIO-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

MH ABSENCES



Toronto District School Board Literacy Strategy, 2024-2028

To: Program and School Services Committee

Date: 25 September, 2024

Report No.: 09-24-4769

Strategic Directions

- Achieve - All students reach high levels of achievement, success, and personal development.
- Commit to the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action.
- Belong - All students belong, are engaged, and valued in an inclusive environment.
- Thrive - All students graduate with the confidence, skills, and knowledge to thrive.

Equity as a guiding principle: Equity is foundational to all TDSB work and will be embedded throughout the strategic directions.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the TDSB Literacy Strategy, 2024-2028 be received.

Context

Literacy is globally recognized as a fundamental human right. It's the gateway to early and lifelong learning, belonging, equity, and excellence. Literacy is also a social determinant of health and contributes to people's well-being, As stated in the *UNESCO Strategy for Youth and Adult Literacy (2020-2025)*,

“Literacy is an essential component of the right to education and a prerequisite for accessing other human rights...the inability to read and write at a basic level of proficiency and to actively participate in an increasingly literate and digitized world is potentially a source of exclusion and a major barrier to engaging more actively in political, social, cultural and economic activities.” (UNESCO, 2024, Annex I, p. 1).

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has developed the TDSB Literacy Strategy (2024-2028), which acknowledges every student's right to literacy proficiency and commits to realizing its Vision of the Literate Learner. The evolving social and economic contexts within which students learn and live require proficiency across different forms of literacy (multi-literacies).

There are several important factors that have contributed to the development of the TDSB Literacy Strategy, including Global, National, Provincial, and local TDSB research and Achievement data.

Outlined below are other key factors that have informed the development of this Literacy Strategy:

- In October 2019, The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) launched a public inquiry into human rights issues affecting students with reading disabilities. Following this inquiry, in 2022 the OHRC released the “Right to Read” Report with recommendations for the Ministry of Education, school boards and faculties of education.
- In January, 2023 TDSB passed a Motion to make English: Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices NBE3U/C/E the compulsory Grade 11 English course for TDSB students to take effect in September 2024.
- In June, 2023 the Ministry of Education released the Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1 to 8: Language, and the de-streamed Grade 9 English course for implementation in September of the 2023-24 school year. Appropriate recommendations from the OHRC “Right to Read Report” are included within the new curriculum. The Four Strands of the Language Curriculum are:
 - A. Literacy Connections and Applications
 - B. Foundations of Language
 - C. Comprehension: Understanding and Responding to Texts
 - D. Composition: Expressing Ideas and Creating Texts
- In July of 2023, The Ministry of Education issued Policy/Program Memorandum 168 which provides direction to school boards on the requirement to complete annual early reading screenings for all students in Senior Kindergarten through Grade 2. This memorandum also outlines direction to school boards regarding the requirement of protected time for reading instruction in Grades 1 to 3.
- In August, 2023 the Student Achievement Plan (SAP) was developed and released by the Ontario Ministry of Education as part of the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023. The plan includes goals and measures that all school boards across Ontario must use to track student achievement, engagement, and well-being. The measures in the TDSB Literacy Strategy are aligned with the Ministry SAP.
- In the spring of 2024, the TDSB passed the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) which has five strategic directions: *Truth and Reconciliation*, *Belong*, *Achieve*, *Thrive* and *Revitalize*.

The TDSB Literacy Strategy is nested in the *Achieve* pillar where, “All students reach high levels of achievement, success and personal development.”

Literacy is the gateway to equity, excellence and high achievement. It’s a critical life skill that permeates every subject and aspect of a student’s educational journey, throughout

life. Ontario students are consistently among the top performers in Canadian and International assessments/comparisons of reading performance (e.g., OECD, 2023). As reported by the Ontario Ministry of Education on December 5, 2023, of 81 international jurisdictions, Ontario ranked second overall in reading internationally and nationally on the 2022 PISA reading assessment (Council of Ministers of Education, 2023, pg. 61). Over the past two decades, the TDSB has either been on par with, or above, the provincial averages in Education Quality and Accountability (EQAO) Grade 3 and 6 assessments of Reading and Writing and the Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). While the TDSB data shows that TDSB students have made progress (recovery) since the pandemic, there are still too many students, particularly those who have been historically and currently marginalized, including racialized students and those from low-income families, not meeting the required provincial literacy benchmarks. Thus, intentional and system-wide approaches are needed to close current achievement gaps and address the disproportionate outcomes some TDSB students are experiencing. This 2024-2028 Literacy Strategy aims to achieve TDSB's Vision of the Literate Learner and meet the expectations set out in the Achieve Pillar of the TDSB MYSP. It is both aspirational and practical and is grounded firmly in current global research as well as international, provincial and TDSB data. If not consistently addressed in every elementary school grade, the effects of reading development in the early years, as shown in the post-pandemic Grade 1 TDSB reading data, as well in other jurisdictions globally, could have a significant detrimental effect across the system in relation to student academic success as these students continue through their elementary and secondary education. In other words, if the current literacy deficits aren't addressed across the system now, they will continue to impact students' literacy development, and broader academic achievement over the course of their school career, and beyond. Unfortunately, those groups of students who were not performing well pre-pandemic have been disproportionately impacted post pandemic.

The TDSB Literacy Strategy includes a Framework that identifies the Goals, Key Actions and Key Monitoring Indicators related to the Learner, Educator, and Learning Environment. These goals and actions will be implemented across the system, in both elementary and secondary schools The Goals identified in the strategy are *grounded in the following*:

- *The Student Achievement Plan*
- *The Achieve Pillar of the MYSP;*
- *Key big ideas from the Ontario Kindergarten Curriculum and Ontario Language Curricula (Grades 1 to 9); and,*
- *Vision of the Literate Learner.*

The Goals are broad in nature and will help ensure the Strategy remains focused. The Key Measurement Indicators demonstrate the approaches to not only measuring the actions in relation to the goals, but also serve as a means to support system accountability. The Key Measurement Indicators align with the Ministry of Education Student Achievement Plan indicators and include local qualitative indicators that will show impact at the school level. The TDSB is committed to monitoring literacy achievement and ensuring educators are better equipped to meet the literacy needs of all students. Layered assessments and pedagogical documentation that highlight

student thinking and wondering, and honours family perspectives, will be used to inform subsequent learning opportunities, teaching and tiered intervention.

Through this Literacy Strategy, the TDSB aims to cultivate and inspire curious and innovative learners and citizens who use their critical thinking skills as readers, writers and communicators, to engage critically in the world around them and thrive in this evolving, diverse and complex global context.

“...Acquiring literacy is an empowering process, enabling millions to enjoy access to knowledge and information which broadens horizons, increases opportunities and creates alternatives for building a better life.”

Kofi Annan.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Detailed implementation plans based on the Framework are in development to support implementation of the TDSB Literacy Strategy.

Upon receipt, the TDSB Literacy Strategy Report will be communicated with all segments of the TDSB community. It will also be shared with staff to guide their work and implementation planning.

Resource Implications

Ministry-designated funding to support literacy intervention and screening teachers, intervention resources, along with TDSB funding will be utilized to support the implementation of the TDSB Literacy Strategy.

Communications Considerations

The Early Years and Literacy team will work with Communications and Public Affairs to establish a communications plan to effectively communicate the TDSB Literacy Strategy internally and externally.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

Family and Caregiver Early Literacy Guide & Translations

Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) 2024-28

Policy P040 - Accountability for Student Achievement

Policy P037 - Equity Policy

Policy P031 - Human Rights

Policy P038 - Transforming Student Learning in Literature and Mathematics Policy

Policy P023 - Parent and Caregiver Engagement Policy

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). Calls to Action;

Appendices

- Appendix A: The TDSB Literacy Strategy, 2024-2028
- Appendix B: TDSB Early and Later Literacy Frameworks
- Appendix C: Grade 1 System Literacy Data (continued)

From

Audley Salmon, Associate Director, Learning Transformation and Equity audley.salmon@tdsb.on.ca

Lynn Strangway, Interim Executive Superintendent, Student Achievement and Pathways lynn.strangway@tdsb.on.ca

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Literacy Strategy 2024 - 2028



INSPIRING MINDS & SHAPING FUTURES: Our Multi-Year Commitment to Student Success 2024-2028

Introduction

TDSB Literacy Strategy 2024-2028
Appendix A

Literacy is the pathway to equity, excellence and high achievement. It is a fundamental human right.

Literacy is globally recognized as a fundamental human right. It's the gateway to early and lifelong learning, belonging, equity, and excellence. Literacy is also a social determinant of health and contributes to people's well-being. As stated in the *UNESCO Strategy for Youth and Adult Literacy (2020-2025)*,

"Literacy is an essential component of the right to education and a prerequisite for accessing other human rights...the inability to read and write at a basic level of proficiency and to actively participate in an increasingly literate and digitized world is potentially a source of exclusion and a major barrier to engaging more actively in political, social, cultural and economic activities." (UNESCO, 2019, Annex I, p. 1).

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has developed the Literacy Strategy (2024-2028), which acknowledges every student's right to literacy proficiency and commits to realizing its Vision of the literate learner. The evolving social and economic contexts within which students learn and live require proficiency across different forms of literacy (multi-literacies). To that end, through this Literacy Strategy, the TDSB aims to cultivate and inspire curious and innovative learners and citizens who use their critical thinking skills as readers, writers and communicators, to engage critically in the world around them and thrive in this evolving, diverse and complex global context.

Context

A student's literacy proficiency develops over time and has many layers of influence, including early exposure to conversations, books, print and access to technology; opportunities for shared reading within families; and in various early years programs. Children and youth are individuals who must be seen and heard. They have the right to have their voices heard in all matters that affect them. Literacy is the language OF learning.



Introduction

Reflecting on recent data, the TDSB recognizes that realizing the Vision of the Literate Learner described below requires intentional support following the significant learning interruptions posed throughout and following the pandemic. The TDSB Literacy Strategy lays out the framework, context and roadmap for literacy learning, teaching and leading for the next four years and beyond. The Strategy is based on current global research and international, national, provincial and local data. Detailed implementation plans and resources will be developed to support the goals and actions outlined in this Strategy.

What do we mean by Literacy?

"...literacy is now understood as a means of identification, understanding, interpretation, creation, and communication in an increasingly digital, text-mediated, information-rich and fast-changing world. Literacy is a continuum of learning and proficiency in reading, writing and using numbers throughout life and is part of a larger set of skills, which include digital skills, media literacy, education for sustainable development and global citizenship as well as job-specific skills. Literacy skills themselves are expanding and evolving as people engage more and more with information and learning through digital technology." (UNESCO, 2024, para 2.)

Literacy encompasses many skills essential for navigating contemporary society. It includes traditional literacy, structured literacy (Science of Reading), ensuring proficiency in reading, writing, and understanding oral and written language. It also involves valuing different ways of knowing and communicating. For many cultures, literacy also encompasses being in relationship with language and each other. Additionally, literacy incorporates multiliteracies such as:



Introduction

- **Oral Language** is a foundation for early literacy development. Honouring the wide diversity of oral language skills ensures academic success. Students come into education with oral language skills that are not only complex but provide them with resources to develop relationships, share lived experiences and familial stories, while developing strong vocabulary which is crucial for learning to read, write and communicate effectively.
- **Digital literacy** equips individuals with the skills to effectively utilize technology for communication, accessing information, and critical thinking.
- **Media literacy** fosters the ability to analyze and evaluate diverse media forms and discern between credible information and misinformation.
- **Cultural literacy** promotes an understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural backgrounds, traditions, histories, signs and symbols of different groups of people. This fosters respectful interactions and collaboration within and across communities.

Together, these literacies empower individuals to thrive in an interconnected world, navigate complex challenges, and actively participate in shaping their personal and collective futures (TDSB, 2024a).

“Literacy empowers individuals, reduces poverty, increases participation in the labour market, and positively impacts health and sustainable development”. It’s a means to fulfilling one’s human rights. [UNESCO, 2024 Literacy: what you need to know \(unesco.org\)](https://unesco.org)



Vision of the Literate Learner

The literate learner doesn't simply navigate a complex and rapidly changing world; they engage with, critically reflect on, and thrive in one.

This TDSB Literacy Strategy is designed to support all students, regardless of their identity, in creating, communicating, reading, writing and thinking critically with **confidence, fluency, and enjoyment**, regardless of the language of instruction. Their literacy skills allow them to contribute to positive social change, social justice, technological and economic growth. Literate learners will develop the skills to engage in learning that is transferable across various disciplines from the early years to secondary school and beyond. Their literacy skills will allow students to pursue educational and vocational opportunities that are meaningful to them. Multiliterate learners will be able to actively participate as responsible citizens who uphold human rights and who can explore and engage with the world around them.



The Early Literacy Learner

A solid foundation in literacy in the early years is important for students to be successful in all curriculum areas as they move throughout the primary, junior, intermediate and senior divisions in school. As stated in TDSB's [Early Learning and Care Policy](#) (TDSB, 2022a), "Children are born learners, curious and capable, and important contributors in their learning. By planning responsive, inclusive and engaging programs, educators will capitalize on children's development in the early years" (p.2). The TDSB recognizes that a child's literacy journey starts well before they transition to kindergarten. As children learn to talk, begin to explore with books, print, reading and writing, and engage in other social literacy experiences, the foundation for later literacy development is laid - all beginning before age three (Zero to Three, 2024).

According to the Child Mind Institute, if a child reads one picture book a day with their parents or caregivers they will be exposed to 78,000 different words each year. From birth to kindergarten, this means they will have been exposed to 1.4 million more words than children who are not exposed to books (Zero to Three, 2024). Reading with and engaging infants, toddlers and young children, and exposing

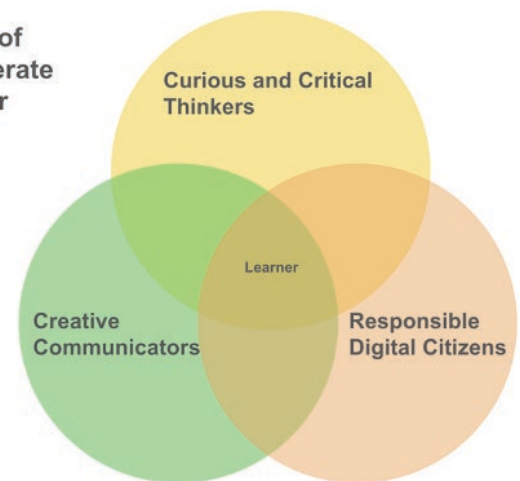
Vision of the Literate Learner

them to books and other forms of text/print directly impacts their early and ongoing literacy development and academic achievement. Adults who engage in conversations with their children using complex language also increase their children's vocabulary and later literacy development. The TDSB has a long history of supporting children's early literacy development through its EarlyON Child and Family Centres (formerly Parenting and Family Literacy Centres), and continues to do so through its many partnerships with various child care and early years programs in schools. The partnerships are vital to a thriving school community, and support these important early literacy experiences for children and families.

All literacy learners are... Curious and Critical Thinkers. They use their literacy skills:

- to seek knowledge;
- articulate their thoughts;
- ask questions that clarify their understanding and thinking;
- probe more deeply into an issue or topic; and
- make meaningful connections between themselves, the texts they encounter, and the world around them (adapted from Adolescent Literacy Guide, 2016).

Vision of the Literate Learner



Literacy learners are lifelong learners and consumers of information both in, and beyond school. They develop proficiency in the critical consumption and analysis of information. They question the sources of information they encounter, and the often covert biases within. Literacy learners consider different perspectives and positions, and how language may be used to exercise power and/or maintain the status quo (Adolescent Literacy Guide, 2016).

Creative Communicators

Literacy learners are creative communicators. They:

- look for opportunities for purposeful self-expression to authentic audiences about meaningful topics and issues;
- carefully consider which platforms, tools, styles, and formats to use to achieve their purpose and reach their audience (International Society for Technology and Education (ISTE); and,
- express informed positions in creative ways, thereby contributing to meaningful social and technological change.

Literacy learners use language to interact and connect with individuals and communities, for personal growth and for active participation as global citizens.

Vision of the Literate Learner

Digital Citizens

Literacy learners are digital citizens. They:

- recognize the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of living, learning and working in an interconnected digital world (ISTE);
- act and model digital citizenship in ways that are safe, legal and ethical (ISTE);
- use technology to access multiple sources of information to develop and deepen their knowledge, and seek divergent perspectives; and
- use their literacy skills to contribute to social change and justice.

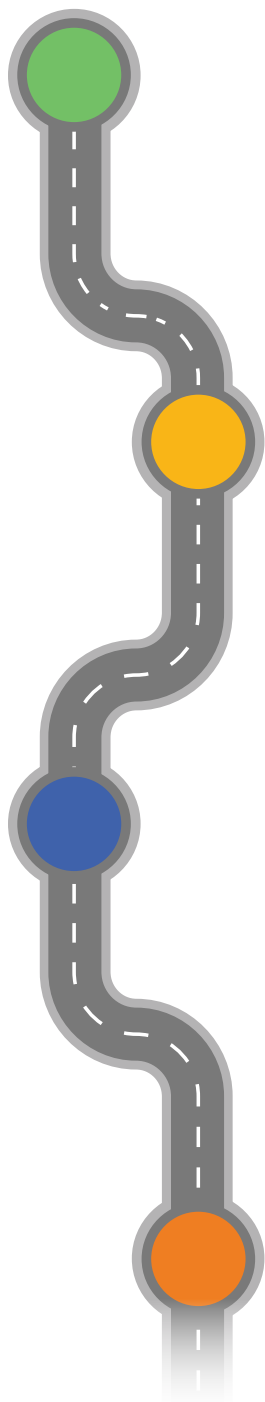
Students who actively seek out multiple ways of knowing within the digital world will support the critical citizenship required to drive ongoing social growth and development within and across communities.



Background

The timeline below describes the key milestones that have influenced and led to the development of the TDSB Literacy Strategy (2024-2028).

Key Milestones to date



September 2019

Literacy Intervention Model Introduced in 50 TDSB Schools

- Where data showed students had the most need for intensive intervention support within Grade 1 classrooms, along with support for kindergarten classes.
- Model happens within the classroom where the Literacy Intervention teacher influences both student and educator learning.
- Note: This Intervention Model was interrupted during the pandemic. Full implementation happened in the 2022-23 school year.

January 2022

TDSB Released the Early Reading Framework

- Outlines the components of effective reading instruction for students from Kindergarten to Grade 3.

Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) Released Right to Read Report

- Includes recommendations for the Ministry of Education, school boards and faculties of education, following a public inquiry by the OHRC into human rights issues affecting students with reading disabilities (October 2019).

Spring 2022

TDSB Early Reading Instruction Family and Caregiver Guide Released

- Available in English and translated into 22 most common languages in the TDSB.

Instructional Strategies to Support Teaching and Learning in Reading Companion Document Created

- Supports the implementation of the Ministry of Education’s Effective Early Reading Instruction: A Teacher’s Guide in response to the OHRC Right to Read Report.

January 2023

TDSB Passed Motion to Make English: Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices NBE3U/C/E Compulsory Grade 11 English Course for TDSB Students (September 2024).

Background



June 2023

Ministry of Education Released the Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1 to 8: Language and the De-streamed Grade 9 English Course (September 2023 implementation)

- Appropriate recommendations from the OHRC Right to Read Report are included within the new curriculum. The Four Strands of the Language Curriculum are: *Literacy Connections and Applications, Foundations of Language, Comprehension: Understanding and Responding to Texts, and Composition: Expressing Ideas and Creating Texts.*

July 2023

Ministry of Education Issued Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 168

- Provides direction to school boards on the requirement to complete annual early reading screenings for all students in Senior Kindergarten to Grade 2.
- Outlines direction to school boards regarding the requirement of protected time for reading instruction in Grades 1 to 3.

August 2023

Student Achievement Plan Developed and Released by Ministry of Education

- Part of the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023, the plan includes goals and measures that all Ontario school boards must use to track student achievement, engagement, and well-being.

April 2024

TDSB Released the Later Literacy Framework

- Outlines the components of effective literacy instruction for students from Grades 4-12.

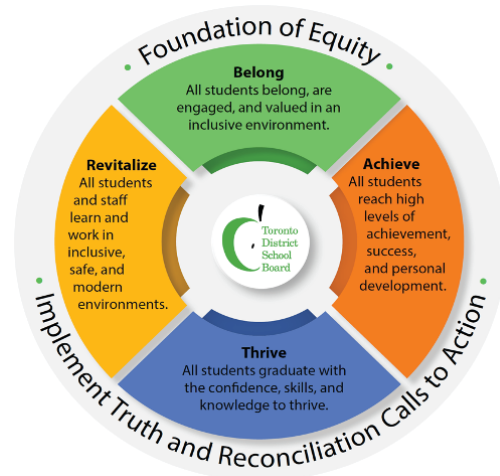
TDSB Launched 2024-28 Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP): Inspiring Minds and Shaping Futures.

Background

Multi-Year Strategic Plan 2024-28

The TDSB's renewed Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP; TDSB, 2024b), *Inspiring Minds and Shaping Futures*, sets direction and identifies system goals for the next four years (2024-2028). The MYSP is built on the foundation of Equity and the commitment to implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action.

The MYSP has five strategic directions: *Truth and Reconciliation, Belong, Achieve, Thrive* and *Revitalize*.



This Literacy Strategy is nested in the Achieve pillar where, "All students reach high levels of achievement, success and personal development."

We will achieve this pillar of the MYSP by:

- Developing a strong foundation of **literacy** and numeracy skills beginning in kindergarten.
- Creating culturally responsive, identity-affirming resources and learning environments that reflect the diverse backgrounds and experiences of TDSB students.
- Increasing equity of access to programs, extracurricular opportunities and other enrichment opportunities.
- Strengthening instructional practices to reflect evidence-based approaches and more fully include [Universal Design for Learning](#) and differentiated instruction.
- Welcoming, respecting, and valuing parents/caregivers/guardians as partners in their children's learning and development.
- Holding high expectations for students and finding ways to set goals and monitor progress with them, to enable students to master skills that will help them to be successful in their chosen pathways.

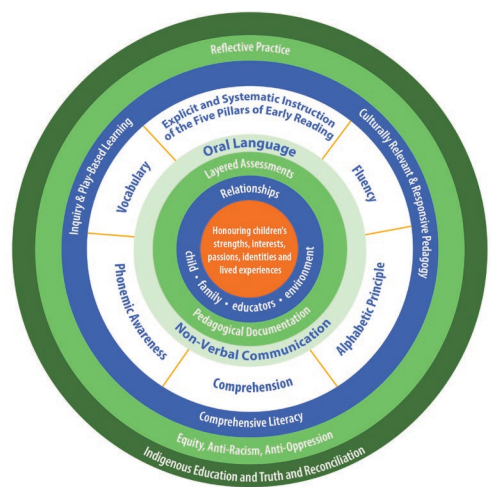
Although the TDSB Literacy Strategy is nested mainly within the Achieve pillar there are links to the Belong, Truth and Reconciliation, Thrive and Revitalize pillars. Strong academic success in literacy is directly connected to students' sense of belonging and their ability to thrive within TDSB learning environments and outside of school.

Background

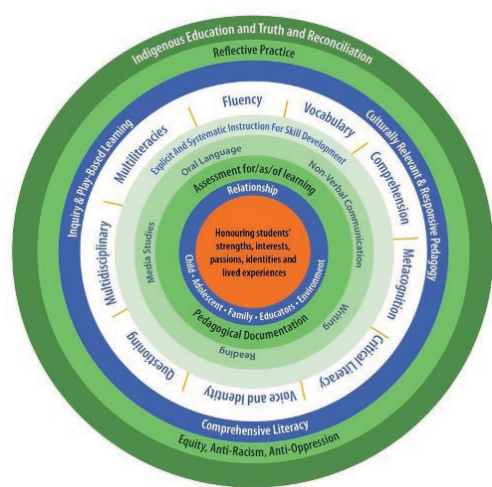
TDSB Early Reading and Later Literacy Frameworks

The *TDSB Frameworks for Early Reading (2022)* and *Later Literacy (2024)* outline the critical components of effective literacy pedagogy and learning. The purpose of these frameworks is to set pedagogical practices for an equitable and comprehensive literacy program for all students. The frameworks are based on academic and field research and expertise, and have been developed in partnership with educators, Speech-Language Pathologists and researchers. The frameworks connect to the Achieve pillar within the MYSP.

TDSB Early Reading Framework



TDSB Later Literacy Framework



Educators use these frameworks to set high expectations for all students, in both English and French programs, to support a comprehensive approach to literacy so that all essential aspects of literacy learning are addressed. This will provide for consistent practices across schools that will further emphasize the TDSB's commitment to reading enjoyment and fluency, and guide assessment and instruction in reading. See [Appendix B](#) for more information about the TDSB Literacy Frameworks.



Global Perspectives and Research on Literacy

Context Matters...

Children learn, grow, develop and thrive in a multitude of environments. Each one influences their growth and development in dynamic ways. It's important to understand how various environments and contexts interact with and influence students, and their learning, throughout life. This is especially true for literacy given the increasingly global and evolving nature of the digital world within which students live and learn. Literacy permeates all other subject areas; it impacts a student's proficiency across every curriculum area. The global and contextual considerations below highlight some of the key contexts and perspectives currently influencing student literacy learning, development and educational practice.

Empirical research in the field of literacy is fully consistent with the implementation of a balanced or contextual approach to literacy (e.g., culturally relevant, identity-affirming, promotes student efficacy) that integrates the teaching of sound/symbol relationships (foundational literacy skills as described in the Ontario Curriculum: Language, 2024) along with a commitment to immerse children into a literacy rich environment (Cummins, 2022).

In countries where students have high performance in literacy, there are commonalities about the purpose of being literate, which include the following:

- Having the necessary skills to contribute to society;
- Advancing human rights, social justice and technological innovation;
- Communicating effectively in all aspects of daily life;
- Enjoying reading and other literacy activities;
- Improving health and well-being (TDSB, 2024a).



In countries like Australia and New Zealand, through their work with Indigenous populations they value multi-generational literacy, communication and knowledge sharing. These countries are working toward moving beyond Western views of literacy that often overlook the link between knowledge, literacies and power (Hetaraka et al., 2023). In Canada, in an article by Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001) they state, "If universities are to respect the cultural integrity of First Nations students and communities, they must adopt a posture that goes beyond the usual generation and conveyance of literate knowledge, to include the institutional legitimization of Indigenous knowledge and skills, or as Goody (1982) has put it, to foster 'a re-valuation of forms of knowledge that are not derived from books'" (p. 201).

While the above refers to post-secondary education, the same can be said for K-12 educational institutions and the long-standing approaches to literacy learning and teaching that have been common practice in Ontario schools. An inclusive literacy strategy must consider the harm that traditional educational reforms have had on Black students (Love, 2023) and Indigenous students (OHRC, 2022). It

Global Perspectives and Research on Literacy

must also include respect for Indigenous knowledge, including languages and culture, “as well as an ability to help students appreciate and build upon their customary forms of consciousness and representation as they expand their understanding of the world in which they live” (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001, p. 11). The *Right to Read Inquiry Report* reiterates long standing recommendations that include improving access to First Nations, Michif and Inuktitut language learning, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultural knowledge, and taking steps to address anti-Indigenous racism (OHRC, 2022). Importantly, such recommendations should be embedded in trauma-informed and culturally safe approaches that include effective and inclusive instruction and intervention practices.

Current global research about literacy pedagogy and learning includes the following (TDSB, 2024a):

- The recognition that high expectations for all students are essential for success;
- Literacy learning happens in the context of relationships. This includes:
 - Educator’s relationships with the student/children, their family/caregivers and community;
 - Peer relationships between students;
 - Relationships amongst educators within the school; and
 - The relationship with the learning materials and environment;
- Foundational literacy skills are explicitly taught with intention based on student assessment data, and contextualized through rich text that affirm students’ identities, passions, and experiences, within a comprehensive literacy program;
- Literacy pedagogy must be student-centred and focused on higher order and critical thinking skills;
- Literacy learning includes the components of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy;
- Address student learning and academic success;
- Develop students’ cultural competence to assist students in developing positive ethnic and social identities; and
- Support students’ critical consciousness or their ability to recognize and critique societal inequalities” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, as cited in Keith, H.R., Kinnison, S., Garth-McCullough, R & Hampton, M. (2023) p.2).



Global Perspectives and Research on Literacy

In addition to the above, in French Immersion, confidence and proficiency in the target language of French are developed through the exclusive use of French instruction. Interactions with and between

students build both receptive and expressive language skills in French, while being immersed in a French learning environment. For English Language Learners, it's important to continue to intentionally support literacy development in their home language, while simultaneously supporting the acquisition of English as a second or additional language.



It is imperative that the work in implementing the TDSB Literacy Strategy seeks to eliminate disproportionate outcomes for groups of students who have been historically and are currently marginalized. It is important to “move beyond traditional notions of literacy (i.e., the ability to read and write, or the ability to use language - to

read, write, listen and speak)” (Munroe & Sylvestre, 2022, p. 8) and value multiple ways of knowing that “include practices such as storytelling, signifying, dancing and singing, to name a few (Price-Dennise et al., 2017; Richardson, 2009) (as cited in Munroe & Sylvestre, 2022, p. 7).

What does the Literacy Data tell us?

The TDSB Literacy Strategy has been developed using international, provincial and TDSB data.

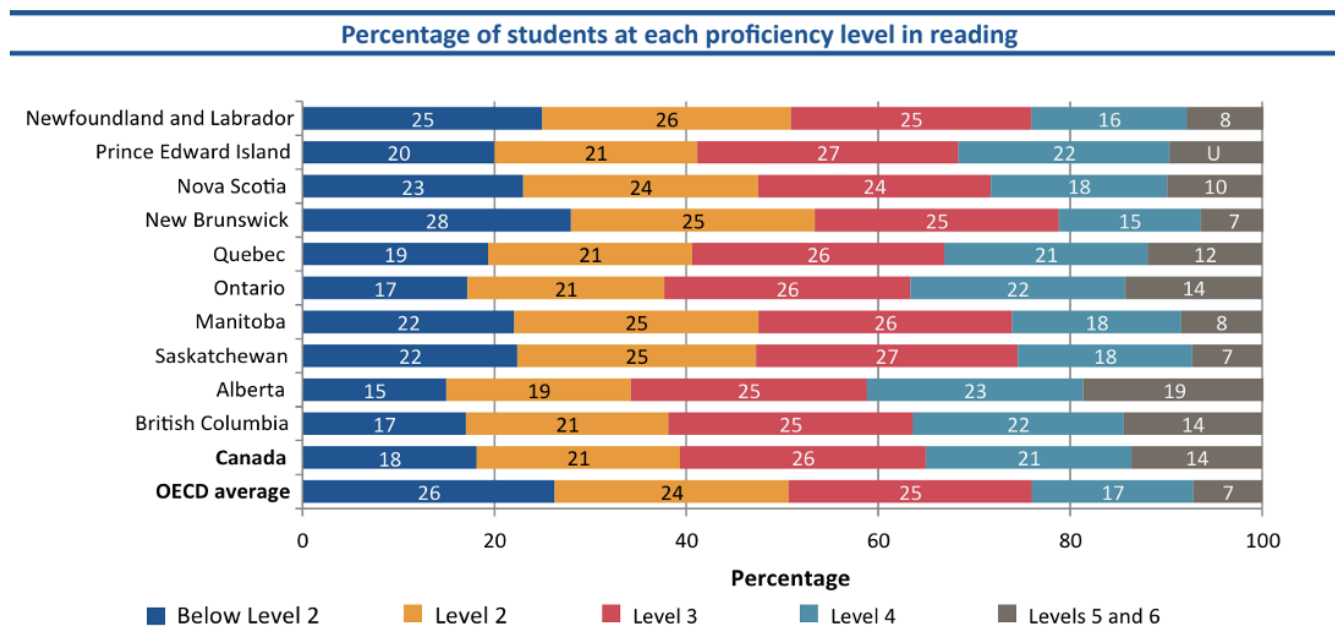
International Context

It is important to frame the TDSB literacy data within the larger international context in order to understand the strengths and areas for growth that this literacy strategy will support for TDSB students. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) was launched by the Organization for Economic and Cooperative Development (OECD) in 1997 and first administered in 2000. “Every 3 years the PISA survey provides comparative data on 15-year-olds’ performance in reading, mathematics, and science. In addition, each cycle explores a distinct “innovative domain” such as Creative Thinking (PISA 2022) and Learning in the Digital World (PISA 2025). The PISA results have informed education policy discussions at the national and global level since its inception” (PISA, n.d. online).

In 2022, PISA International assessments of 15-year-old students showed that 82% of Canadian students performed at or above the baseline level of reading proficiency required for full participation in modern society (referred to as a level 2) (Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC), 2023, pg. 61). In Ontario, 83% of students performed at or above this same benchmark (see Figure 1). Canada ranks among the countries with a mean performance of top performers above the OECD average.

Literacy Data

Figure 1: Percentage of Students in each Province at Proficiency Level (2) in Reading on the 2022 PISA



Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding. Results for Canada and most provinces (except Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and Saskatchewan) should be treated with caution because one or more PISA technical standards were not met (see Appendix A for further details).

(Council of Ministers of Education, 2023, pg. 61)

Ontario students are consistently among the top performers in Canadian and International assessments/comparisons of reading performance (e.g., OECD, 2023; see Figure 1). As reported by the Ontario Ministry of Education on December 5, 2023, of 81 international jurisdictions, Ontario ranked second overall in reading internationally and nationally on the 2022 PISA reading assessment (Council of Ministers of Education, 2023, pg. 61). It is important to note, that because TDSB students account for 14% of all Ontario students, literacy practices within TDSB schools have a positive impact on Ontario’s scores in international assessments.

Provincial Context

Over the past two decades, the TDSB has either been on par with, or above, the provincial averages in Education Quality and Accountability (EQAO) Grade 3 and 6 assessments of Reading and Writing and the Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). TDSB students represent 14% of Ontario students. The size of the TDSB creates a significant impact in provincial averages across all assessments. TDSB is also unique to the province as it supports more than 100 working languages, representing the most diversity across all 72 school boards. Scores that are on par with a much more homogenous student population across Ontario represents significant achievement in addressing diversity and cultural responsiveness within EQAO performance.

Literacy Data

On the Grades 3 and 6 EQAO assessments, the provincial average is level 3, which is equivalent to a B- and above on Provincial Report Cards. The passing score on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) for Grade 10 students is 75%. These are high benchmarks for achievement. The EQAO assessments measure students' achievement on grade-band specific curriculum expectations that can be assessed independently in a digital written format.

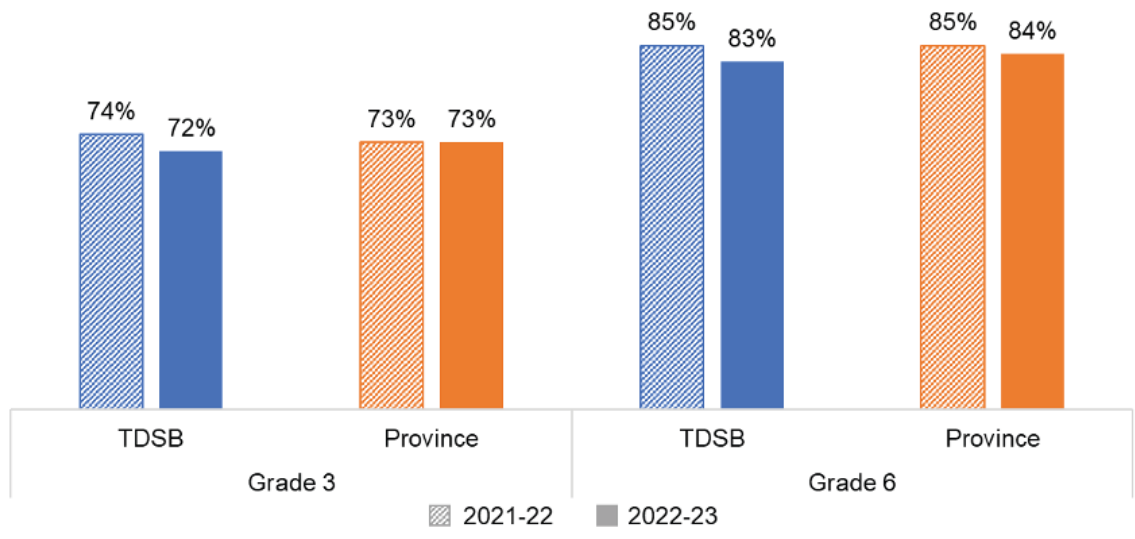


During the 2020-21 school year, the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) transitioned from a paper version of the assessment to a new digital online format. EQAO field tested the digital version in the 2020-2021 school year and full implementation began in the 2021-22 school year.

**Note: Given the change in the assessment format, comparisons to previous EQAO assessments (prior to 2020-2021) cannot be made.*

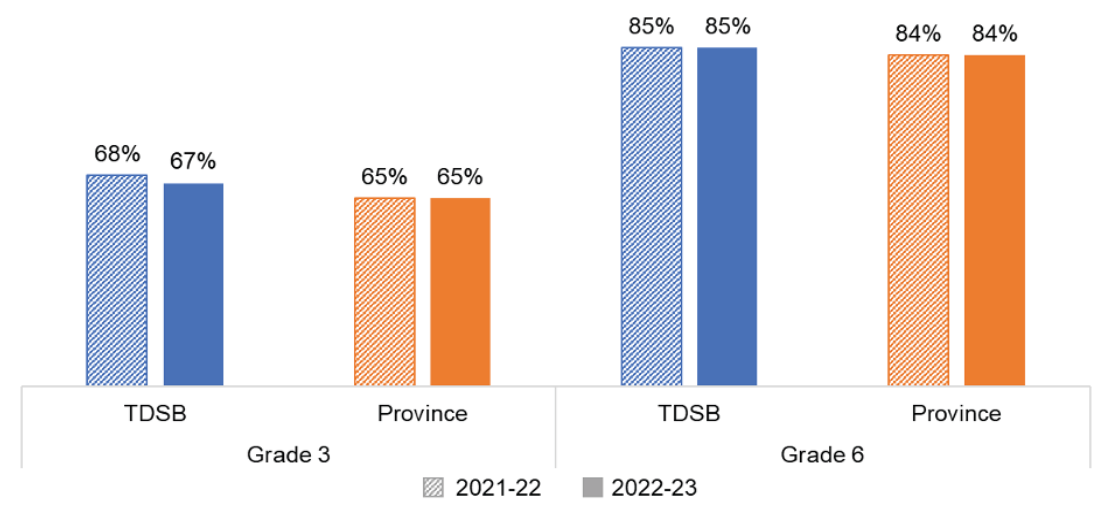
The graphs below show the EQAO data for TDSB for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years (Figures 2-4).

Figure 2: Percentage of Grade 3 and Grade 6 Students Achieving Level 3 and Above on the EQAO Assessment for Reading at TDSB and in Ontario



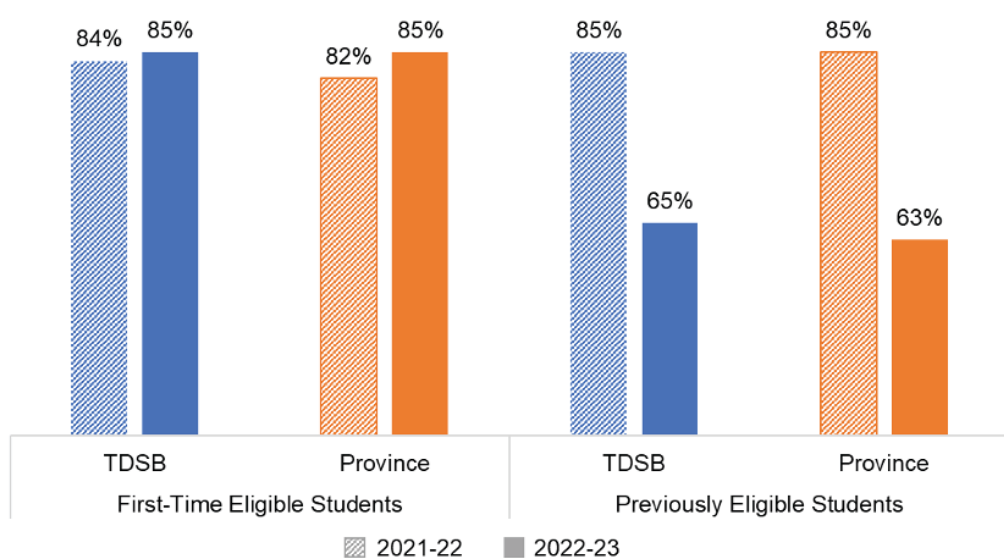
Literacy Data

Figure 3: Percentage of Grade 3 and Grade 6 Students Achieving Level 3 and Above on the EQAO Assessment for Writing at TDSB and in Ontario



As students become more fluent readers and writers, the number of students achieving at or above the provincial standard increases from Grade 3 to Grade 6.

Figure 4: Percentage of Fully Participating First-Time Eligible and Previously Eligible Students Who Were Successful on the OSSLT at TDSB and in Ontario



**Note: There is a 20 percent decline from 2021-2022 to 2022-2023 for Previously Eligible Students as the 2021-2022 data included first time eligible students who could not take the OSSLT in 2020-2021 due to the pandemic.*

Literacy Data

TDSB Context

The data and information shared below and in [Appendix C](#) provides a context check of where TDSB students are as of the 2022-2023 school year in terms of literacy achievement as measured by large scale Grade 1 system reading assessment data, EQAO data, and report card reading and writing data.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused prolonged school closures and multiple shifts to and from remote learning, impacting every student and family. While educational experiences varied for students, concerns persist regarding the lasting consequences on students' literacy development across all grades, as well as on their mental health and well-being. TDSB Grade 1 reading data gathered during and just after the pandemic showed a decline in the number of students meeting reading benchmarks as compared to pre-pandemic reading benchmarks. Student data from Grade 8 to Grade 9 also indicates gaps in students' literacy achievement. This impacts their success in secondary school subject areas, as literacy becomes increasingly necessary to access subject-specific and cross-disciplinary content, as students progress through the grades.

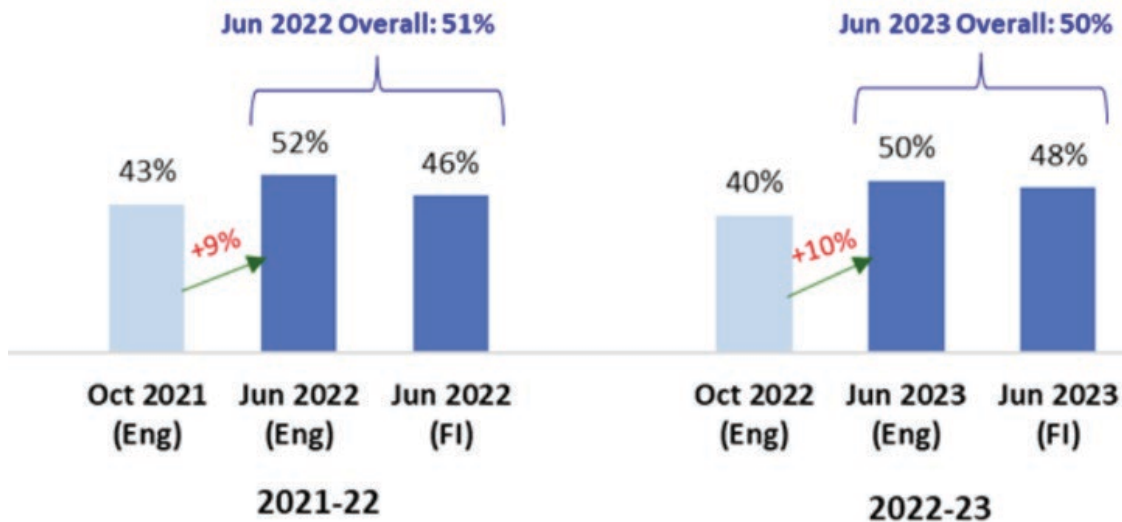
The system reading assessment in TDSB measures student reading engagement, oral reading fluency and comprehension. It is important to acknowledge that the development of skills and knowledge in language is often enhanced by learning in other subject areas. The system data assessment tool is one source, within a suite of layered assessments, to assist educators with making decisions about the teaching and reading supports required by students.

It is without a doubt that the pandemic negatively impacted the expected learning gains for students over the course of their elementary and secondary 'pandemic' years. The impacts of the pandemic on the foundations of early learning are demonstrated in Figure 5 by the decreasing proportion of Grade 1 English students who met targeted reading behaviour expectations between 2021 and 2023. However, data from current Grade 1 English students reveals an initial positive upward trend, with slightly more students achieving reading benchmark expectations than the previous school year.



Literacy Data

Figure 5: Percentage of Grade 1 English and French Immersion students who met Grade 1 Benchmark Reading Level Expectations



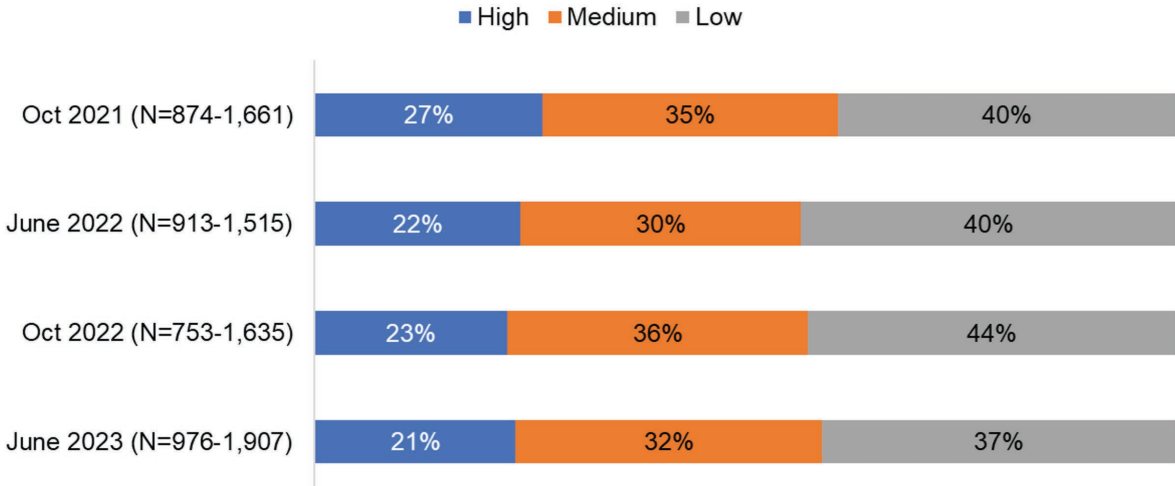
At a Glance: What has happened since the pandemic?

2022-2023

- The percentage of all TDSB students 'at or above' reading level benchmarks in Grade 1 increased by 10% from October to June.
- The percentage of students in low-income households 'at or above' reading level benchmarks by the end of the year increased by 10% throughout the year.
 - This represents a 7% increase in growth rate for students in this income category compared to the previous year.
- The percentage of students in low-income households who were 'at risk' of not reaching reading level benchmarks decreased by 7% over the 2022-23 school year, dropping 3 percentage points below comparable reading level proportions in 2021-22 (see Figure 6).

Literacy Data

Figure 6: High, Medium, and Low Estimated Family Income Breakdowns for Students 'At Risk' of Not Reaching Grade 1 Reading Benchmarks



Despite these gains, student early literacy development, as measured by the system reading assessment (focused on reading engagement, oral reading fluency and comprehension), is still an area of concern as pre-pandemic benchmark levels have not recovered or reached pre-pandemic levels, regardless of demographics. The positive gains and related trajectories outlined above look promising, but not for everyone, particularly for those from low-income households who were 'at risk' of not reaching benchmarks prior to the pandemic.

Tier 1 reading supports are available in every classroom in the TDSB, and a Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 reading intervention has been made available to all schools across the TDSB for students struggling to achieve required literacy benchmarks for their grade. Moving forward, and as part of this Literacy Strategy, strong



culturally relevant, differentiated teaching informed by a variety of layered assessments will support young learners with reaching literacy benchmarks while maintaining a joy for all aspects of literacy. A strategic focus on those learners who have faced disproportionate outcomes is necessary to close the gaps in literacy achievement that persist.

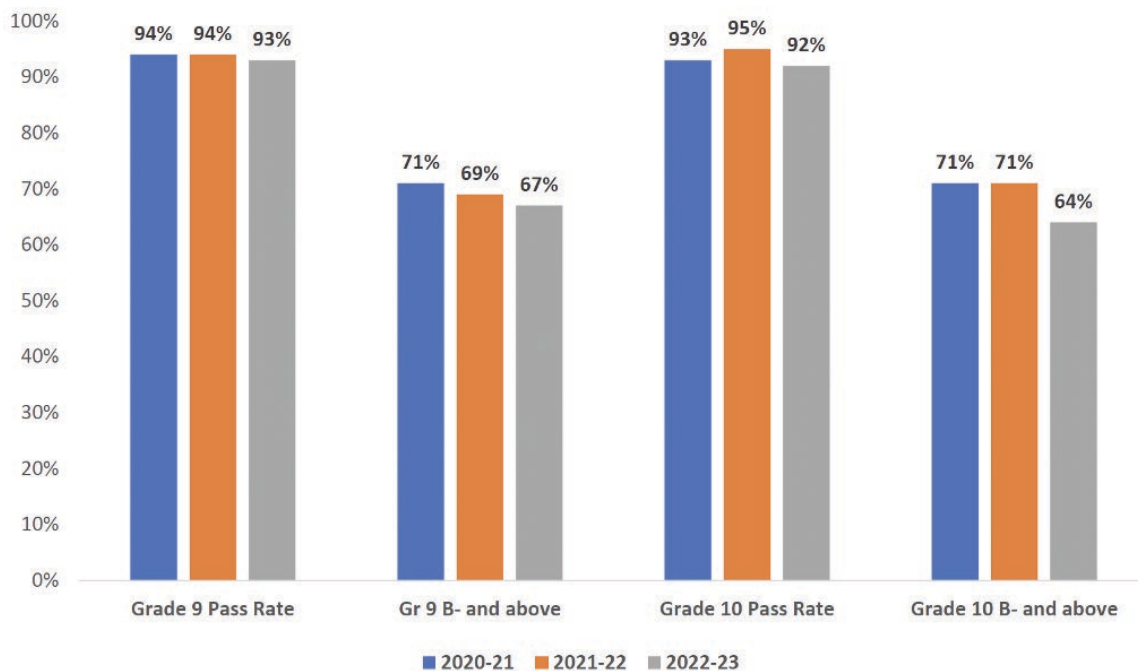
For more information about the Grade 1 reading system data by household income and TDSB Provincial Report Card data please see [Appendix C](#).

Literacy Data

Literacy Outcome Data across the Secondary Panel

The data shows us that the pass rate in Grade 9 and 10 English is very high. Similar to the findings in the primary division (Grades 1-3), there has been a decrease in the proportion of Grade 9 and 10 students in Academic English courses who have achieved at or above the provincial standard (B-) on their Term 2 report card since the 2020-21 school year (see Figure 7). These data may partially be related to the impact of the pandemic on students transitioning from elementary to secondary school and a return to pre-pandemic grading patterns.

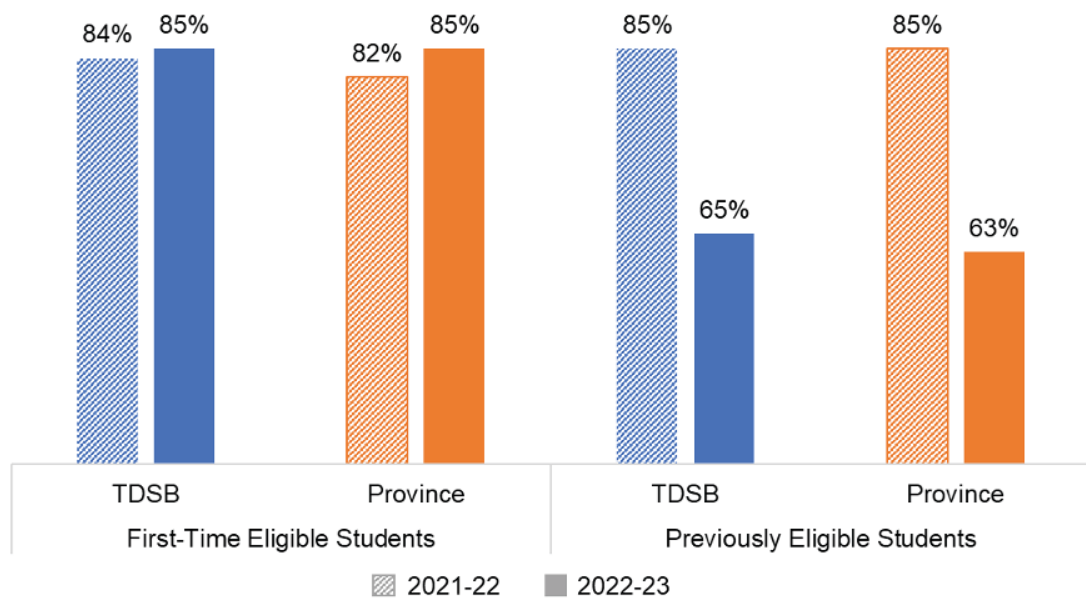
Figure 7: Percentage of Students Successful in Grade 9 and 10 Reading- Passing and achieving a B- Grade and Above on Report Cards



With respect to the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), slightly more Fully Participating First-Time Eligible (FTE) students were successful in 2022-23 than 2021-22; this pattern is similar at the provincial-level (see Figure 8). Figure 8 also depicts a noticeable reduction in success rates for Previously Eligible (PE) students between 2021-22 and 2022-23 for both TDSB and the province. It’s important to recognize that the 2021-22 PE cohort includes all Grade 11 students who did not have a prior opportunity to write the test during the pandemic. These students had an additional year of learning, and their success rates are higher than those for the first-time eligible (FTE) (Grade 10) students. These success rates are much higher than this year’s cohort when the PE cohort included only students who had a prior unsuccessful attempt on the OSSLT.

Literacy Data

Figure 8: Percentage of Fully Participating First-Time Eligible and Previously Eligible Students Who Were Successful on the OSSLT at TDSB and in Ontario



Overall, the above data shows that the majority of TDSB students are doing well, and in fact, have made progress since the pandemic. The data also tells us, however, that students from groups that have been historically and currently marginalized are still not being served well enough to meet the required provincial literacy benchmarks, and some of the data is lower than pre-pandemic levels. This is also in line with much of the student outcome data and the student perception data gathered in the TDSB during and since the pandemic. The data shows us students did well given the challenging circumstances within the pandemic. This is a tribute to student and educator effort and skills. While there has been progress and positive pandemic recovery for many students, the literacy-related achievement gaps and disproportionate outcomes that persist need to continue to be addressed.



Goals, Key Actions and Monitoring Indicators

Literacy Strategy: Framework

The below outlines the Framework for the TDSB Literacy Strategy. Specifically, it identifies the Goals, Key Actions and Key Monitoring Indicators related to the Learner, Educator, and Learning Environment. The Goals identified below are *grounded in the following*:

- *The Achieve Pillar of the MYSP;*
- *Key big ideas from the Ontario Kindergarten Curriculum and Ontario Language Curricula (Grades 1 to 9); and,*
- *Vision of the Literate Learner.*

The Goals are broad in nature, foundational, not exhaustive, and identify specific outcomes for students. The Key Actions describe the approaches, pedagogies/practices, professional development commitments, resources and interventions that will be implemented to support the Goals. Finally, the Key Monitoring Indicators are the metrics that will be used to monitor strategy, goals and actions.

Note: The term "Educators" used below is inclusive of school-based educators, leaders, and system-level staff.

All students, regardless of their identity, are able to create, communicate, read, write and think critically with confidence, fluency, and enjoyment.

Early Years

Goals (Learner Focused)

All students, by the end of Grade 3, will develop and apply foundational literacy knowledge and skills (e.g., phonics, morphology, word reading, etc.) to read, write and communicate effectively, with confidence in purposeful, meaningful, and culturally relevant contexts.

Key Actions (Educator/Leader Focused)

- Educators will implement explicit and systematic teaching of foundational knowledge and skills within meaningful and culturally relevant contexts (CRRP) following a carefully planned scope and sequence.
- Educators will co-create purposeful and meaningful literacy experiences grounded in CRRP for students that cultivate joy and allow them to apply their knowledge and skills.
- Leaders will facilitate intentional professional learning for educators grounded in the commitments outlined above.
- Leaders and educators will acquire and use resources to support the commitments outlined above.

Goals, Key Actions and Monitoring Indicators

Key Monitoring Indicators (School and System Focused)

- Improvements in:
 - Student achievement data, including Report Cards and EQAO
 - Grade 1 system level reading data
 - Qualitative data, including classroom assessments, student voice and pedagogical documentation

All Learners K to 21

Goals (Learner Focused)

All students will increase oral language, reading and writing/communication skills, confidence and enjoyment of reading in school, at home and in life.

Key Actions (Educator/Leader Focused)

- Educators will create learning opportunities and resources to support the development of a strong foundation of literacy skills beginning in the preschool years through TDSB EarlyON Child and Family Centres, Kindergarten through to the end of secondary school.
- Educators will use student-centred strategies (e.g., student voice, play- and inquiry-based learning) to motivate students to read and write a variety of texts (e.g., by using mentor texts that incorporate media, oral, prose, infographics, and levelled nonfiction texts).
- Schools will partner with the Toronto Public Library and other relevant programs in each community to extend opportunities for students to find books and other resources they want to read every day at home and during the summer.

Key Monitoring Indicators (School and System Focused)

- Improvements in:
 - Student achievement data, including report cards, system assessments, EQAO
 - Qualitative data including classroom assessments, student voice and pedagogical documentation
- Student feedback surveys
- Parent, Caregiver, Guardian surveys

Goals, Key Actions and Monitoring Indicators

Goals (Learner Focused)

All students will use digital tools, where appropriate, to build foundational skills, develop their critical thinking, and express their thinking, ideas and perspectives.

Key Actions (Educator/Leader Focused)

- Leaders and system staff will focus on the Kindergarten and Middle Years iPad rollout strategy, providing access to technology and developing digital literacy skills.
- Educators will engage in professional learning to enhance expertise in Literacy Connections and Applications from the Language Curriculum.
- Educators will engage in professional learning to enhance confidence and efficacy in teaching and learning about literacy with digital tools.

Key Monitoring Indicators (School and System Focused)

- Improvements in:
 - Student achievement data, including report cards and EQAO
 - Qualitative data, including classroom reading and writing/communication assessments, student voice and pedagogical documentation
- Improvement in school- and system-level reading comprehension assessment data
- Increased number of educators indicating confidence and efficacy in teaching and learning with digital tools through professional learning feedback surveys

Goals (Learner Focused)

All students will develop and apply comprehension skills, critical thinking and reasoning within a comprehensive literacy program and across all subject areas.

Key Actions (Educator/Leader Focused)

- Leaders will provide professional learning and mentoring about embedding the teaching of transferable skills across all subject areas and disciplines.
- Leaders and Educators will collaborate with TDSB central departments to develop cross-curricular and integrated literacy learning experiences and assessments.

Key Monitoring Indicators (School and System Focused)

- Improvements in:
 - Student achievement data, including report cards and EQAO
 - Qualitative data, including classroom assessments, student voice and pedagogical documentation

Goals, Key Actions and Monitoring Indicators

Goals (Learner Focused)

All students will be provided with ongoing multi-tiered literacy supports and interventions, in every school, with particular attention being paid to key divisional transition points (e.g., Grades K-1, 3-4, 6-7, 8-9).

Key Actions (Educator/Leader Focused)

- Every school will be provided with the TDSB Early Reading Intervention Toolkit for primary classes, focusing on distribution to one grade each year.
- Early Reading Intervention Specialist Team (ERIS) members will be assigned to particular schools to support reading intervention in early years classrooms showing the most need, as indicated by comprehensive data sets.
- Early reading screening will be administered to all Senior Kindergarten, Grade 1 and 2 students, providing diagnostic baseline data and allowing for early intervention strategies to be implemented for students where data shows it is necessary.
- Principals/Vice Principals will meet with educators at regular intervals (at least four times per year) to determine which students will need additional tiered interventions in literacy with particular attention being paid to key divisional transition points (e.g., grade K-1 3-4, 6-7, 8-9).

Key Monitoring Indicators (School and System Focused)

- Every school has been provided access to a tier 2 or 3 intervention such as Wilson Reading, including Foundations® Kindergarten, Foundations® Level 1 (Grades 1-3), Just Words®, and/or the Wilson Reading System® Introductory, Lexia, and Empower.
- Increasing the number of schools that have access to Empower Reading
- Reading intervention system data tracking with a focus on eliminating the gaps in students' reaching achievement benchmarks, particularly those students who have faced disproportionate outcomes

Goals (Learner Focused)

All students will be provided with Assessment and Evaluation opportunities that are differentiated, culturally relevant and responsive; and formative assessment will be layered and ongoing.

Key Actions (Educator/Leader Focused)

- Educators will engage in ongoing culturally relevant and responsive, layered assessment practices and progress monitoring to ensure students receive differentiated instruction and appropriate and timely intervention.

Goals, Key Actions and Monitoring Indicators

- Leaders will set expectations for ongoing assessment and monitor student learning to ensure student-focused differentiated instruction and regular and timely communication of progress with families.
- Educators and leaders will align assessment 'for' and 'as' learning practices using the fundamental principles within *Growing Success: assessment, evaluation and reporting in Ontario's Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12* in all literacy assessment practices.

Key Monitoring Indicators (School and System Focused)

- Qualitative - differentiated assessment tools are used in the classroom as noted in Vice Principal/Principal and Superintendent documentation from classroom visits
- Local school tracking of students who require intervention, and that they are receiving it in a timely manner
- Improved outcomes on TDSB Reading assessment and inventory data
- Increased opportunities for student voice in learning and assessment

Goals (Learner Focused)

All students will learn in culturally relevant, inclusive learning environments/spaces to explore and cultivate their identities as readers, writers and communicators.

Key Actions (Educator/Leader Focused)

- Educators will co-create learning experiences for and with students to explore their identities as readers, writers and communicators, develop their voice, and exercise agency (beginning in EarlyON Centres and in K-12 learning environments).
- Educators and leaders will use student evidence of learning to highlight promising practices and engage in meaningful research/inquiry on topics to eliminate disproportionate outcomes for students who have been historically and are currently marginalized.
- Educators will use resources and strategies to develop students' sense of their own social-cultural identity in relation to the diverse student body they learn with, enhance student critical thinking and communication skills.

Key Monitoring Indicators (School and System Focused)

- Leader and educator qualitative data (e.g., pedagogical documentation, student work samples, photographs, videos, etc.) about student learning spaces being culturally responsive, and linked to curriculum expectations, within the School Improvement Process data collection

Goals, Key Actions and Monitoring Indicators

- Collection of student qualitative and quantitative data
- Improvement in student report card and EQAO data
- Tracking of Student Census and Climate Survey data
- An increased number of school and system-level affinity spaces for students
- Increased student input and voice in co-developing learning environments/spaces

Goals (Learner Focused)

All students' families will be respected and valued as the child's first literacy teacher.

Key Actions (Educator/Leader Focused)

- EarlyON Centre staff will continue to engage in community outreach to encourage more families to attend EarlyON Centres, in partnership with school leaders.
- Educators and leaders will engage parents, caregivers, guardians as partners in shaping and informing priorities and instruction, as part of the School Improvement Process.
- Educators and leaders will engage parents, caregivers, guardians as partners in understanding and identifying student strengths, needs, and next steps for learning.

Key Monitoring Indicators (School and System Focused)

- Continue to monitor the numbers of family visits at TDSB EarlyON Centres and monitor for increased participation
- Track the authentic inclusion of parents in the School Improvement Process
- Parent Feedback Surveys
- Documentation of learning from Principal/Vice Principal and Superintendent Classroom visits
- Tracking of parent/caregiver engagement in learning initiatives at schools and system-wide parenting conferences and initiatives

Goals, Key Actions and Monitoring Indicators

Later Literacy

Goals (Learner Focused)

All students will use literacy across subject areas and graduate with effective literacy skills required to navigate their increasingly complex world.

Key Actions (Educator/Leader Focused)

- Leaders and educators will provide professional learning and mentoring about embedding the teaching of transferable skills across all subject areas and disciplines.
- Educators will provide supports for OSSLT proficiency and engagement.
- Leaders and educators will provide Credit Rescue and Credit Recovery options for all secondary students.
- All Grade 11 secondary students will have access to *English: Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices* (NBE3U/3C/E) as the Grade 11 compulsory English course.
- The Urban Indigenous Education Centre (UIEC) will continue to support the implementation and continuous learning for educators teaching the NBE3 course by providing the following:
 - Four professional learning days for teachers of *English: Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices* NBE3U/3C/E
 - Access to Indigenous Education funding specific to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies courses (funds are for Indigenous Educational Partners, excursions and resources/supplies for the course).

Key Monitoring Indicators (School and System Focused)

- Improvements in:
 - Percentage of fully participating first-time eligible students who are successful on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)
 - Graduation rates of Grade 12 students
 - Report card data
 - Credit Rescue and Credit Recovery data
 - Student achievement data, including Report Cards and EQAO,
 - Qualitative data, including classroom assessments and pedagogical documentation
- Tracking of report card data from the *English: Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices* (NBE3U/3C/E) as the Grade 11 compulsory English course

Goals, Key Actions and Monitoring Indicators

Educator and Leader Development

How will the Goals outlined in the framework above be achieved?

The TDSB will invest in educator and leader development to support the implementation of evidence-based, research-informed and culturally relevant instructional practices that align with current research, the TDSB MYSP, recommendations from the OHRC Right to Read Report, Ontario Kindergarten Curriculum and the four strands in the Grade 1 to 8 and Grade 9 Language Curriculum:

- A. Literacy Connections and Applications
- B. Foundations of Language
- C. Comprehension: Understanding and Responding to Texts
- D. Composition: Expressing Ideas and Creating Texts

Implementation of the Literacy Strategy Framework Goals will be embedded within the school improvement process (SIP) action plans.

Note: A detailed Implementation Plan will be developed to support implementation of the TDSB Literacy Strategy

Literacy Strategy Summary

Literacy is the gateway to equity, excellence and high achievement. It's a critical life skill that permeates every subject and aspect of a student's educational journey, throughout life. While the data shows TDSB students have made progress (recovery) since the pandemic, there are still too many students, particularly those underserved, including racialized students and those from low income families, not meeting the required provincial literacy benchmarks. Thus, intentional and system-wide approaches are needed to close current achievement gaps and address the disproportionate outcomes some of our students are experiencing. This 2024-2028 Literacy Strategy aims to achieve TDSB's Vision of the Literate Learner and to meet the expectations set out in the Achieve Pillar of the TDSB MYSP. It is both aspirational and practical, and is grounded firmly in current global research as well as international, provincial and TDSB data.

If not consistently addressed in every elementary school grade, the effects of reading development in the early years, as shown in the post-pandemic Grade 1 TDSB reading data, as well in other jurisdictions globally, could have a significant detrimental effect across the system in relation to student academic success as these students continue through their elementary and secondary education. In other words, if the current literacy deficits aren't addressed across the system now, they will continue to impact students' literacy development, and broader academic achievement over the course of their school career, and beyond. Unfortunately, those groups of students who were not performing well pre-pandemic have been disproportionately impacted post-pandemic.

The Literacy Strategy Framework (chart) outlines the specific Goals and Actions that will be implemented across the system, in both elementary and secondary schools. The Goals are broad in nature and will help ensure the Strategy remains focused. The Key Measurement Indicators demonstrate the approaches to not only measuring the actions in relation to the goals, but also serve as a means to support system accountability. The TDSB is committed to monitoring literacy achievement and ensuring educators are better equipped to meet the literacy needs of all students. Layered assessments and pedagogical documentation that highlights student thinking and wondering, and honours family perspectives, will be used to inform subsequent learning opportunities, teaching and tiered intervention.

"...Acquiring literacy is an empowering process, enabling millions to enjoy access to knowledge and information which broadens horizons, increases opportunities and creates alternatives for building a better life."

Kofi Annan

Next Steps

The TDSB Literacy Team will develop specific implementation plans for each Grade band from Kindergarten to Grade 12 that align with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan and the framework in this Literacy Strategy. Specific resources, supports and professional learning will be included in the implementation plans, with a focus on the Ontario Kindergarten Curriculum and Grade 1 to 9 Language curriculum implementation (which includes recommendations from the OHRC “Right to Read” report), comprehensive literacy, addressing pandemic-related learning deficits and subject-specific literacy for transferable skills application. These plans will include:

- All students having access to a child-centred, culturally relevant and responsive comprehensive literacy program that addresses all the Language expectations within the Kindergarten curriculum, all four strands of the Ontario Language Curriculum, and functional literacy skills for students in congregated special education programs;
- A focus on research-informed culturally relevant literacy pedagogical expertise prior to and during transitional years;
- A focus on middle childhood years to provide literacy intervention supports to those students who developed or sustained literacy gaps during the pandemic;
- A focus on identifying students leaving Grade 8 who need support with literacy skills to transition into Grade 9, so that all secondary students can utilize the transferable skills to be successful across subject areas; and;
- Content-specific literacy so that educators are aware of the literacy demands for each subject in order to tailor instruction.

With the support of all education partners, including families, community, educators, leaders and students this literacy strategy will support the outcome that **all students, regardless of their identity, are able to create, communicate, read, write and think critically with confidence, fluency, and enjoyment.**

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Appendix B

TDSB Early and Later Literacy Frameworks

Early Literacy

The TDSB Early Reading Framework encourages educators to embed the intentional teaching of foundational reading skills. These emerging literacy skills like phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, phonics, and word study are embedded in rich learning experiences that build upon children's strengths, interests, passions, lived experiences and identities. The teaching of foundational reading skills happens in purposeful and meaningful contexts where students are immersed in rich literacy experiences that cultivate *joy*. Educators are providing systematic and explicit Instruction, where teaching is direct, clear and purposeful. Materials and concepts are taught through a carefully planned scope and sequence and informed by assessment data.



A child's family plays an important role in their early literacy development. The family is understood and valued as the child's first teacher. Through TDSB's EarlyON Child and Family Centres, children and families come together to make connections, and explore language and literacy through play. These early experiences contribute to their development of strong language and cognitive abilities in both the short and the long term. Through the provision of open-ended materials that foster imagination and symbolic play, including signs, symbols, and props that support print awareness in authentic contexts these programs support emerging literacy skills. By encouraging children to engage in play with words and sounds through song and rhyme and by offering numerous opportunities for children to share books and stories with their families and educators, children develop their emerging literacy skills. These early literacy experiences during infancy and the early years of a child's life begin at home and continue to be cultivated across many early years settings, including our EarlyON Child and Family Centres, and child care programs. As children transition into Kindergarten, opportunities to explore and expand their developing literacy skills

Appendix B

continue to be developed by educators in school and in before- and after-school programs.

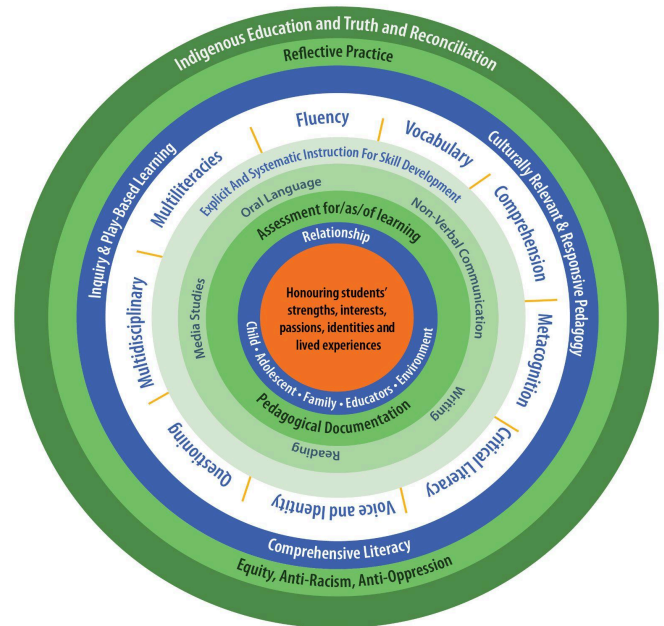
Later Literacy

The TDSB is committed to addressing the learning and achievement gaps that some of our junior and intermediate learners demonstrate. When students perform below their grade level this negatively impacts their short and longer-term educational outcomes, and reading identity. The TDSB Later Literacy Framework, launched in 2024, guides educators and school administrators in the development of positive student literary identity through explicit strategy and skill development that is contextualised. This Framework uses a culturally relevant and responsive approaches to literacy teaching that nurtures and joyfully affirms students’ racial, cultural and reader identities. By considering its many facets and their

interconnectedness, this Framework supports educators in developing comprehensive literacy instruction that encourages students to take a critical stance, and to respond or to take action as they engage in the critical analysis and evaluation of text, as it relates to issues of equity, power and social justice.

Through the TDSB [Adolescent Literacy Strategy](#) educators will co-create with students, classrooms that intentionally embed strong reading pedagogy as well as accessible and engaging texts. Specifically, pedagogy must be culturally relevant wherein students are active partners in their learning *with* teachers who are explicit and transparent about what they are doing and why” (Right to Read, TDSB, 2019, p. 31).

Professional learning opportunities provided to support the implementation of the strategy are aligned with the TDSB School Improvement Process that include a collaborative dialogue and opportunities for inquiry and reflection so that educators can deepen their content knowledge and awareness of the principles of anti-racism,

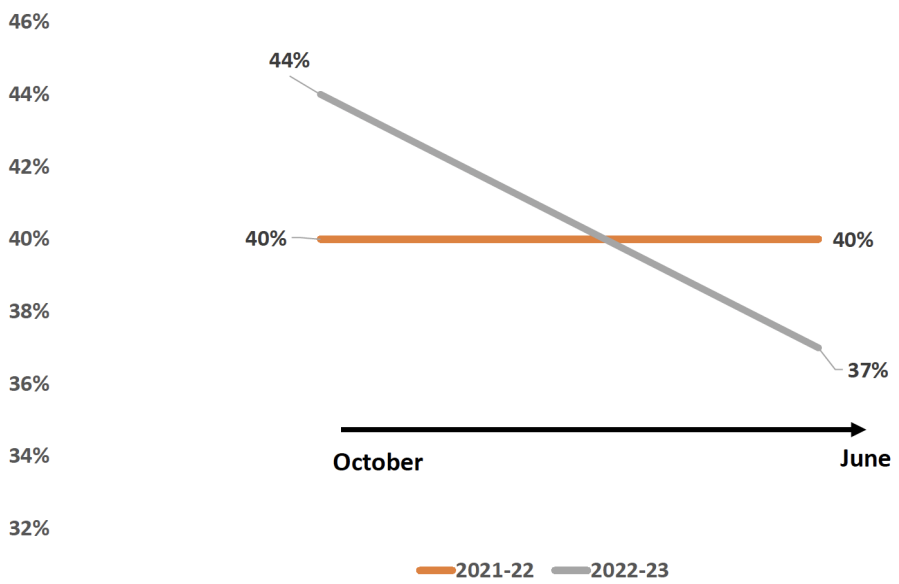


Appendix C

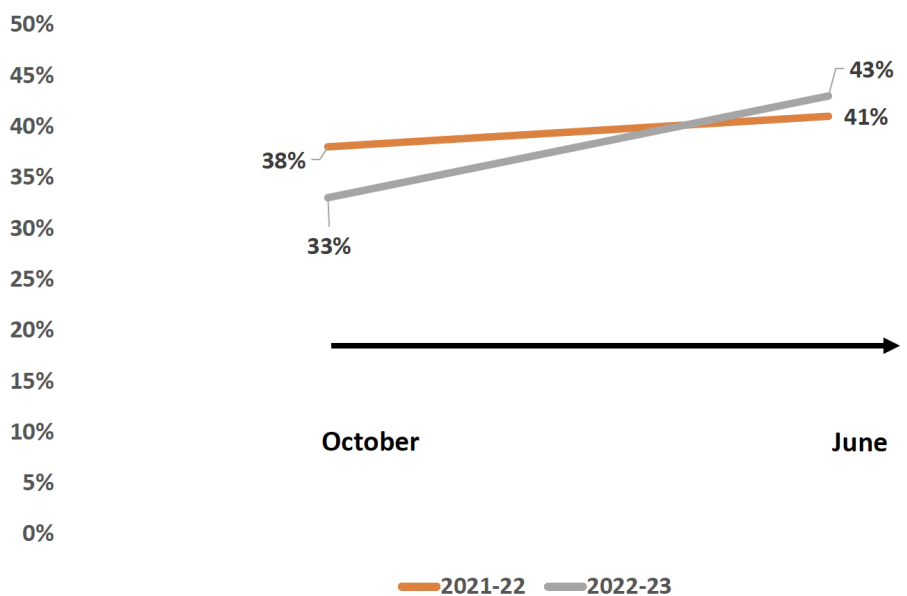
Grade 1 System Literacy Data - Continued

The grade 1 system data graphs below highlight literacy benchmark trajectories for the two school years during and immediately following the pandemic.

Percentage of Grade 1 students from low income households **at risk** of not reaching grade level benchmarks

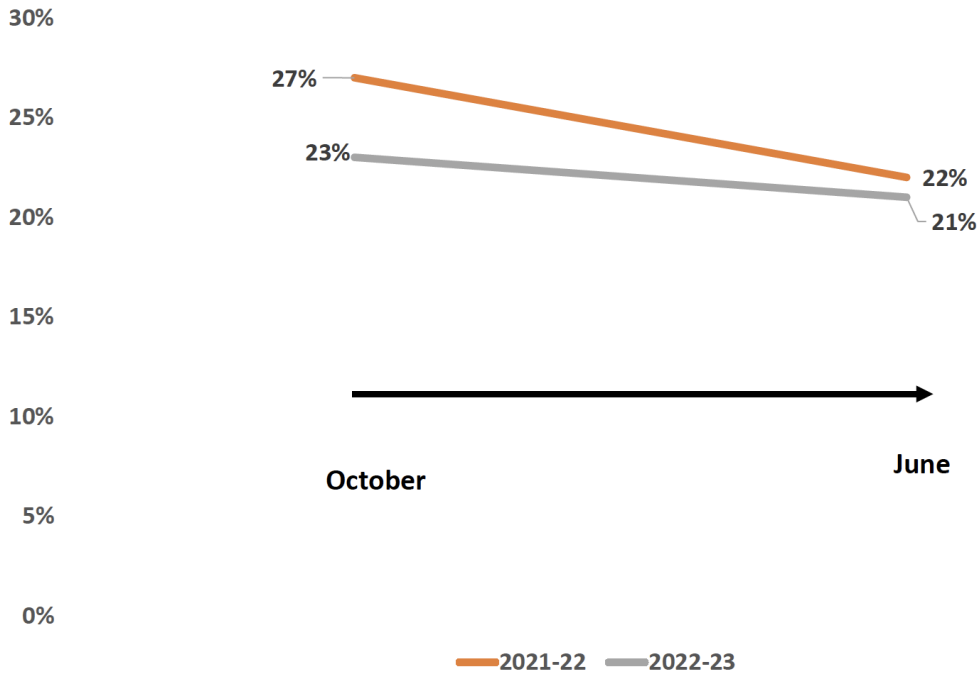


Percentage of Grade 1 students from low income households **at or above** reading level benchmarks

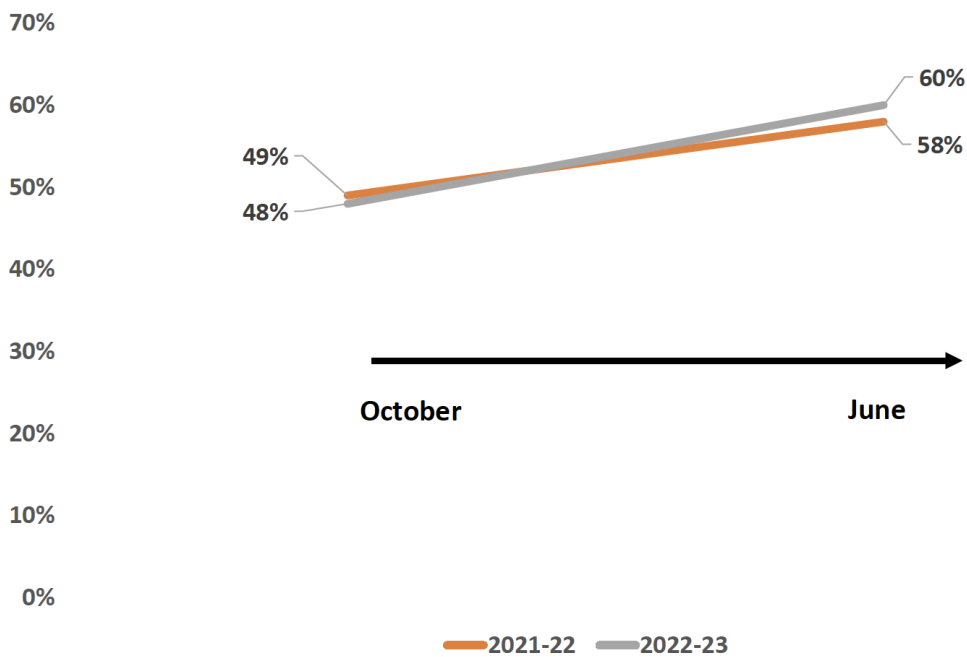


Appendix C

Percentage of Grade 1 students from high income households **at risk** of not meeting grade level benchmarks



Percentage of Grade 1 students from high income households **at or above** grade level benchmarks

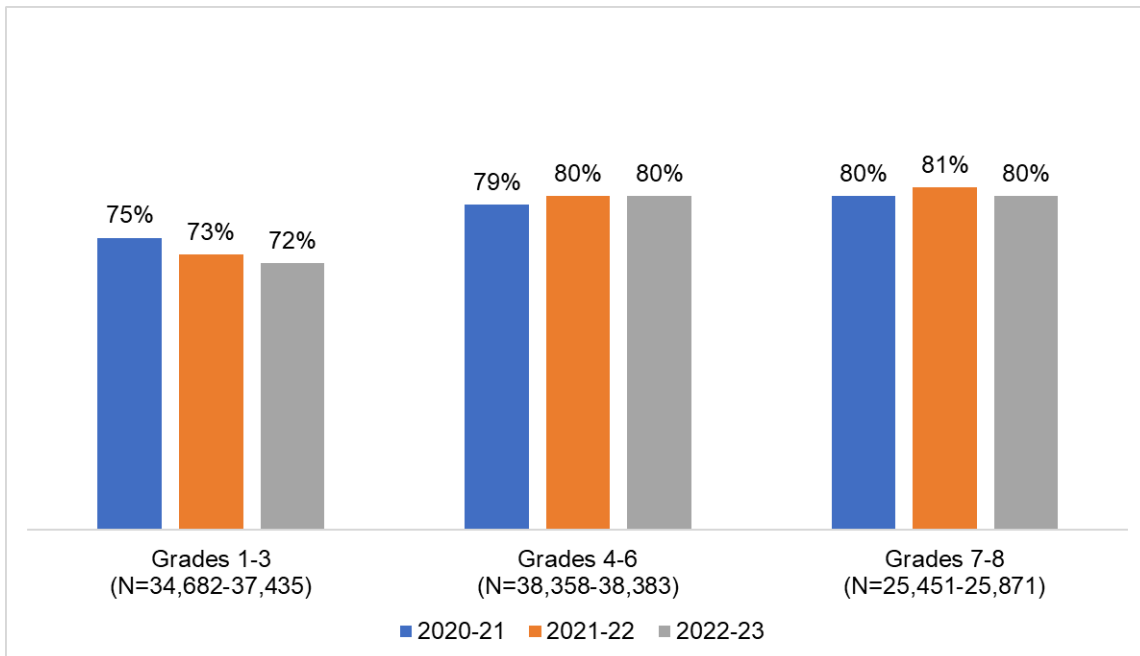


Appendix C

TDSB Report Card Data

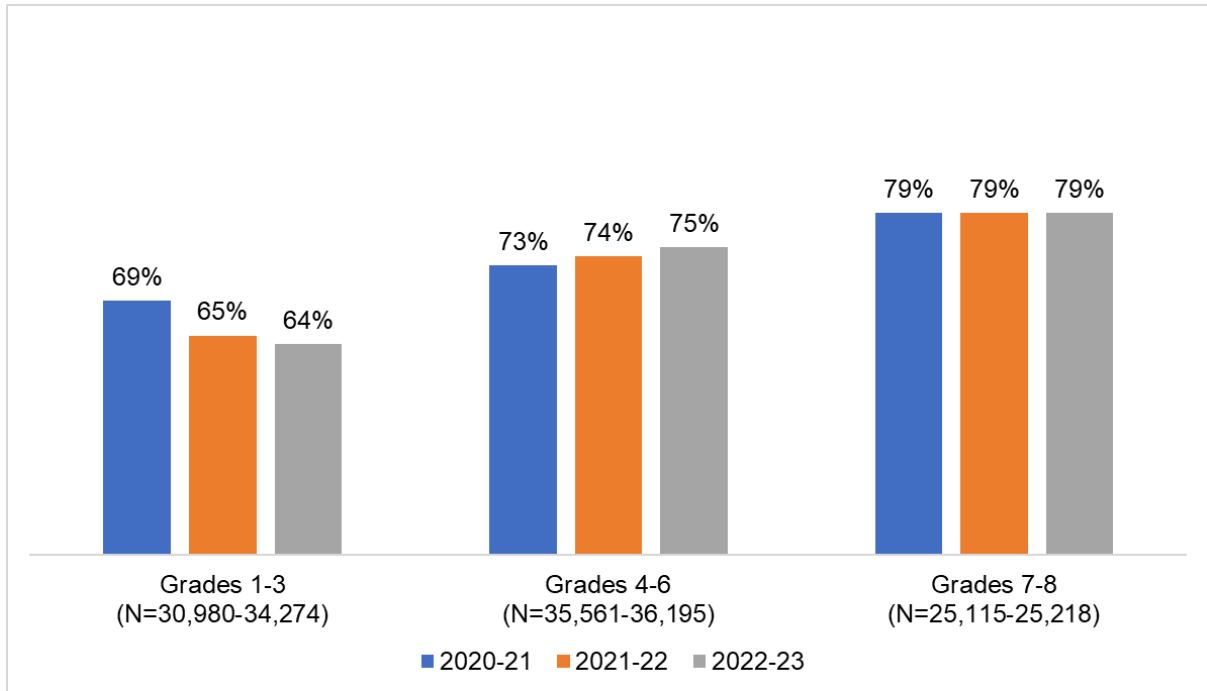
The report card findings below align with recent Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Assessments of Reading and Writing, particularly among Grade 3 students who experienced significant in-class learning disruptions in Senior Kindergarten and Grade 1 during COVID-19 (see Figures 4 and 5). In general, TDSB performance on the Grade 3 and Grade 6 EQAO is comparable to the province.

Figure 1: Percentage of Elementary Students Achieving Level 3 and Above in Reading on Term 2 (Final) Report Cards



Appendix C

Figure 2: Percentage of Elementary Students Achieving Level 3 and Above in Writing on Term 2 (Final) Report Cards





Academic Pathways Strategy: Supporting Students from Kindergarten to Apprenticeship, College, University, and the Workplace

To: Program and School Services Committee

Date: 25 September, 2024

Report No.: 09-24-4768

Strategic Directions

- Commit to the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action.
- Belong - All students belong, are engaged, and valued in an inclusive environment.
- Achieve - All students reach high levels of achievement, success, and personal development.
- Thrive - All students graduate with the confidence, skills, and knowledge to thrive.
- Revitalize - All students and staff learn and work in inclusive, safe, and modern environments.

Equity as a guiding principle: Equity is foundational to all TDSB work and will be embedded throughout the strategic directions.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Academic Pathways: Supporting Students from Kindergarten to College, University, Apprenticeship and the Workplace report be received.

Context

The goal of Academic Pathways K-12 is to identify, address, and eliminate systemic barriers, while also promoting inclusive instruction so that every student reaches the

post-secondary destination of their choice. This report outlines a proposed 4-year strategy (2024-2028) for ensuring access to and student success in the various pathways offered at the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). Outlining the strategic direction for continued support of Academic Pathways, apprenticeship, and experiential learning plans.

Academic Pathways: Challenging Streaming from Kindergarten to Grade 12

History of Addressing Academic Streaming in the TDSB

- Academic streaming is the process of separating students into distinct educational pathways based on perceived ability. Since 1999, Grade 9 students have been placed in either the Academic or Applied course stream. Academic courses in Grades 9 and 10 serve as prerequisites and a foundation for university-preparation and college-preparation courses in Grades 11 and 12. Applied courses, however, generally only serve as prerequisites for college-preparation courses and Workplace options in the senior grades.
- Therefore, Academic courses provide students with pathways towards all post-secondary educational destinations (i.e., university, college, or apprenticeship), whereas Applied courses prepare students for college, apprenticeship and workplace programs but courses do not qualify for university entrance.

TDSB is a leader in equitable and inclusive education, specifically in regards to investigating the impact of academic streaming. From 2013 to 2017, numerous reports were published that identified key effects of academic streaming. *Structured Pathways* (Parekh, 2013), showed that enrollment in Applied courses was associated with poorer academic achievement, higher suspension rates, higher dropout rates, and lower rates of acceptance to post-secondary education compared to enrollment in Academic courses. In addition, this report illustrated that students who are Black and Indigenous, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and students with special education needs were disproportionately placed in Applied courses.

Shifting, Sorting and Selecting (TDSB, 2015), utilised these data profiles to create a working document and a series of professional learning sessions to school administrators and teacher leaders from four secondary schools and three elementary feeder schools in neighbourhoods with high numbers of Black families and with low socioeconomic status. It culminated with staff voluntarily committing to “destream” in at least one Grade 9 subject by eliminating the Applied course option and running “Academic-only” programming. Results after the first year indicated

gains in academic achievement through measures including report card mark averages and achievement on EQAO assessments.

The success and impact of *Sifting, Sorting & Selecting* led to the creation of a similar series in 2017, titled [Restructured Pathways](#), that expanded participation to 16 secondary schools and 47 elementary schools. In addition to examining streaming in secondary schools, elementary staff focused on the Home School Program (HSP) as a form of streaming. HSP was designed to support students with special education needs by providing a smaller class setting for at least 50% of the day for timed and tiered intervention. TDSB research found that students from racialized and low socioeconomic backgrounds were disproportionately placed in HSP and achieved lower academic outcomes.

Addressing academic streaming at a system-wide level was formalized through the adoption of the TDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) in 2018. Goals within the MYSP included a review of the Home School Program and led to the phased elimination of HSP across the TDSB that was completed in 2022. Another goal in the MYSP was “to work over the course of three years to support the majority of students to study at the academic level for Grades 9 and 10.” Through a three-year phased approach, schools transitioned to providing

Academic-only courses in Grades 9 and 10, culminating in the elimination of Grade 9 Applied courses in September 2021 and Grade 10 Applied courses in September 2022. During the transition period, extensive professional development on inclusive teaching was offered to teachers, curriculum leaders, and school administrators through departments including Academic Pathways K-12, English/Literacy, and Mathematics/Numeracy.

In its own efforts to address systemic discrimination in Ontario education, the Ministry of Education began destreaming Grade 9 courses across the province through the development of new curricula. Grade 9 Mathematics was the first course to be destreamed in 2021, followed by Science in 2022, English in 2023, and Geography in 2024.

Key Goals of Destreaming in TDSB

The three key goals of destreaming through Academic Pathways K-12 in the TDSB are the following:

1. Increasing academic achievement for all students, particularly for those from historically and currently underserved groups, by elevating expectations, strengthening instructional practices, and providing appropriate supports and resources.
2. Increasing students' sense of belonging and engagement in inclusive and supportive classroom environments.

3. Reducing, and ultimately eliminating, disparities in acceptance rates to post-secondary education by race, socioeconomic backgrounds, and special education status.

These goals are addressed in the action plan and associated timelines (page 15).

Destreaming in Grades 9 and 10

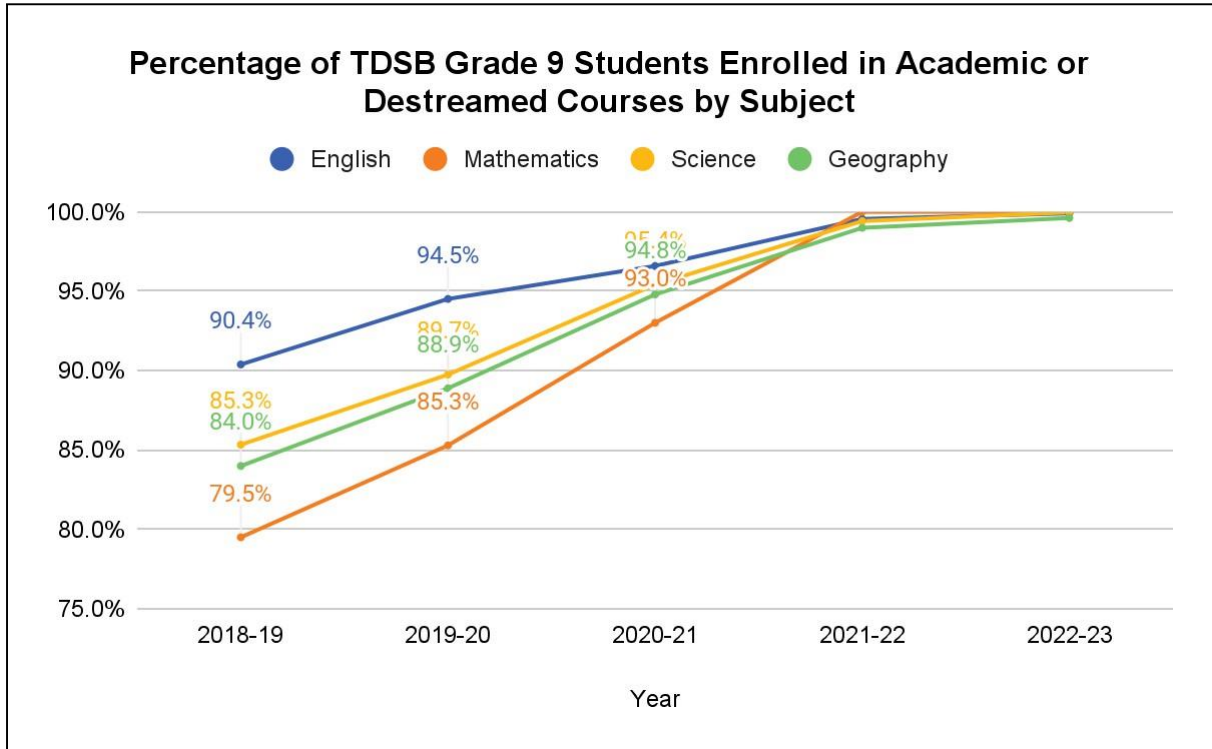
An important first step in secondary school to meet each of the goals above involves ensuring that students begin and continue to take Academic or destreamed courses. As of 2022-2023, almost all Grade 9 and 10 students are enrolled in the academic streams. From 2018-2019 to 2022-2023, there was significant growth in the proportion of students enrolling in Grade 9 Academic courses as the phased approach to destreaming was progressing.

Currently, almost all Grade 9 students in the TDSB are enrolled in either Academic (English and Geography) or destreamed (Mathematics and Science) courses (see Figure 1). In September 2023, the new destreamed Grade 9 English course was offered, and in September 2024, Grade 9 Geography will be a destreamed course. A similar trend occurred for Grade 10 Academic course enrollment, culminating in almost all TDSB students enrolling in Academic courses in English, History, Mathematics, and Science in the 2022-2023 school year (see Figure 2), which serve as prerequisites for university-preparation courses in Grade 11.

The student data that follows below maps out key success indicators in relation to student trajectories into post-secondary education opportunities. Successful transitions from Grade 8 into a Grade 9 is critical to establishing a successful trajectory for students into their later secondary education experience. The slides below begin with a breakdown of student enrollment in destreamed courses in Grade 9 and follow with enrollment in University Level course participation in Grades 11 and 12. These two stages for secondary school students are important to monitor as they provide insights into the likelihood of successful transitions of TDSB students into post-secondary education. In early secondary school, Grade 9, schools and system leaders need to monitor the successful transition of students within the destreamed learning environment that almost all students (Figure 1) are now engaged.

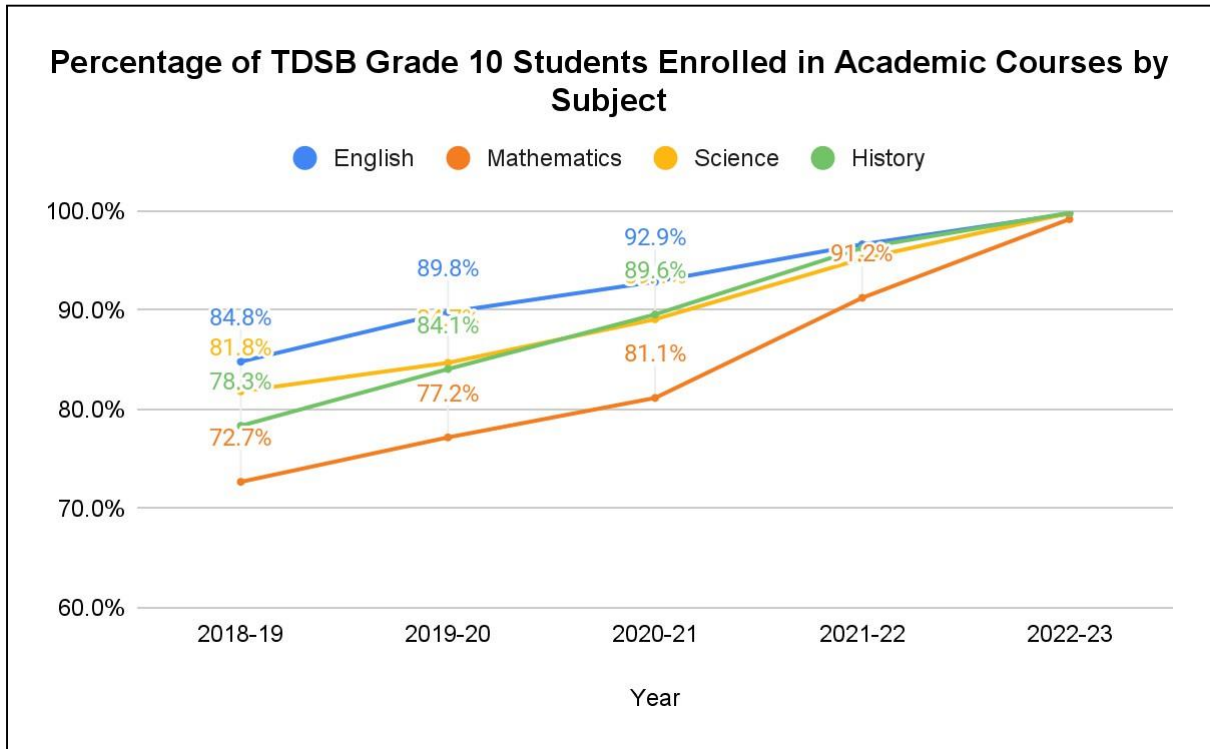
Achieving an average of 70% and above for the four academic core subjects- Geography, Science, English, and Mathematics- is a critical threshold for students in providing an academic foundation for successful participation in Grade 11- 12 learning experiences (Figures 3-5) that in turn serve as a critical platform for post-secondary education access– both college and university (Figure 3 and 5).

Figure 1: Percentage of TDSB Grade 9 Students Enrolled in Academic or



Destreamed Courses by Subject (2018-2019 to 2022-2023).

Figure 2: Percentage of TDSB Grade 10 Students Enrolled in Academic Courses by



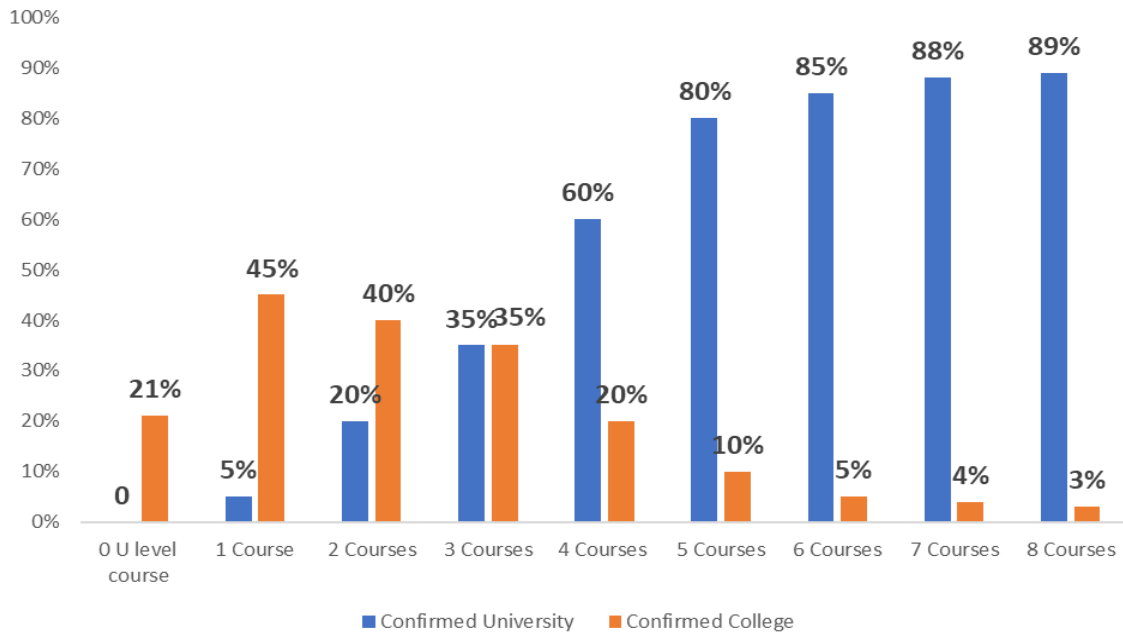
Subject (2018-2019 to 2022-2023).

Enrollment in Grades 11 and 12 University-Preparation Courses to Support Entry and Success in College or University

Increased student enrollment in university-preparation courses in Grades 11 and 12 is an important indicator that more students are prepared to enter, and succeed in, post-secondary education in college or university. Recent research has shown that among students who confirmed entry to an Ontario university within two years of graduating from secondary school, 99.8% of them completed Grade 12 university-preparation English. Also, a majority of students who confirmed entry to an Ontario college (53.0%) also completed Grade 12 university-preparation English (Gallagher-Mackay et al., 2023). In mathematics, almost all students (98-100%) entering STEM and business programs have at least one Grade 12 university-preparation Mathematics course, in addition to a majority of Arts, Humanities and Social Science students (58%) (Brown, Parekh & Gallagher-Mackay, 2018). Students who take first-year college mathematics courses having completed university-preparation mathematics courses in secondary school outperformed those who completed college-preparation mathematics courses (Orpwood et al., 2012). TDSB Research has followed 129,000 students in cohorts from 2005-2012 in order to ascertain the relationship between University Level course participation in Grades 11-12 and post-secondary education opportunities of any kind. Only 21% of students who did not take one University Level course went on to any post-secondary education

opportunity. However, 70% of students who took 3 university level courses of any kind went on to a post-secondary education opportunity, half of which was a college opportunity and half a university post secondary opportunity. See figure 2 below.

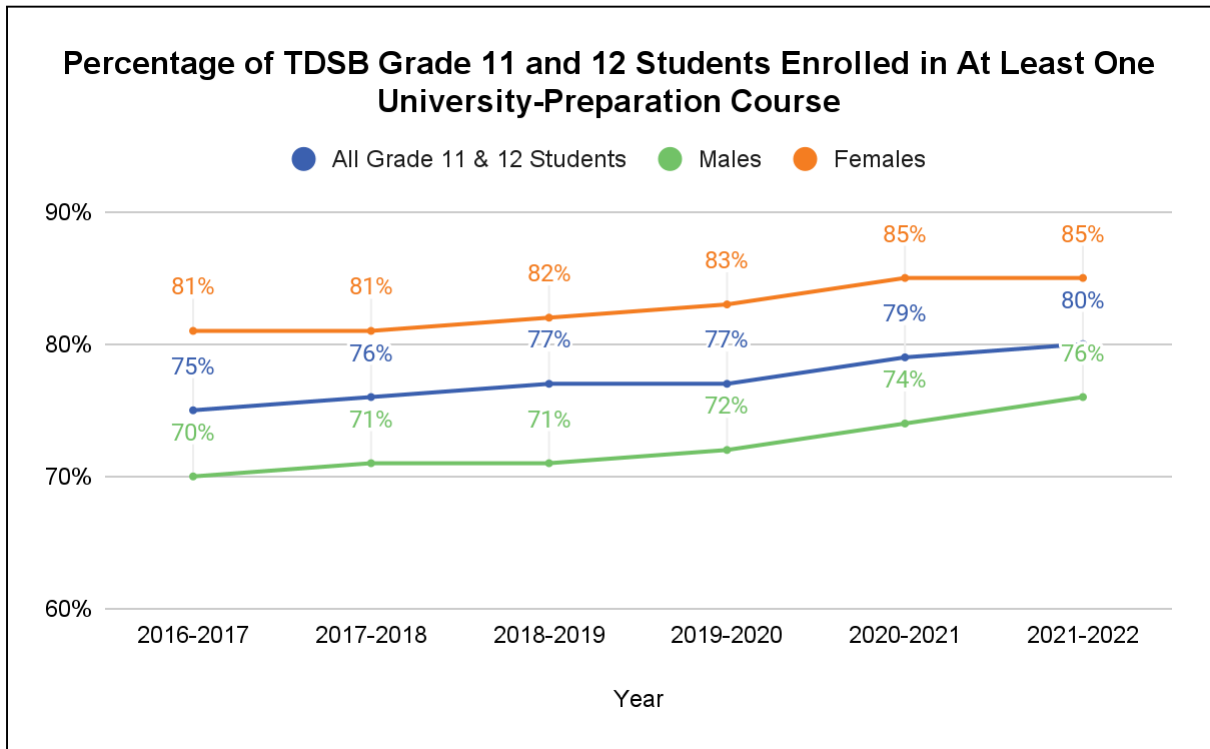
Figure 3. Relationship between Gr 11- 12 University Level Course Participation and Post-Secondary Education Opportunities 2005-2012



Due in large part to the destreaming efforts in the TDSB since 2015, the proportion of students enrolling in university-preparation courses has been increasing. Overall, the percentage of Grade 11 and 12 students enrolling in at least one university-preparation course has increased from 75% to 80% from 2016-2017 to 2021-2022 (see Figure 3). Historically, males were overrepresented in Applied courses (Parekh, 2013), which accounts for the disparity between males and females enrolled in university-preparation courses. However, that disparity has been decreasing over time, from 11% to 9%.

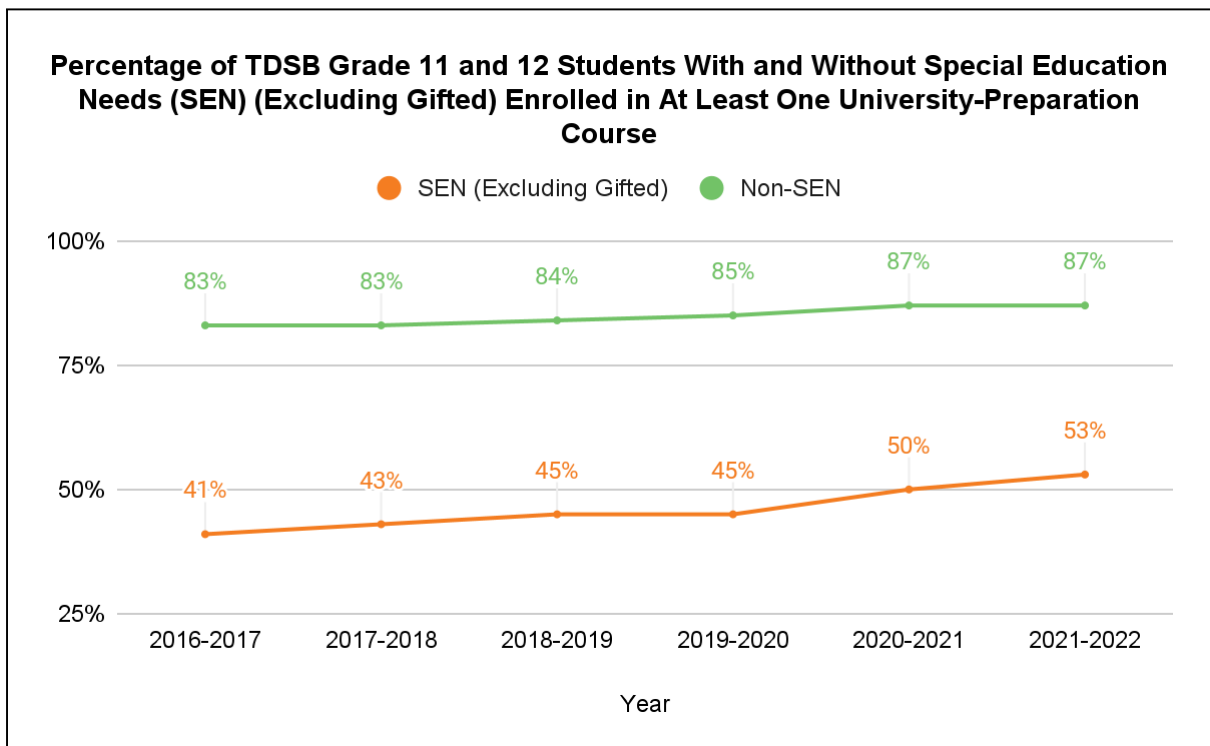
Students with special education needs (SEN) (excluding gifted) have seen large gains in university-preparation course participation during the board's destreaming efforts. From 2016-2017 to 2021-2022, there was a 12% increase in students with SEN enrolling in at least one university-preparation course, compared to a 4% increase in enrollment for students without SEN (see Figure 4). While the disparity remains large, this is a promising trend that indicates destreaming efforts as having the desired effect of providing greater equity in educational outcomes.

Figure 4: Percentage of TDSB Grade 11 and 12 Students Enrolled in At



Least One University-Preparation Course (2018-2019 to 2022-2023).

Figure 5: Percentage of TDSB Grade 11 and 12 Students With and Without Special Education Needs (SEN) (Excluding Gifted) Enrolled in At Least One University-



Preparation Course (2018-2019 to 2022-2023).

Increases in the rates of university-preparation course enrollment were measured across all self-identified racial groups in the TDSB. However, some groups experienced greater gains than others. Southeast Asian (15%), Middle Eastern (10%), Mixed (7%), and Black (7%) students saw the greatest increases in university-preparation course participation from 2016-2017 to 2021-2022 (see Table 1). Indigenous students, however, saw the least growth (2%) amongst self-identified racial groups and remain the group with the lowest rate of university-preparation course enrollment, indicating a clear area of focus for concerted improvement efforts.

Table 1: Percentage of TDSB Grade 11 and 12 Students by Self-Identified Race Enrolled in At Least One University-Preparation Course.

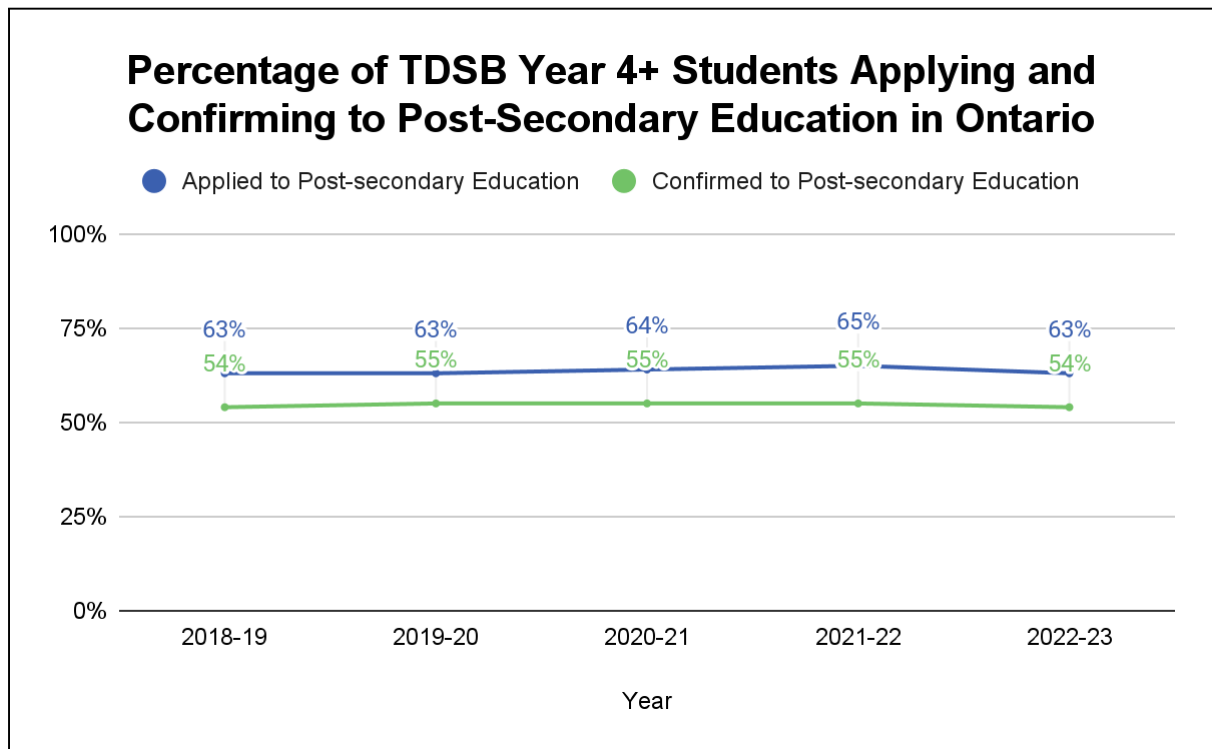
Year	Black	East Asian	Indigenous	Latina/o/x	Middle Eastern	Mixed	South Asian	Southeast Asian	White
2016-17	60%	90%	37%	63%	72%	75%	86%	67%	82%
2017-18	62%	91%	37%	63%	74%	78%	87%	71%	83%
2018-19	64%	92%	38%	66%	76%	78%	87%	72%	85%
2019-20	62%	93%	36%	68%	77%	77%	87%	73%	85%
2020-21	63%	94%	34%	66%	82%	79%	89%	78%	86%
2021-22	67%	95%	39%	69%	82%	82%	90%	82%	87%
6-year change	+7%	+5%	+2%	+6%	+10%	+7%	+4%	+15%	+5%

*Please note, Indigenous student proportions on this chart may not be reliable as self-identified Indigenous students and communities are significantly underrepresented due to historical and current relations with the Canadian government and colonialism in general. Equally, there is a distinction between approaches to equity in relation to racialized students who are marginalized and sovereignty affirming First Nation, Metis, and Inuit students that is not clearly articulated within data tables. The groups are included together here for purposes of representation of all students.

Applying and Attending College or University

Despite clear growth in student participation in university-level preparation courses, there has not yet been a subsequent increase in applications and confirmations to post-secondary education. Rates of applications and confirmations to Ontario colleges and universities have remained steady (63% and 54%, respectively) from 2018-2019 to 2022-2023 (see Figure 5). The identification and elimination of possible financial, informational, societal, or systemic barriers to applying for post-secondary education is needed to increase these rates.

Figure 6: Percentage of TDSB Year 4+ Students Applying and Confirming to Post-



Secondary Education in Ontario (College or University).

Current Actions to Support Destreaming in TDSB at the System Level

As stated , the goal of Academic Pathways K-12 is to identify, address, and eliminate systemic barriers, eliminate disproportionate outcomes for historically and currently underserved students, while also enhancing inclusive instruction so that every student reaches the post-secondary destination of their choice. This commitment begins at Kindergarten registration to Grade 8, where students learn foundational skills and concepts that set them up for success in Grade 9 and 10 destreamed courses. In turn, those courses can lead students to university-preparation courses in Grades 11 and 12, which not only serve as prerequisites for university programs, but also provide the most robust preparation for college programs.

Professional Learning

Focusing on destreaming and inclusion to enhance learning from Kindergarten to Grade 12 requires educators to challenge historical notions of (dis)ability, race and other areas of bias, and reconceptualize how we serve students with varying skills and readiness. Numerous program departments in the TDSB, including the Academic Pathways K-12 department, have engaged educators in professional learning to

address these needs. Expectations of staff for serving historically and currently underserved students are being raised to ensure that all students receive the support and opportunities they need to succeed. By providing ongoing professional development, the TDSB aims to equip teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary to create inclusive learning environments that meet the diverse needs of all students, and bring forward a more equitable and supportive system.

The Academic Pathways K-12 department facilitated professional learning to over 300 Grades 7 and 8 teachers in January 2024 to support inclusive instruction in language and mathematics, as well as through the use of digital tools. Subject area departments have also provided hands-on workshops to teachers to deepen their practice in delivering the new Grade 9 destreamed English and the Grade 9 destreamed Mathematics course. In December 2023, a learning session for Mathematics Assistant Curriculum and Curriculum Leaders (ACLs and CLs) from every secondary school focused on effective instruction and assessment for Grades 9 and 10 Mathematics courses. As part of the Mathematics Achievement Action Plan, Math Learning Partners have provided in-depth professional learning to over 1300 K-12 teachers and administrators on effective and inclusive Mathematics instruction. This year, the Mathematics and Numeracy Department is offering a professional learning opportunity in partnership with OISE/UT to complement the work with Math Learning Partners called *Destreaming Grade 9 Mathematics: Exploring the Curriculum through Inclusion, High Expectations and Impactful Practice*. This multi-day learning will occur throughout the 2024-25 school year. Math Learning Partners have worked and will continue to work alongside Grades 3, 6, and 9 mathematics teachers in classrooms to assist with implementing high-impact instructional practices and teaching the mathematics curriculum with fidelity.

Teaching Resources

The TDSB is committed to ensuring that all schools have adequate resources to meet the diverse needs of learners. These resources are culturally relevant and responsive, and demonstrate academic rigor and high expectations for all students.

Classroom-ready teaching resources have been provided to teachers to complement their professional learning. For example, the English/Literacy department has provided sample lessons as part of the Grade 9/10 support plan and shared the TDSB Literacy Success Diagnostic Kits with secondary English teachers. In mathematics, teachers in Math Learning Partnership schools have access to digital teaching resources (MathUP and Mathology). All Grade 9 mathematics teachers in the TDSB have access to MathUP, a Ministry-approved resource to use in destreamed classes, and online tools including Knowledgehook and Brainingcamp to augment classroom learning.

Additional Staff

The Ministry of Education provided \$11.2 million for additional staff to support destreaming and the transition to secondary school for the 2023-2024 school year. These funds were used to staff elementary guidance positions, reduce class sizes in Grade 9 , provide in-class support for students, and create in-school destreaming coaches to build staff capacity in inclusive teaching and learning.

One challenge that the TDSB will face for the 2024-2025 school year is the removal of the \$11.2 million funding from the Ministry of Education to support destreaming and the transition to secondary school. This funding reduction in staff allocation may hinder the board's ability to effectively implement programs aimed at academic programming and support historically underserved students. Without this financial support, the TDSB will need to attempt to find alternative resources or strategies to continue providing essential services and support for students during these critical educational transitions.

Student Tutoring and Mentoring Program

For the past three years, the Academic Pathways K-12 department has facilitated a student tutoring and mentoring program, where paid senior students support Grades 9 and 10 students in English, mathematics, science, geography, and history. From September 2023 to May 2024, 19 secondary schools have provided over 2500 hours of tutoring to strengthen achievement in destreamed and Academic courses.

So far, this report has highlighted system efforts related to Academic Pathways that revitalize TDSB's K-12 education system so that all students — particularly those from historically underserved communities — belong, achieve, and thrive in their preparation for college and university. Destreaming and inclusion, however, also support students who are considering apprenticeships and the workplace by elevating student expectations and developing more accessible learning environments. Additional system actions to prepare students for post-secondary apprenticeships and the world of work are outlined below.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is a post-secondary pathway that combines paid on-the-job training with an experienced skilled tradesperson, with periodic in-school training that is regulated by Skilled Trades Ontario. Eighty-five percent of the cost of training is paid for by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development (MLITSD). An apprentice attends in-school training two or three times over the course of their apprenticeship. Apprentices typically complete their training with some significant savings. An Ontario Government news release from August 2023 cited that “Nearly 300,000 jobs are going unfilled across the province, while one in

five new job openings in Ontario will be in the skilled trades by 2025. 1.2 million people were working in skilled trades-related occupations in Ontario in 2022. Roughly one in three workers in Ontario with an apprenticeship or trade certificate is aged 55 or over and nearing retirement.” ([Ontario Government](#))

Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program

The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) is a program for students that opens the door to work in apprenticeship occupations through the Cooperative Education (Co-op) program. Students have an opportunity to become registered apprentices and work towards becoming certified journeypersons in a skilled trade while completing their secondary school diplomas. The program is funded through a grant from MLITSD.

While students in OYAP programs are typically in unpaid co-op placements, students get the experience they need to gain employment as paid apprentices upon graduation while earning credits towards the completion of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

To be a student in an OYAP program students need to:

- have 14 credits, be 15 years old OR
- be 16 years old to go on a construction site
- have co-op on their timetable

For more information on the various ways that students can participate in a journey towards a skilled trade, see <https://oyaptdsb.com/programs>.

Accelerated OYAP

Accelerated OYAP is an intensive one-semester program that combines a co-op placement with an eight-week block of Level 1 training at a college or union training centre. A student in an Accelerated OYAP program becomes a registered apprentice with the MLITSD.

TDSB Offers the Accelerated OYAP programming in 16 different skilled Trades sectors (see Table 2 below).

Table 2. Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program Types

Auto Collision Repair	Child & Youth Worker	General Carpenter	Plumber
-----------------------	----------------------	-------------------	---------

Automotive Service Technician	Cook	Hair Stylist	Tile Setter
Baker	Electrician	Heavy Equipment Technician	Air Conditioning Mechanic
Brick & Stone Mason	Floor Covering Installer	Interior Finishing Drywall	Truck & Coach Technician

TDSB currently has 2088 students who are working through their apprenticeship journey through OYAP. Of those, 479, or 22.9%, of students identify as female.

Focused Apprenticeship Skills Training (FAST)

A new accelerated stream of the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, called Focused Apprenticeship Skills Training (**OYAP-FAST**) was announced by the Ministry of Education in May of 2024.

OYAP-FAST allows Grade 11 & 12 students to participate in full-time apprenticeship learning through 8 to 11 co-op credits in the Skilled Trades while pursuing their OSSD, including continuing to attend classes to earn compulsory and optional credits.

Graduates of this new stream will receive a new seal on their OSSD.

Students will be able to choose the OYAP-FAST pathway during the course selection process for the **2025-2026** school year.

Additional program details will be shared once they are available through updates to the 2024-2025 OYAP guidelines.

Dual Credits

Dual Credit programs are programs approved by the Ministry of Education that allow students, while they are still in secondary school, to take a college or apprenticeship course that counts towards both their OSSD and a post-secondary certificate, diploma, degree, or a Certificate of Apprenticeship.

Dual Credit programs are intended to assist secondary school students in completing their OSSD and making a successful transition to college and/or apprenticeship programs.

Students attend classes on a college campus one afternoon a week for approximately 15 weeks. Upon successful completion of the college-delivered course, students earn both a college and secondary school credit which will count towards their OSSD (elective credit).

TDSB students can access Dual Credits at the following four colleges: Centennial College, Humber College, Seneca College and George Brown College.

In 2023-2024 TDSB students were enrolled in over 800 Dual Credit courses.

Preparing for the Workplace

Experiential learning allows students to apply knowledge and skills through hands-on experiences. These opportunities build valuable knowledge, essential skills, work habits, technical literacy and networks in business, industry and the community.

The following opportunities in Experiential Learning are available to high school students:

- [Business Studies](#)
- [Cooperative Education](#)
- [Technological Education](#)
- [Specialist High Skills Major](#)

Cooperative Education

Cooperative education is a credit course that provides the opportunity to use what is learned in the classroom and apply it in the workplace. Co-op is an opportunity to “try out” a career and can help with making decisions about your future. Students will also develop work habits, attitudes and job skills necessary for a successful transition to post-secondary education or the workplace.

Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM)

The Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) is a specialized program that allows students to gain credits toward their OSSD and focus their learning on a specific economic sector at the same time.

Students receive the SHSM seal on their diploma when they:

- complete a specific bundle of 8-10 courses in the student's selected field
- earn industry certifications like first aid and CPR qualifications
- gain important skills on-the-job through co-op placements

By design, SHSM programs must offer course bundles that honour all pathways for students. TDSB currently has 130 SHSM programs offered at 56 secondary schools in TDSB. SHSMs are available in the following 14 sectors (see Table 2 below).

Table 3. SHSM Program Types

Arts and Culture	Environment	Information and Communications Technology	Sports
Aviation/Aerospace	Health and Wellness	Justice, Community Safety, and Emergency Services	Transportation
Business	Horticulture and Landscaping	Manufacturing	Non-Profit
Construction	Hospitality and Tourism		

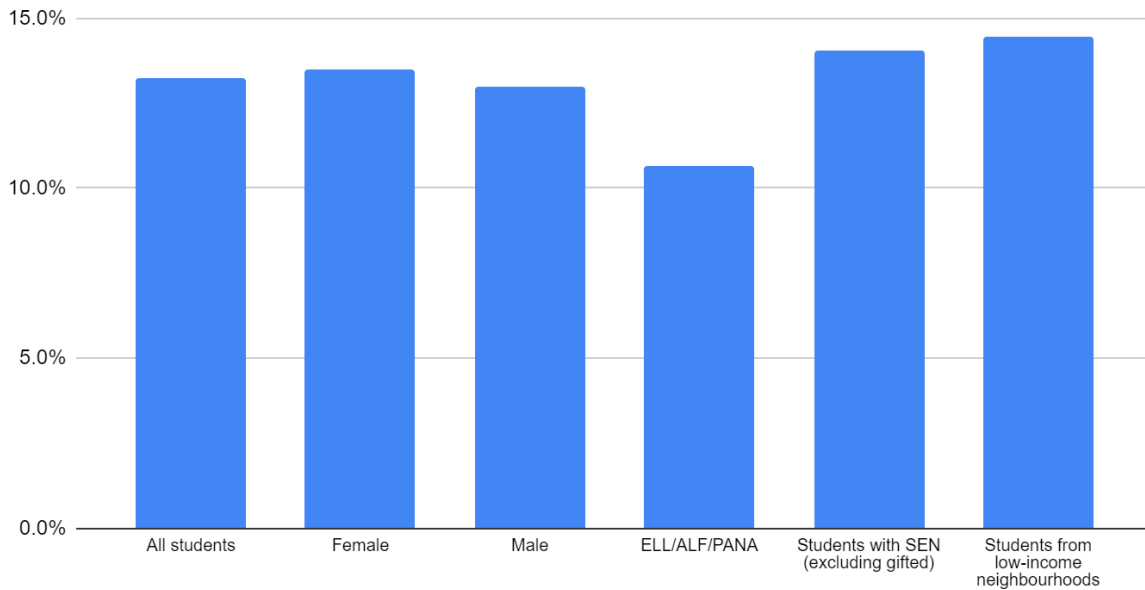
Benefits of a Specialist High Skills Major

Pursuing a SHSM can help students:

- customize their high school education to suit their interests and talents;
- develop specialized knowledge and skills;
- earn credits that post-secondary educational institutions and employers recognize;
- gain sector-recognized certification and career-relevant training;
- engage in STEM-related activities that develop innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship;
- identify, explore and refine career goals and make informed decisions about their future;
- transition after graduation to apprenticeship training, college, university or the workplace; and
- remain flexible, with the option to shift between pathways, should their goals and plans change.

Figure 7. Job Skills Participation Broken Down by Demographic Factors

% of students participating in at least one job skills program (SHSM, Dual Credits or OYAP) Source 2021-22 Ministry Student Achievement Plan



Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Academic Pathway Strategy 2024-2028

The following goals and actions aim to guide students and provide the necessary support and resources for them to succeed in various post-secondary pathways, whether that be college, university, apprenticeships or directly entering the workforce.

Objectives:

1. Increase academic achievement for all students, particularly for those from historically marginalized groups, by elevating expectations, strengthening instructional practices, and providing appropriate supports and resources.
2. Increase students' sense of belonging and engagement in inclusive and supportive classroom environments.
3. Reduce, and ultimately eliminate, disparities in confirmation rates to post-secondary education by race, socioeconomic backgrounds, and special education status.

Action: Enhance Teaching of Foundational Skills in Literacy and Numeracy from Kindergarten to Grade 8, and Reduce the Number and Severity of Curriculum Modifications in Literacy and Numeracy in Grades 4-8

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The goal is to have students move from their modified grade level in language and mathematics to their age-appropriate grade level.

This will be accomplished by supporting the acquisition of foundational literacy and mathematics skills in children which is at the heart of addressing academic streaming and setting students up for success throughout their K-12 educational experience. The Academic Pathways K-12 department will coordinate with the English/Literacy, Mathematics and Numeracy and Special Education and Inclusion departments to support the offering of professional learning opportunities to K-8 educators that lead to the effective implementation of evidence-based instructional strategies for developing foundational literacy and numeracy skills, taught within meaningful and culturally relevant contexts.

For students who have been historically and currently underserved and have curricular expectations modified to a lower grade level on their individual education plans, having a concrete plan for accelerating learning so that they reach grade-level expectations alongside their peers is vital to effective inclusion. We will provide professional learning to elementary staff to illustrate promising teaching practices that accelerate language and mathematics learning for students.

Key Monitoring

In partnership with the Research department, Special Education and Family of Schools department we will monitor the number and severity of curriculum modification over time.

Action: Support Academic Achievement in Grades 9 and 10

TDSB research has indicated that not only are the earning of credits important, but the quality of the credits matter as well. That is, a student who achieves at or above the provincial standard in Grades 9 and 10 is more likely to achieve success in future grades compared to those that do not. Therefore, ongoing professional learning for staff teaching Grades 9 and 10 courses must continue in order to enhance academic achievement. The professional learning sessions that will be offered in collaboration with individual subject-area departments, will promote the effective use of evidence-based instructional practices, including differentiated instruction, universal design for learning, and culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy.

Key Monitoring

Achievement levels for Grade 9 destreamed and Grade 10 Academic courses will continue to be monitored. Monitoring will be expanded to include students' sense of belonging and engagement.

Action: Provide Adequate Resources to Meet the Diverse Learning Needs of Learners The implementation of teaching practices that are culturally relevant and responsive in order to support effective instruction can be enhanced and accelerated by providing staff with appropriate teaching and learning resources. The department will work with various subject-area departments to determine how best to utilize the Ministry's De-streaming Implementation Supports program to maximize impact on students and teachers.

Key Monitoring

The department, in partnership with the Family of Schools, and subject-area departments will monitor well-being, belonging, engagement, and achievement levels using various measurement tools to assess how effectively the supports have helped students. By tracking these key indicators, we aim to provide the initiatives that are making a positive impact on students' overall educational experience and outcomes.

Action: Increase Proportion of First Nations, Metis and Inuit Students Participating in University-Preparation Courses in Grades 11 and 12

The Academic Pathways K-12 department will work in partnership with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre (UIEC) to increase the proportion of First Nations, Metis and Inuit students participating in university-preparation courses in Grades 11 and 12 over the course of the next three years.

Key Monitoring

In partnership with the Research department and the UIEC ongoing data will be collected to indicate the proportion of First Nations, Metis and Inuit students participating in university preparation courses.

Action: Increase Proportion of Black Students Participating in University-Preparation Courses in Grades 11 and 12 and Pathways to Post Secondary

The Academic Pathways K-12 department will work in partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement to increase the proportion of African, Afro-Canadian and Black students participating in university-preparation courses in Grades 11 and 12 over the course of the next four years. This partnership will support students in identifying diverse post secondary pathways.

Action: Increase Level of Application to Post-secondary Education

The Academic Pathways K-12 department will work in partnership with the Guidance, Career Development & Student Well-Being department and graduation coaches to determine and address barriers for students to apply to post-secondary education.

Key Monitoring

In partnership with the Family of Schools, Guidance, Career Development & Students Well-Being department, Research department and the Equity team we will monitor student experience and trajectories to provide opportunities for students to post-secondary education.

Action: Increase the Application of Students Entering Apprenticeships

To build system capacity in supporting students entering the skilled trades, full year Professional Learning for elementary and secondary school guidance teachers focused on experiential professional learning opportunities will continue. Educators will develop an enhanced understanding of the skilled trades and apprenticeship pathway and the benefits of the skilled trades as a career. This professional learning will be delivered in a number of ways, from small group workshops with elementary grade 7/8 teachers and facilitators as well as larger training days hosted for secondary guidance counsellors at colleges and training delivery sites.

To expand offerings for students in the skilled trades it will require TDSB to continue to establish new partnerships with skilled trades unions and training delivery sites to expand the offerings of Accelerated OYAP student placements. To better prepare students to have a successful start in the skilled trades, TDSB will expand the innovative pre-OYAP Boot Camps for students designed to bridge any skills gaps and meet employer needs.

Exposure for students to the variety of skilled trades in the province will be facilitated with increased opportunities for students to attend skilled trades fairs including Level Up, Dreamers Conference, Jill of All Trades Conference, Skills Ontario Young Women's Conference and First Nations Métis and Inuit Student Conference. This will further bolster our success rate in attracting and retaining female identifying students to the skilled trades.

As more detailed information about the Focused Apprenticeship Skilled Training is released from the Ministry of Education, the OYAP department will promote this revised pathways option with students in all Grades 7-12 schools.

Key Monitoring

The department will monitor student applications and outcomes by demographic on a yearly basis.

Action: Increase the Exposure of Students to Planned Entry to the Workforce

To provide focus for students in schools, TDSB will continue to support the expansion of SHSM offerings both in sectors and in schools by facilitating writing teams at local schools to apply for new SHSM programs. The department will assist schools by supporting increased student enrolment in existing SHSM programs through a variety of reach-ahead activities such as the k2i Initiative team at York University/Lassonde School of Engineering, Enriched Academy, UHN STEM pathways lectures.

The Experiential Learning department continues to streamline access for teachers and students who are entering central cooperative education programs, such as STEP to Construction, Transportation, Sunnybrook, UHN, Banking on Business, and Be Our Guest. The department will continue to expand, both in number and quality, the cooperative education community placements available for students.

The goal is to increase the number of schools that offer at least one SHSM by 10 schools in the next two years.

Key Monitoring

The department will monitor the number of students enrolled as well as the success rates of students participating in SHSM programming who earn their red seal of completion. The department will also monitor the number of new SHSM applications made to the Ministry of Education.

Action: Increase the Opportunities for TDSB Students to Access Dual Credits

The department will continue to promote and enrol students in Dual Credits, both in conjunction with the regular school programming, as well as part of the Apprenticeship and Experiential Learning programming. The department will continue with full year professional learning for secondary school guidance counsellors and Student Success teachers, which will be offered on-site at TDSB partner college campuses throughout the year with the goal of expanding information of, and access to, Dual Credit programming.

Key Monitoring

The department will monitor the number of students enrolling in and successfully completing Dual Credits.

Resource Implications

Primary funding to support Academic Pathways K-12 comes from the Ministry of Education's De-Streaming Implementation Supports Program, which is one of the Ministry's Responsive Education Programs (formerly Priorities and Partnerships Funding (PPF)). This funding is designed to support transitions for Grades 7-10. It will be used to release teachers to participate in professional learning opportunities aimed at enhancing their ability to support students during these grade transitions. Additionally, this funding can also be used to support peer tutoring within the school, providing students with valuable academic assistance from their peers.

Dual Credit funding is allocated by the Ministry of Education under the School College Work Initiative (SCWI) and TDSB. SCWI funding determines the number of spots within the college (known as seats) available for purchase by TDSB. TDSB funding determines staff allocation for monitoring of Dual Credits.

Apprenticeship funding is allocated by MLITSD under SCWI. This funding covers the cost of training along with required resources (tools, uniforms, PPE) for students.

SHSM funding is allocated by the Ministry of Education at the prescribed rate of \$300 per student enrolled in a registered SHSM.

Communications Considerations

N/A.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

Toronto District School Board (1998). [Accountability for Student Achievement P040](#);

Toronto District School Board (2018). [Equity Policy P037](#);

Toronto District School Board (2019). [Transforming Student Learning In Literacy And Mathematics Policy P038](#);

Toronto District School Board (2022). [Parent and Caregiver Engagement Policy P023](#);

Toronto District School Board (2023). [Human Rights P031](#)

Appendices

- Appendix A: Restructured Pathways

From

Audley Salmon, Associate Director, Learning Transformation and Equity at audley.salmon@tdsb.on.ca

Roni Felsen, System Superintendent, Secondary Programs and eLearning at roni.felsen@tdsb.on.ca

Allan Easton, Centrally Assigned Principal, Experiential Learning, Student Success, Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting at allan.easton@tdsb.on.ca

Lisa Edwards, Centrally Assigned Principal, Academic Pathways, Aquatics, Guidance, Health, Physical Education & Athletics, Well-Being, UPHS at lisa.edwards@tdsb.on.ca

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Brown, R., Parekh, G., & Gallagher-Mackay, K. (2018). *Getting Through Secondary School: The Example of Mathematics in Recent TDSB Grade 9 Cohorts*. Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) 2018 Annual Conference Pre-Conference on the Tri-Ministry Ensuring Equitable Access to Postsecondary Education Strategy (Access Strategy).

Authors

Jason To, Erika Lloyd, Natalie Bacchus, Alison Gaymes San Vicente

Reviewers

Rob Brown
Carl James
Gillian Parekh
Ramon San Vicente
Cherilyn Scobie
Nikki Silvera

Planning Committee Chairs

Special Education (HSP) Models of Inclusion: Alison Gaymes San Vicente and Jason To
Delayed Pathways: Alison Gaymes San Vicente, Ramon San Vicente and Jason To

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Executive Summary

Restructured Pathways

Closing persistent achievement, participation, and opportunity gaps, as well as eliminating systemic barriers faced by students from historically and currently marginalized groups are key areas of focus for the Ministry of Education (2017) and the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) (2016a, 2016b). TDSB system data confirms that streaming or structured pathways such as special education programming and non-academic programs of study (e.g. applied and locally developed/essentials) have led to inequitable academic outcomes and restricted access to postsecondary education.

This issue, however, is not unique to the TDSB. Students in applied courses and those identified with special education needs (SEN) are encountering structural barriers across Ontario (Quan, 2017). As a result, questions are being raised as to how students are being identified and recommended for special education or non-academic programming. The delivery of pedagogy, supports, and services as well as how ability or disability is constructed are also called into question. As ‘ability’ is naturally and equitably dispersed across gender and racial identities (Gould, 1996), the persistent overrepresentation of male students, racialized students and students living in poverty recommended for placement within special education and non-academic programs is of particular concern (Brown & Parekh, 2010; 2013).

For example, Dr. Carl James and Tana Turner discuss in their report, *Towards Race Equity in Education: The Schooling of Black Students in the Greater Toronto Area* (2017) the problematic reality that a greater proportion of Black students are identified as having a special education need and non-gifted exceptionalities. In community consultations, “[p]arents, students, and community members felt that the [TDSB] data also corroborated their realities in Peel, York, and Durham regions in both public and Catholic boards” (James & Turner, 2017, p. 38). The report signifies that the data is a call to action for systemic change not only in the TDSB, but in other school boards as well (James & Turner, 2017).

In response to the TDSB system data, and as a follow-up to the recommendation by the TDSB Sifting, Sorting and

Selecting inquiry to phase out streaming and move towards greater inclusion (San Vicente, Seck & Sultana, 2015), schools across the TDSB formed the HSP¹ Models of Inclusion and Delayed Pathways collaborative inquiries in February 2017.

As part of these inquiries, during the 2016–17 school year, TDSB school and system leaders from 63 schools (47 in HSP Models of Inclusion, 16 in Delayed Pathways) across the entire system (i.e. all four Learning Centres) engaged in collaborative professional learning focused on inclusive education. Specifically, both groups: (1) examined their respective data contexts and history of exclusionary policies using the framework of an anti-oppressive stance and inclusive practice, (2) leveraged the experience of leaders already implementing inclusive models by facilitating panel and small-group discussions to exchange ideas, (3) discussed research articles to deepen their understanding of the rationale and possibilities for inclusion, and (4) reflected on the importance of inclusive education through anti-oppressive discourse upon hearing students’ experiences of streaming.

As part of their collaborative inquiry, participants identified factors needed from the system (local and provincial) to successfully implement inclusive models in their respective schools. These factors informed a proposed three-year plan to further support the development and implementation of inclusive models in elementary and secondary schools. The data and learning from these inquiries demonstrate that students from families with low incomes, students with SENs as well as those from historically and presently marginalized communities are disproportionately impacted by structured pathways which negatively impact their access to postsecondary education. **The overall recommendation resulting from this inquiry is to review in-school and system processes in elementary and secondary**

¹ The TDSB created the Home School Program (HSP) to provide support to elementary students in their neighbourhood school for at least 50% of the school day and to serve the Individual Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) placement decision or School Support Team recommendation of Special Education Class with Partial Integration (Toronto District School Board, 2017b).

panels through which students are streamed and phase out the practice of streaming. It is imperative that this process is thoughtful and informed by an analysis and knowledge of relevant demographic data and anti-oppressive educational theory. The complete list of specific recommendations is introduced on page 18 of this report.

Introduction

Restructured Pathways

Amanda is a happy and vibrant Grade 1 student who meets the expectations set by her classroom teacher. She excels in elementary school in a mainstream class all the way through to her promotion to Grade 9. In secondary school, Amanda enrolls in courses in the academic program of study and begins to prepare for postsecondary education by enrolling in university preparation courses in Grade 11. The following year, she applies to college and university programs and prepares to graduate secondary school.

Devon is also a cheerful and spirited Grade 1 student. In contrast to Amanda, Devon is racialized and his family lives below the poverty line. Devon has yet to achieve some of the learning expectations for his grade and is identified as having a special education need. By the middle of Grade 1 he is separated from his classmates for half of the day to receive additional support in a small group setting. By Grade 8, his learning gaps have persisted and in some areas widened, and he is transferred to Grade 9 where he is enrolled in applied and locally developed courses. Devon continues to struggle into Grade 11 where he takes mainly college preparation courses, but by Grade 12, he has no plans to apply to any postsecondary programs and is at risk of dropping out altogether.

The stories of Amanda and Devon are not uncommon reflections of student pathways in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). They are in fact examples of what has become known as “streaming”, a process whereby students are separated into distinct programs based on perceived characteristics (San Vicente, Seck & Sultana, 2015). Research has demonstrated that streaming continues to pervade the educational experiences of Ontario students as early as Grade 1 and has been shown both locally and globally to replicate and exacerbate societal inequities (Clandfield et al., 2014). The discourse is no longer about whether or not streaming exists and the harm that it inflicts upon particular demographics of students, but rather what can be done to mitigate its effects or altogether eliminate streaming as a systemic barrier to equity and the realization of the potential of all students.

Background

Restructured Pathways

This report focuses on the issues and responses to two methods of streaming in the TDSB: streaming into special education in the elementary grades and streaming into various Programs of Study (POS) at the secondary level. Specific to this report, the focus is on the elementary Home School Program (HSP) and the Grade 9/10 POS, which have historically been key factors leading to inequitable outcomes for students from the most vulnerable and marginalized segments of society.

HSP is a program unique to the TDSB that is found in all elementary schools and has existed since the early 2000s. It was originally intended to support students identified with special education needs (SEN) within their local home school, thereby removing the stigma of being pulled out of their school community to access services and supports. Students in HSP receive at least 50% of their day in a smaller class setting to be provided with timed and tiered intervention and subsequently reintegrated. However, students from racialized and low socioeconomic backgrounds are disproportionately placed in HSP and achieve lower academic outcomes. In this case, flawed or biased notions of ability, often conflated with racial and class identity, appear to be used to segregate and stream students in ways that reproduce structural and systemic oppression. This often begins in the early primary grades (Gaymes San Vicente, 2016) and impacts students into secondary school as “[s]tudents with special education needs are enrolled in applied courses and are underrepresented among students who graduate and go on to pursue postsecondary education” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 14).

Similar concerns exist in secondary schools with respect to streaming by POS. Prior to 1999, students were placed in courses at three levels – advanced, general, and basic. As evidence mounted that this streaming system led to inequitable outcomes, particularly for students from marginalized, underserved groups, the new Ontario Secondary Schools curriculum emerged and streaming was officially eliminated. However, in reality, this new system simply replicated the earlier streaming structure and

outcomes but under new labels – academic, applied, and essentials (Clandfield et al., 2014). Thus, the formal and informal streaming and sorting of students in early elementary grades by perceived academic ability and special education needs continues into secondary schools, impacting their pathway and POS (San Vicente, Seck, & Sultana, 2015).

Recently, the TDSB increased its efforts to investigate issues pertaining to streaming in its schools; Brown and Parekh (2010; 2013) established relationships between student demographics and special education program placement in the TDSB. Parekh (2013b) further demonstrated correlations between student demographics, placement in secondary POS, academic outcomes, and access to postsecondary education (PSE). These analyses, along with additional TDSB cohort data, show that students from historically and currently marginalized groups (e.g. racialized, low socioeconomic status, those perceived as having disabilities) are overrepresented in special education programs and streamed into non-academic (i.e. applied and locally developed/essentials) programs of study, leading to inequitable academic outcomes and severely restricted access to postsecondary education. Although HSP and secondary POS were designed to level the playing field, there is ample evidence to show they act as systemic barriers for the very students they are intended to serve.

“flawed or biased notions of ability, often conflated with racial and class identity, appear to be used to segregate and stream students in ways that reproduce structural and systemic oppression.”

Additional steps have been taken to address the issue of streaming in elementary and secondary schools. TDSB Research and Information Services released a report in 2013 entitled, *A Case for Inclusive Education*, which detailed local, national, and international research and policies that support the adoption of an inclusive education model for all students,

with close attention to students identified as having a disability or special education need.

In addition, the former TDSB Department of Equity and Inclusive Schools worked with the authors of *Restacking the Deck: Streaming by Race, Class and Gender in Ontario Schools* as well as staff from the TDSB Guidance Department in a collaborative inquiry where teachers and administrators from elementary and secondary schools engaged in professional learning and efforts to disrupt the practice of streaming. This initiative, the Sifting, Sorting and Selecting collaborative inquiry, occurred in 2014–15 and engaged staff from seven schools, primarily from underserved neighbourhoods, to develop and implement local models of inclusion as alternatives to streaming. Their efforts led to new learning for staff, the development and implementation of inclusive programming in participating schools, and a report, *Sifting, Sorting & Selecting: A collaborative inquiry on alternatives to streaming in the TDSB* (2015). The report summarizes the professional learning, the impact of their work, and articulates a main recommendation to phase out streaming in all schools.

In 2016–17, the HSP Models of Inclusion and Delayed Pathways collaborative inquiries, which involved 47 elementary schools and 16 secondary schools respectively, continued previous inclusion work and engaged school leaders in professional learning and the co-development of inclusive models of schooling. This report re-emphasizes the rationale behind all the work done previously and presently to promote inclusive education by summarizing the relevant data related to streaming in elementary and secondary schools and situating the efforts within current Ministry of Education and TDSB policies. Descriptions of the work and its impact are then described, followed by a proposed three-year plan to support further implementation of inclusive education in the TDSB.

Rationale

The introductory stories of Amanda and Devon personify the data trends and equity issues related to streaming through mechanisms like HSP, which begins in elementary school, and secondary POS. This section provides a more detailed look at issues with respect to which students comprise the special education population in the TDSB and where their programming takes place. TDSB data for the 2011–12 school year illustrates the relationships between special education status/placement and family income (Figures 1 to 4) (Parekh, Brown & Conley, 2016). Students without SENs were evenly distributed by income tertile (Figure 1); however, students identified with exceptionalities from the lowest income tertile were underrepresented in regular classrooms while students with SENs from higher income families were most likely to remain included (Figure 2). Figure 3 illustrates that students from the lowest income tertile were overrepresented amongst those placed in the regular classroom but given Individual Education Plans (IEPs) without formal identification of exceptionalities. The most troubling disparity, however, exists within HSP classrooms, where the proportion of students from lower income households is notably higher than those from high incomes (41% vs. 25%). Additional TDSB data shows that students who self-identified as Black as well as students whose parents have not gone to university are also overrepresented in HSP, and thus are at the greatest risk for being streamed into non-academic programs in secondary school and limited access to postsecondary programs.

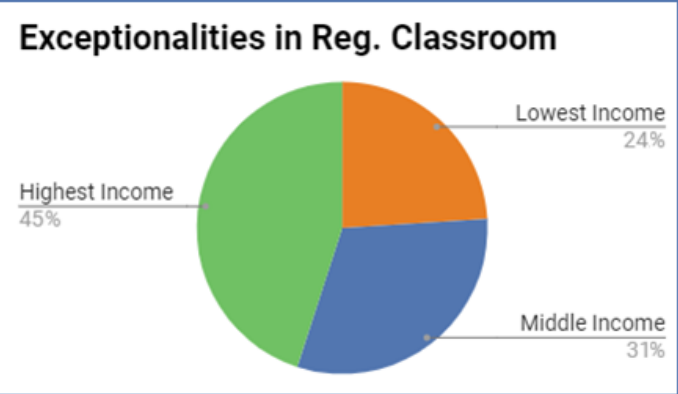


Figure 2: Proportion of students identified with exceptionalities whose placement is in a regular classroom by income tertiles (2011–12).

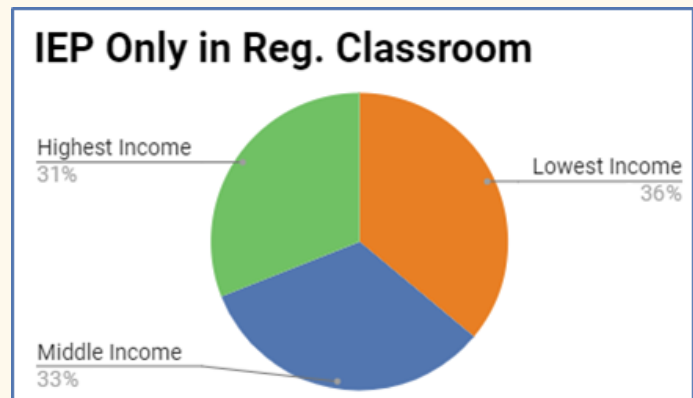


Figure 3: Proportion of students with Individual Education Plans (IEP) but without identified exceptionalities by income tertiles (2011–12).

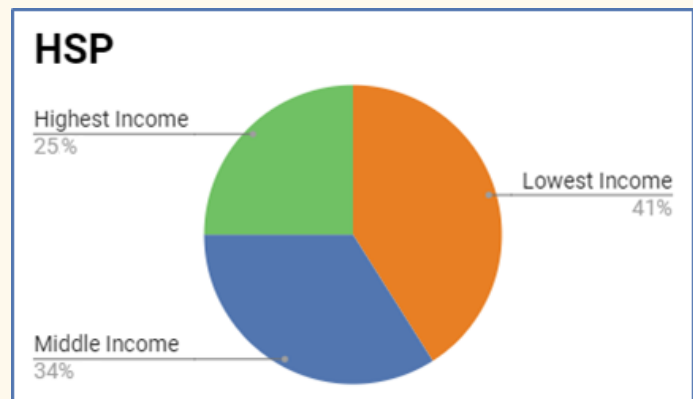


Figure 4: Proportion of students identified with special education needs and placed in HSP by income tertiles (2011–12).

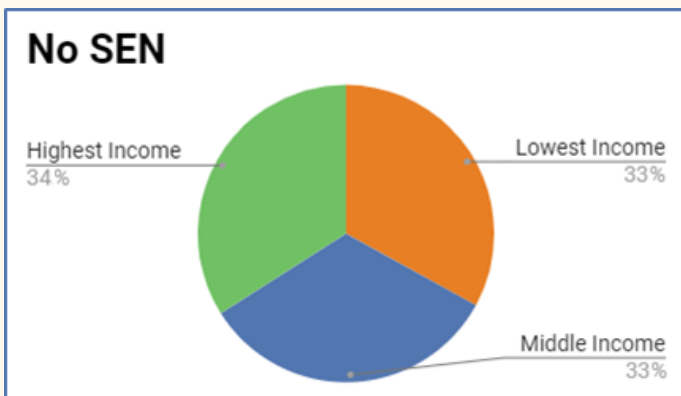


Figure 1: Proportion of students without special education needs by income tertiles (2011–12).

Additionally, Dr. Carl James and Tana Turner noted in their report, *Towards Race Equity in Education: The Schooling of Black Students in the Greater Toronto Area* (2017), that among the students, parents, educators, school administrators, trustees, and community members who

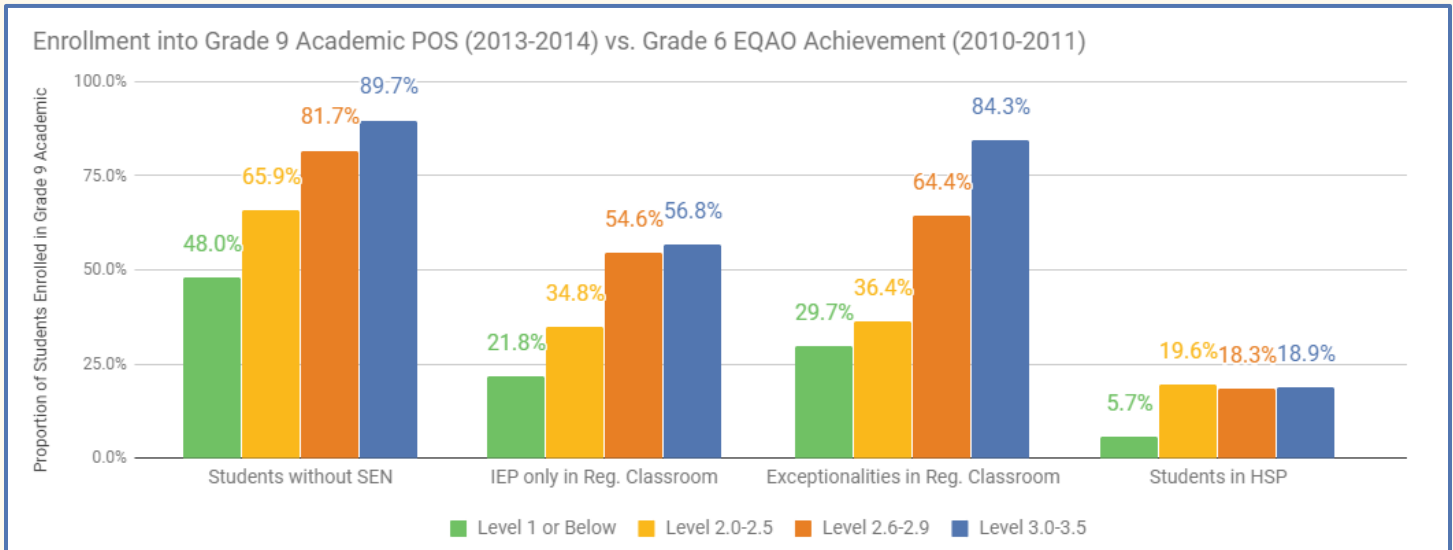


Figure 5: Proportions of students who accessed the academic program of study in 2013–14 by special education designation/placement and achievement level on the Grade 6 EQAO Junior Division Assessment.

attended consultation sessions about the challenges that Black students and parents face within Ontario's public education system, “[s]ome participants...felt that special education and behavioural classes had become ‘warehouses’ for Black students and the processes by which they were removed from regular classrooms, thereby creating racially stratified school environments and educational outcomes” (James & Turner, 2017, p. 46).

Achievement and cohort data also show a strong relationship between a student's special education identification and placement in elementary school and their pathway in secondary school (Parekh & Brown, 2017). The decisions on which streams students enter in Grade 9 are typically informed by recommendations from elementary school teachers and/or guidance counsellors based on their *interpretation* of the students' perceived ability and intelligence. A student's SEN as well as placement in special education programs such as HSP is a salient factor (San Vicente, Seck, & Sultana, 2015). The trajectory for students who are placed in HSP largely ends with streaming towards a non-academic program of study in secondary school regardless of their achievement level using the Grade 6 Junior Division Assessment administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) as the indicator of achievement (Figure 5) (Parekh & Brown, 2017). Students achieving at the same level on the EQAO assessment but without exceptionalities or those who are identified with

SENs but are placed in the regular classroom access the secondary school academic POS at a much higher proportion, indicating that placement in HSP serves as a barrier to accessing academic programming.

Similar equity issues related to demographic disproportionality exist with respect to placement in secondary POS. *Structured Pathways: An Exploration of Programs of Study, School-wide and In-school Programs, as well as Promotion and Transference across Secondary Schools in the Toronto District School Board* (Parekh, 2013b) analyzed the trajectory of students from historically and currently marginalized groups and those identified with exceptionalities and determined relationships between student demographics, placement in elementary school, subsequent secondary school programming and postsecondary access. The following trends emerged:

- **Perceived ability:** Students transferred² from Grade 8 were overrepresented in non-academic POS. In the academic, applied, and essentials POS, the proportion of students transferred from Grade 8 was 4.5%, 53.5% and 91.4% respectively in 2011–12.

² “Transfer: The student has not met the curriculum expectations of the Grade 8 subjects and has not achieved an average equivalent to a minimum of Level 1 across all subjects OR has not achieved a minimum of Level 1 in any of the following subjects: Language/French (extended or immersion), French (core)/Native Language, mathematics, science and technology, geography and history” (Toronto District School Board, 2013, p. 2).

- **Special education:** Students identified with special education needs were disproportionately placed in non-academic programs of study. In the academic, applied, and essentials programs of study, the proportion of students identified with SENs was 5.5%, 32.9% and 67.6% respectively in 2011–12.
- **Income and socioeconomic status:** There is a direct correlation between family income level or socioeconomic status (SES) and placement in a POS. The lower the family income or SES, the higher likelihood of students being placed in non-academic POS in the TDSB (Yau, Rosolen, & Archer, 2015). This trend is consistent across Ontario. In the 10% of schools with the highest levels of applied math enrolment, the average family income is \$61,720, whereas in the 10% of schools with the lowest levels of applied math enrolment, the average family income is \$112,420 (Hamlin & Cameron, 2015).
- **Race:** Students from racialized backgrounds were overrepresented in non-academic POS. For example, in 2011–12, students who self-identified as Black made up 12.6% of the TDSB overall, but comprised 22.7% of students in applied programming and 29.3% of those in essentials. Students who self-identified as being of Indigenous³, Middle Eastern, or Latin American descent were also disproportionately placed in non-academic programming.

Concerns regarding disproportionate representation exist because, generally, students placed into non-academic POS continue to be marginalized and have their learning needs unmet. From 2011 to 2017 in the TDSB, achievement data pertaining to the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) administered by EQAO illustrate that students enrolled in applied English classes met the provincial standard at less than half the rate compared to those enrolled in academic English (29-37% vs. 87-89%). Students enrolled in locally developed (essentials) English did not fare better,

³ At the time when the data was collected, the term “Aboriginal” was used. However, this report is in keeping with the Government of Canada and the TDSB’s movement in using the term “Indigenous” as it is utilized for international agreements (The Government of Canada, 2017) and honouring the diversity of how Indigenous Peoples self-identify.

with 2-6% meeting provincial standard. A similar trend holds true for applied and academic mathematics courses and the proportion of students meeting provincial standard on the Grade 9 EQAO assessment of mathematics, despite different assessments for students in applied versus academic math. Student achievement discrepancies between streams are further compounded by the fact that students from applied and essentials programs were disproportionately suspended from school compared to their peers in academic (7.1% and 11.5% vs. 1.8%, respectively in 2011–12) (Parekh, 2013b). Although applied and essentials programming are intended to support the varying needs of learners, they have done little to support equitable outcomes for all students.

It is no surprise, therefore, that after four years of secondary school, students taking the applied and essentials POS encounter significant barriers in reaching academic milestones and accessing postsecondary education. Compared to students taking the academic POS, students from applied and essentials programs, respectively:

- graduate at a far lower rate (81.6% vs. 39.2% and 20.3%) (Figure 6).
- drop out at a higher rate (2.9% vs. 14.8% and 23.1%)
- are substantially less likely to apply to university or college (74.3% vs. 20.7% and 5.7%) (Parekh, 2013b)

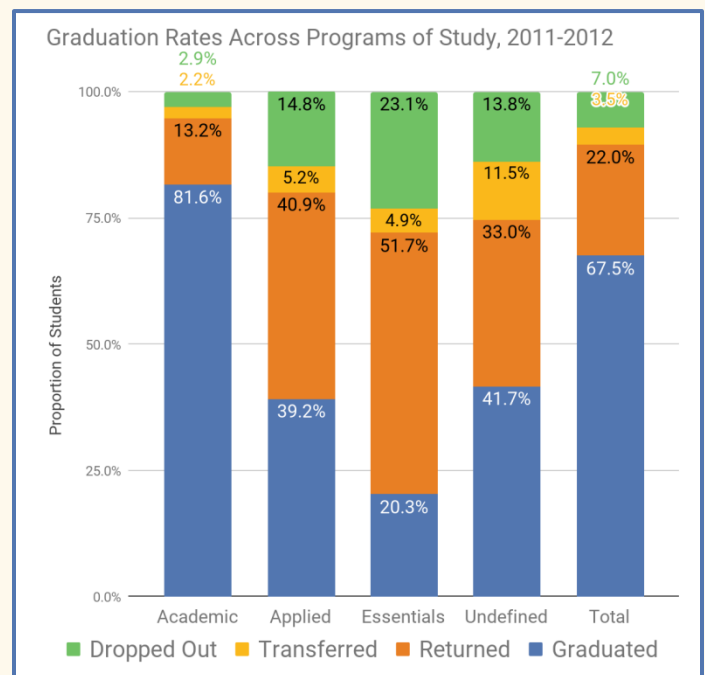


Figure 6: Breakdown of outcomes after four years of secondary school by program of study. Reproduced from Parekh (2013b).

This barrier for students moving from applied and essentials POS to postsecondary education is further illustrated in Figure 7 which represents TDSB cohort data from 2011–16 (arrows are proportionately weighted to illustrate actual student pathways). The data shows that while there have been improvements in access over the last five years to both university and college, less than half of the students taking college level courses actually end up confirming an offer to college even after five years of secondary school. The figure contrasts the commonly used graphic (Figure 8) (Toronto District School Board, 2017c), which suggests that all pathways choices are possible and flexible. However, under closer investigation, clear pathways emerge with very obvious postsecondary outcomes.

The discrepancy in access to postsecondary education is particularly concerning, given its emerging importance in overall life outcomes. It has been demonstrated that postsecondary education is linked to improved long-term health and securing financial independence and well-being (Berezina, Lior & MacLaughlin, 2015; Fonseca Benito &

Zheng, 2011; Pew Research Centre, 2014). Overall, the school and life trajectories that exclusionary structures such as HSP and secondary POS create are starkly divergent, with some students benefiting and excelling, while others are dramatically left behind.

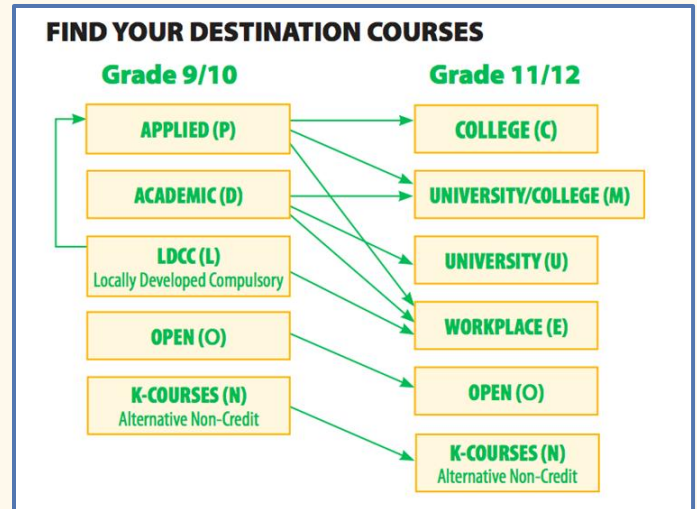


Figure 8: Diagram of secondary POS pathways from TDSB’s Choices 2017–18 guide.

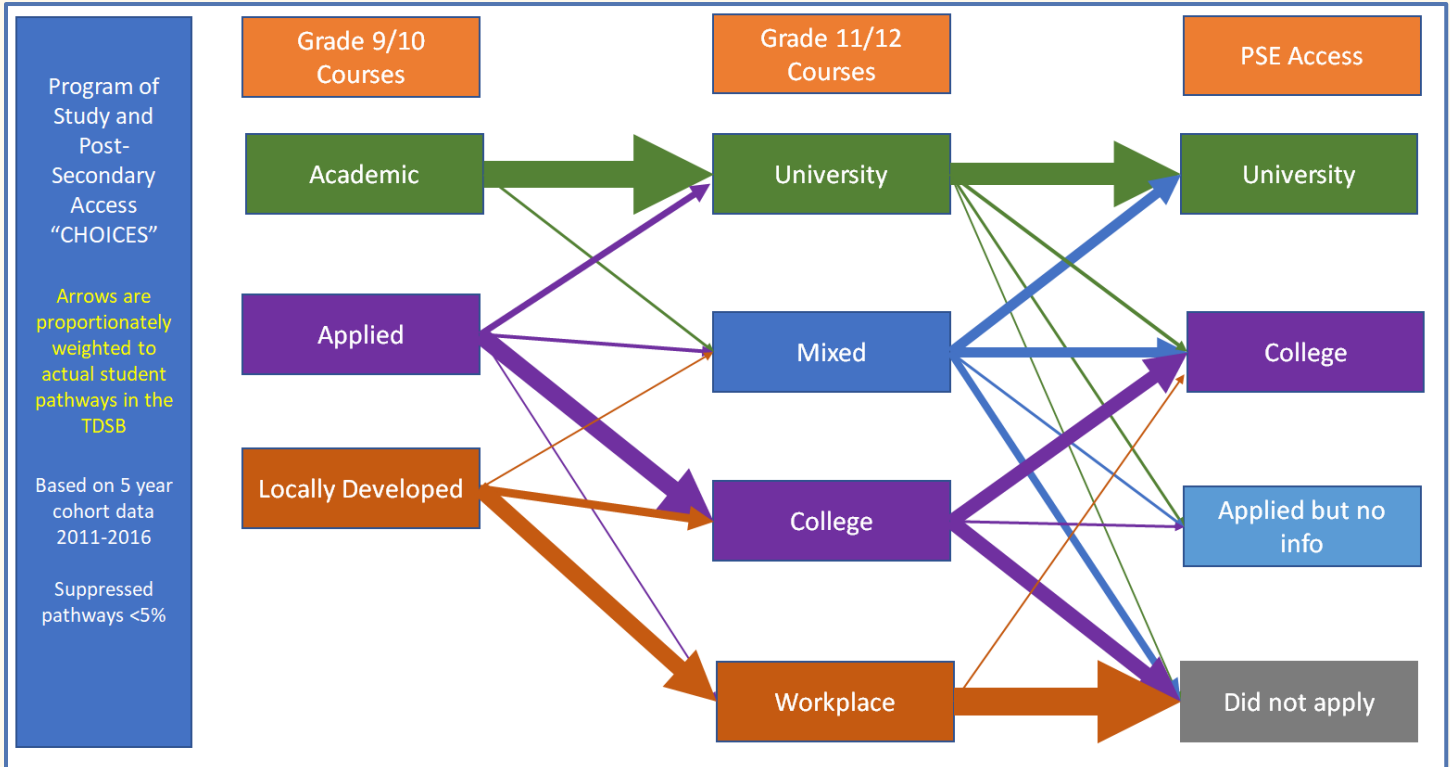


Figure 7: A visualization of streaming by POS based on 2011–16 TDSB cohort data and application data from Ontario University Application Centre and the Ontario College Application Service (Parekh, Brown & Conley, 2017).

Oppression in education involves the privileging of some and the marginalization of others (typically from historically non-normative groups) through actions, inactions, or more subtly, assumptions and expectations that influence how marginalized students are treated. This oppression is supported by policy, practices and structures (Kumashiro, 2000). As noted by James and Turner (2017), inappropriate streaming and low teacher expectations are examples of systemic oppression and anti-Black racism in the school system. The practice of labelling Black students' behaviours as early as kindergarten and placing them in "behavioural classes" serves to remove Black students from regular classrooms and programming and often excludes them from specialized programs such as French Immersion (James & Turner, 2017). It is also evident that HSP and secondary POS are systemic structures that enact the oppression of students from particular demographics. Clandfield et al. (2014) state further that:

streaming is a form of institutionalized violence that works to convince many working-class and racialized students, as well as their parents, that they belong in dead-end programmes with stunted curricula, which almost always lead to insecure, low-paid employment. (p. 261)

If academic achievement and overall health and financial outcomes are unequal for people in different streams of education, and those that are disadvantaged are youth from the most marginalized communities, then it stands to reason that school systems and jurisdictions that strive towards equity must reconsider such exclusionary practices and challenge the status quo. The efforts of the HSP Models of Inclusion and Delayed Pathways collaborative inquiries are such a response to disrupting current practices and reimagining how education might exist within an inclusionary framework to benefit all students.

Policy Context

Restructured Pathways

The work of the HSP Models of Inclusion and Delayed Pathways collaborative inquiries aims to eliminate streaming as an oppressive structure and develop alternative inclusive models that are grounded in provincial law and policy as well as TDSB policy and equity initiatives. Challenging streaming as a discriminatory practice reflects the Ontario Human Rights Code prohibited grounds for discrimination based on, among others, race, colour, ethnic origin, and disability (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2016). In 2009, the Ontario Ministry of Education released *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*. This directive, along with the supporting Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, *Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools* (2013), outline school boards' responsibilities of:

promoting inclusive education, and identifying and eliminating discriminatory biases, systemic barriers, and power dynamics that limit students' learning, growth, and contribution to society. These barriers and biases, whether overt or subtle, intentional or unintentional, need to be identified and addressed. (p. 2)

The Ontario Ministry of Education has made equity a central focus for all schools in the province. In *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*, ensuring equity in the education system is inextricably linked to achieving academic excellence, promoting well-being, and enhancing public confidence (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014). To help realize the vision, *Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan* outlines initiatives to eliminate embedded systemic barriers, discriminatory practices, and bias from schools and classrooms, including the separation of Grade 9 students into applied and academic courses (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017).

The identification and removal of systemic barriers is also at the heart of continued equity-focused TDSB policies. In *A Vision for Learning in the TDSB (2016)*, equity is one of the three learning and improvement focus areas. This TDSB policy document calls for schools to "eliminat[e] gaps that

may exist for identified demographic groups" by utilizing data and research findings (Toronto District School Board, 2016a, p. 6). Two expectations set out in the document include the "removal of any bias and systemic barriers that are hindering student achievement and well-being" and "all students graduating" (p. 4). Moreover, "this commitment to equity requires that we engage in challenging conversations not only at the system level but at each and every school"⁴ (p. 2).

“Removal of any bias and systemic barriers that are hindering student achievement and well-being”

Expectation from A Vision for Learning in the TDSB

In addition, the Toronto District School Board's multi-year *Integrated Equity Framework (IEF) Action Plan 2016–2019* "aims to improve achievement and well-being for each and every student, while closing persistent achievement, opportunity and participation gaps for all" (Toronto District School Board, 2017a). *Inclusion and Special Education*, along with *Access and Secondary Program Review* are two of the seven component areas of the IEF and are addressed directly by the work of the HSP Models of Inclusion and Delayed Pathways collaborative inquiries. Specifically, the TDSB has committed that moving forward, the board will "continue to remodel the Home School Program with an anti-racist, anti-oppression stance and an emphasis on greater inclusion, to address the over-representation of racialized and Indigenous students in special education" as well as "assess impact of the de-streaming initiative that is currently underway in a number of TDSB secondary schools" (Toronto District School Board, 2017a, p. 7). By addressing streaming in schools

⁴ At the school level, staff were asked to engage in important dialogues that included some of the following questions:

- What barriers exist in the school that might be keeping students from achieving?
- What bias might persons in the school possess about what certain groups of students are able to achieve?
- What needs to change in terms of the instruction, the environment in the school, and the relationships in the school so that achievement and well-being will improve for all students?
- How might our parents and communities assist us in this endeavour?"

through concrete actions, the collaborative inquiries described in this report are actualizing board and provincial goals of equity and inclusion.

The work of the HSP Models of Inclusion and Delayed Pathways collaborative inquiries aligns with the IEF as well as anti-oppressive discourse and is part of the transformational change needed to realize the equity vision of the TDSB. The equity goals in the IEF are intended to close achievement, participation and opportunity gaps, and eliminate the systemic barriers faced by some groups of students so that all are successfully included, supported, and empowered⁵.

The Toronto District School Board (2016a) is “committed to creating an equitable school system where the achievement and well-being of every student is fostered through rich, culturally authentic learning experiences in diverse, accepting environments where all are included, every voice is heard, and every experience is honoured” (p. 5). Through the work of the HSP Models of Inclusion and Delayed Pathways collaborative inquiries, the board’s commitment to equity of access and outcome for all students can be achieved.

“We believe that equity of opportunity, and equity of access to our programs, services and resources are critical to the achievement of successful outcomes for all those whom we serve, and for those who serve our school system ... The Board is therefore committed to ensuring that fairness, equity, and inclusion are essential principles of our school system and are integrated into all our policies, programs, operations, and practices.”

TDSB Equity Foundation Statement

⁵ Specifically, the equity goals in the IEF pertaining to Inclusion and Special Education will ensure: “all students experience a sense of belonging and social citizenship (e.g., membership, inclusion, shared power and value); the learning environment is modified to fit the student, not the student to fit the environment; all identities and cultures are celebrated within the learning environment; the right to participation and establishing a positive climate where social engagement and friendships can be promoted is prioritized; and deficit thinking is rejected and students are not organized within and outside the classroom by perceived ability.” (Toronto District School Board, 2016b, p. 12)

Collaborative Inquiries to Support Inclusion

Restructured Pathways

In consideration of the Ministry of Education and TDSB policies that promote equitable and inclusive education, participating schools in the HSP Models of Inclusion and Delayed Pathways collaborative inquiries engaged in co-constructed professional learning and explored potential models of inclusion. Within each collaborative inquiry were schools at various stages of implementation, from initial planning and dialogue with staff to full implementation of an inclusive model that addresses the needs of their local context. The following describes the learning, actions and impact of both collaborative inquiries during the 2016–17 school year that took place across three professional learning sessions.

HSP Models of Inclusion Collaborative Inquiry

The HSP Models of Inclusion Collaborative Inquiry continued the work of the Sifting, Sorting and Selecting collaborative inquiry in addressing streaming by special education program. This current inquiry was initiated with elementary schools to engage in and provide support around initiating inclusion models to support students with identified learning needs within the regular classroom. Participating schools were self-selected to take part following a system announcement of the inquiry's inception. The equity goal as stated in the IEF is to "[Ensure] that every student in every school is welcomed and included within the most enabling learning environment" (Toronto District School Board, 2016b, p. 12). Research indicates that inclusive models can maintain or improve academic outcomes for students identified with special education needs and have no negative impacts on those without SENs (Parekh, 2013a). From this position, school leaders engaged in a collaborative inquiry centred on the following question:

How might inclusive models of HSP impact student engagement, achievement and well-being?

Two-thirds of participating schools had already begun to enact either partial or full inclusion models. These models saw students receive HSP support in their regular classroom

through intentional collaboration between the classroom teacher and school-based special education staff to plan for and deliver differentiated instruction. A goal of the professional learning was to leverage the expertise of school leaders already involved in inclusion to help all participants gain the knowledge they require to begin planning or improve their local inclusive approach to HSP support.

Participants

Principals and select teaching staff from 47 schools across the system (i.e. all four Learning Centres) engaged in the HSP Models of Inclusion collaborative inquiry.

Summary of Professional Learning

Historical and data context: Participants learned about the historical background of HSP as a special education support model, examined the data indicating the disproportionate representation of students from racialized and low socioeconomic backgrounds in HSP, and analyzed the relationship between special education identification and placement in elementary school and streaming in secondary school.

Identifying factors needed to implement an inclusive model: Participants recorded factors that were required by their school and the system to successfully implement an inclusive model of HSP. The most notable areas that participants identified as being within their control were: (1) timetabling; (2) staff placements, alternate staffing models, structuring opportunities for co-teaching; (3) staff attitudes, promoting equity, engaging in courageous conversations; and (4) programming, implementing differentiated instruction, professional learning communities and professional inquiries (Parekh, 2017).

The top four areas that participants identified as requiring system support were: (1) more professional development and training for teachers and support staff, (2) greater access to human and classroom resources, (3) flexibility in hiring teachers and support staff, and (4) consistent messaging across the system (Parekh, 2017).

Collaborative capacity building: In addition to using external resources, the professional learning on inclusive programming was designed specifically to leverage the expertise that existed within the participant group.

- Principal panel discussion: Leaders from schools already engaged in inclusive models of HSP support shared their experiences with fellow participants in a panel discussion and fielded questions.
- Small-group discussions: An open space forum with four main themes (structural/operational issues, professional development and programming, parent outreach, and other), as well as another group discussion during the second session with similar themes further allowed participants to co-learn and troubleshoot issues pertaining to models of inclusion.
- Q&A with central special education department: A question-and-answer session with the Executive Superintendent of Special Education and Section Programs and the Supervising Principal of Special Education provided clarification for school leaders with respect to operations of HSP support, timetabling, funding, and the system focus on inclusion.
- Research articles: Participants discussed the content of a chapter from *Condition Critical: Key Principles for Equitable and Inclusive Education* by Diana Lawrence-Brown and Mara Sapon-Shevin and discussed its links to inclusion at their schools. Participants were also given a comprehensive list of articles related to inclusive education and Universal Design for Learning curated by staff at the TDSB Professional Library.
- Online collaboration: A Google Classroom was established to support networking and ongoing collaboration of participants.

Student voice: Numerous student groups spoke to staff about their experiences with exclusion and how they contrasted with experiences learning in an inclusive model. A middle school presented a video of students speaking about

their experience receiving inclusive HSP support in the regular classroom and how they felt valued as a learner by their peers. Students who were identified with special education needs also spoke to their positive experiences of learning in an inclusive setting with opportunities for small group support when they needed it. Four Grade 10 students held a panel discussion about their experiences with streaming, particularly their feelings of exclusion, a lack of consultation during Grade 8 to 9 course selections, and how labels such as “HSP” and “applied” impacted their sense of self-worth and well-being. They shared their successes and perceptions of participating in academic-only programming and fielded questions from teachers and principals.

Delayed Pathways Collaborative Inquiry

Similar to the HSP Models of Inclusion collaborative inquiry, the Delayed Pathways collaborative inquiry continued the efforts of the Sifting, Sorting and Selecting collaborative inquiry in addressing streaming at the secondary school level. These inquiries are grounded in successful efforts to challenge streaming from within and outside the TDSB, such as schools in the Limestone District School Board and Rockville Centre School District in New York, USA. To address the TDSB equity goal of “increasing equity of access and opportunity for all students in all schools” (Toronto District School Board, 2017a, p. 6) and years of research, data, and community knowledge that indicates structures have disenfranchised students, participating schools engaged in professional learning centred on the inquiry question:

How might providing all students with rigorous, differentiated curriculum within an academic program of study impact their engagement, achievement, and well-being?

Four participating schools were involved in the Sifting, Sorting and Selecting collaborative inquiry, and as of September 2016 had already begun to implement an academic-only model for some course offerings:

- **C.W. Jefferys Collegiate Institute:** All Grade 9 and 10 courses, except math (one section of Grade 9

locally developed English and science was still offered)

- **Downsview Secondary School:** All courses offered in the Africentric program (Grade 9 English, geography, math and science; Grade 10 English, history and science, Grade 11 English and law; Grade 12 English and social justice and equity)
- **Runnymede Collegiate Institute:** Grade 9 English and French
- **Westview Centennial Secondary School:** Grade 9 English and math (Grade 9 locally developed English and math were still offered)

Similar to the HSP Models of Inclusion collaborative inquiry, a main goal of the professional learning was to utilize the expertise already established within the group to support other schools with developing and implementing inclusive models.

Participants

Principals and key teaching staff from 16 schools across all four Learning Centres participated in the Delayed Pathways collaborative inquiry.

Summary of Professional Learning

Historical and data context: Participants examined and discussed relevant achievement and demographic data as well as policy contexts pertaining to Delayed Pathways and the prior work initiated by the Sifting, Sorting and Selecting team.

Identifying factors needed to implement an inclusive model: School teams identified factors they believed are needed to successfully implement a Delayed Pathways program from both school and system levels. The most notable areas that participants identified as being within their control were: (1) improved instructional, assessment and evaluation practices; (2) strategic scheduling and teacher assignments; (3) staff attitudes, promoting equity, engaging in courageous conversations; and (4) collaborative

professional learning within and between schools, as well as with teachers from feeder elementary schools.

The top five areas that participants identified as requiring system support were: (1) addressing systemic barriers such as class caps for a Delayed Pathways program so that the number of students in inclusive classes are closer to the applied level of 23–25 students versus 31-34 students of academic classes; (2) ensuring financial resources previously allocated to support students in applied courses (e.g. Renewed Mathematics Strategy) continue to support the same students as their pathways restructure to academic only, (3) easier opportunities to collaborate within and outside of school at both administration and teacher levels and with elementary feeder schools; (4) additional allocation of staff (e.g. additional teachers, support staff, learning coaches) and financial resources including funds for supporting reading intervention programs and learning resources for students identified with special education needs; (5) support from various stakeholders of Delayed Pathways including the Ministry of Education and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF).

Collaborative capacity building: Professional learning involved both the sharing of ideas between participants and utilizing external resources.

- Principal panel discussion: Leaders from schools already engaged in inclusion shared their experiences with fellow participants in a panel discussion and fielded questions to build capacity and give greater insight into how successful academic-only courses are implemented by school staff and received by students.
- Small-group discussions: Participating schools engaged in collaborative planning for implementation (or continuation) of Delayed Pathways programming at their schools. Participants brainstormed and shared possible steps for beginning the implementation of an inclusive, academic-only program (Table 1). Additionally, schools created their own draft road maps outlining their journey towards implementation of

Considerations for Restructuring Pathways from Participants	
Who are the stakeholders?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Parents and parent council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School staff • Elementary feeder schools
Before implementation...	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share existing models of academic only programming • Discuss funding issues • Shift pedagogy • Clear misunderstandings and promote asset-based mindset • Ensure supports are in place (e.g. human resources such as educational assistants) • Transition meeting between feeder and secondary schools prior to the transition from grade 8 to 9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in professional learning on streaming • Engage in professional learning on differentiated instruction with secondary teachers • Adjust staffing model • Share data with all school members (including community) • Build growth mindsets • Consider streaming practices at the elementary level • Work with elementary and secondary guidance counsellors
During implementation...	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document the process during the implementation • Ongoing consultation with students, staff and parents on process/ challenges/ successes • Intentional tracking of interventions for gap closing • Continue transition meetings between feeder and secondary schools prior to the transition from grade 8 to 9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing tracking and support for students who may not be on the postsecondary trajectory (e.g. students who would have taken locally developed courses) • Ongoing documentation of the process • Ongoing professional learning on streaming • Job embedded professional learning on differentiated instruction with secondary teachers
How would you document the process and impact?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement data from Trillium • Attendance data • Anecdotal data through teacher perception 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys of students/parents • Journaling and notes • Capturing student voice through pedagogical documentation

Table 1: Possible steps for beginning the implementation of a Delayed Pathways program.

Delayed Pathways and engaged in the Learning Conversations Protocol with colleagues in order to gain insights and elicit feedback from the group. A Google Classroom was established to support networking and ongoing collaboration of participants.

- Research articles: Educators unpacked salient information from professional readings and engaged

in conversations around implementing and supporting Delayed Pathways at their respective schools. Participants analyzed and gained a deeper understanding of the issues of challenging streaming and possible solutions.

The readings provided to participants included:

- *Detracking for Excellence and Equity* by Carol Corbett Burris and Delia T. Garrity
- *Knowing and Responding to Learners – A Differentiated Instruction Educator’s Guide (revised, 2016)* on EduGains.ca
- *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms* by Carol Ann Tomlinson

Student voice: In addition to speaking with the HSP Models of Inclusion collaborative inquiry participants, the four grade 10 students who experienced learning in an academic-only program spoke about how streaming and labels made them feel excluded and inferior, their lack of guidance around course selections and their hope that academic-only programming will exist for their peers.

Impact

The work of participants from the HSP Models of Inclusion and Delayed Pathways collaborative inquiries yielded meaningful results to further the development of inclusive practices across the TDSB.

Movement towards inclusive models: Schools at various points along the continuum of inclusion expressed a commitment to continued work implementing effective models of inclusion. Commitments from schools in the HSP Models of Inclusion collaborative inquiry included “Determining with staff ‘What is our model for inclusion?’,” “Consider how to move more effectively towards the inclusive model” and “Continue to ensure a school-wide approach to inclusion for a second year.” In the Delayed Pathways collaborative inquiry, the number of schools committed to implementing inclusion through academic-only course options will increase in 2017–18 from four to seven, with additional schools expressing strong interest for 2018–19.

Developed and expanded school networks for inclusive practices: The number of schools that engaged in system-wide professional learning on inclusion since the Sifting, Sorting and Selecting collaborative inquiry increased from 7 to 63 (elementary and secondary schools). From the collaborative discussions of ideas, many participants stated that further learning about inclusive models from other schools through site visits and sharing practices would be valuable. An administrator, for example, stated that as a next step, she would be “creating a collaborative learning opportunity between my teachers and those of another school engaged in the same work. We will be providing release time for teachers to visit each other between the two schools.” Also, schools that communicated their intentions for furthering their involvement in the HSP Models of Inclusion or Delayed Pathways collaborative inquiries unanimously agreed to continue the following year.

Collective Advocacy: The work of both inquiries has allowed for deeper collaboration between TDSB staff, community organizations and community members advocating for an end to streaming practices that limit opportunities for students. Such collaborations include work with People for Education, Social Planning Toronto, Success Beyond Limits and the Ministry of Education. Indicative of the growing desire to challenge streaming is the most recent commitment by the Minister of Education to consider ending the province’s practice of streaming Grade 9 students into either “academic” or “applied” (Rushowy, 2017) as well as the receipt of provincial and federal funding to support the implementation and evaluation of restructuring pathways within the TDSB.

More supports with networking: Schools would like assistance with facilitating greater collaboration, discussion and visits between schools in order to strengthen support systems.

Advocate for systemic change: Participants asked central staff from the planning committee to advocate for improvements in Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) guidelines, greater staffing to support inclusion, and resources for co-teaching opportunities.

A salient point from a conversation in the HSP Models of Inclusion collaborative inquiry was the numerous barriers to closing these programs (e.g. implications for Trillium, class caps, navigating the IEP, teacher qualifications).

Advocate to the Ministry of Education: Participants recognized that many barriers to ending the streaming of students were imposed by the Ministry of Education. For example, a change to academic-only courses means a loss of staff due to class caps and a potential reduction of funding tied to the applied POS (e.g. Student Success School Support Initiative and Renewed Mathematics Strategy). Therefore, there was an identified urgent need for TDSB staff at the system level to advocate to the Ministry of Education in the best interest of students.

Key Considerations

Key considerations regarding professional learning needs and further support from the planning committees came out from participant feedback:

The need for practical strategies: Overwhelmingly, school teams from both inquiries are seeking additional support for concrete implementation models and strategies, such as differentiated instruction and Universal Design for Learning.

Moving Forward: A 3-Year Plan

Restructured Pathways

To support the effective development, implementation and review of inclusive models for the benefit of all students in elementary and secondary schools, this report suggests targeting three areas of focus – Collaborative Professional Learning, Structures and Resources, and Research and Review – over a three-year period. The following recommendations stem from the co-learning and feedback derived from both collaborative inquiries, as well as prior recommendations from Parekh (2013) and San Vicente et al. (2015).

Overall Recommendation

Review in-school and system processes in elementary and secondary panels through which students are streamed and phase out the practice of streaming. It is imperative that this process is thoughtful and informed by an analysis and knowledge of relevant demographic data and anti-oppressive educational theory.

Specific Recommendations

Collaborative Professional Learning

Years 1 and 2 (2017–18 to 2018–19)

- Further develop system leaders' understanding of how education has been used as a systemic barrier against a variety of groups using Critical Theories which include but are not exclusive to: Critical Race Theory, Social Reproduction Theory, Anti-colonial (Decolonizing) Theory, and Anti-Oppressive Discourse.
- Engage school staff and leaders in ongoing professional learning through collaborative inquiry regarding the discourse on streaming as a historical structure that marginalizes students.
- Engage key staff (e.g. special education consultants, elementary and secondary guidance counsellors, special education teachers, and educational assistants) in local and system-wide professional learning through collaborative inquiry to support

strategies to advance inclusion and effectively address the learning needs of diverse student populations, including but not limited to:

- teacher and student mindset
- differentiated instruction
- Universal Design for Learning
- Tracking and communicating evidence of inclusive teaching approaches.

Note: participating schools identified whole-group or small-group professional learning formats as preferable to online opportunities.

- Build capacity with schools currently involved in HSP Models of Inclusion and Delayed Pathways collaborative inquiries through job-embedded learning (e.g. lesson study) to further implement inclusive models and develop their leadership capacity to share their journeys and learning with new schools.
- Involve various stakeholders in developing and participating in the learning of the impact of streaming and inclusive practices. Stakeholders should include but are not limited to: parents, students, community agencies, and teacher federations.
- Establish a network of system and school leaders and teachers at both the elementary and secondary level that can be a source of professional learning and capacity building for schools beginning to explore various models of inclusion addressing timetabling, collaborative planning and teaching, learning strategies and approaches to instruction.
- Embed professional learning on inclusive pedagogy in all schools as part of their school improvement plan.

- Create geographic networks or hubs to have a localized focus with leadership from schools who have implemented models of inclusion.

Year 3 and Beyond:

- Continue to engage central and school staff in professional learning on streaming and anti-oppressive education to support inclusive models of teaching and learning, realizing that the work required will be influenced by system and local data, local school needs, and teacher identification of learning needs.
- Revisit collaborative inquiries to determine next steps for schools.

Structures and Resources

Years 1 and 2 (2017–18 to 2018–19)

- Review in-school and system processes in elementary and secondary panels through which students are streamed, as also recommended by the Ministry report *Unlocking Student Potential Through Data*.
- Engage system and school leaders to address streaming in other forms, such as enrolment in specialized schools and programs (e.g. special education/gifted programming, enriched programming, International Baccalaureate programming, arts-based programs, alternative programs, Extended and French Immersion, itinerant music programming, etc.).
- Advocate at the system level to the Ministry of Education for the removal of systemic barriers hindering the effective implementation of models of inclusion. Specifically, the TDSB and Ministry must address potential issues related to the impact of transitioning from multi-streamed programs to academic-only programming, such as increased class caps in academic courses and decreased staffing levels due to the current funding formula.

- Advocate at the system level for funding and staffing resources from the Ministry of Education to support inclusive models where special education and general education teachers work in collaboration in both practice and planning (EADSNE, 2004).
- Establish professional learning structures in schools that implement models of inclusion so that all staff engage in ongoing, job-embedded professional learning in anti-oppression and inclusive education.
- Continue to remodel the Home School Program with an anti-oppressive stance and an emphasis on greater inclusion in the regular classroom to address the over-representation of racialized and Indigenous students in special education (Toronto District School Board, 2017a).
- Examine board processes through which students are identified with disabilities, exceptionalities, and special education needs, as also recommended in the Ministry’s *Unlocking Student Potential Through Data*.
- “Enhance and closely monitor Board and School Improvement Plans to ensure that equity goals are pursued and achieved in all schools” (Clandfield et al., 2014, p. 311).
- For schools where the applied POS persists, “Ensure that strong subject specialist teachers are assigned to the students in Applied Grades 9 and 10, with a view to enhancing student transitions to Academic level courses (Clandfield et al., 2014, p. 312).
- “Review and continually monitor referral practices and assessment instruments in order to identify those that have as their outcome disproportionality of representation by class, race or gender in the assignment of IEPs, exceptionalities, or Special Education placements” (Clandfield et al., 2014, p. 321).
- Align and allocate central and school budgets to provide additional human and financial resources to selected schools to support the implementation of Delayed Pathways and HSP Models of Inclusion.

Potential uses of resources may include, but are not limited to, teacher release time to research, meet and co-plan local models of inclusion and service delivery, job embedded professional learning, additional staff to support students identified with SENs, reading and mathematics intervention programming.

- Create a working group of superintendents, principals, special education staff and teachers, to research and create timetabling models such that they allow special education and classroom teachers to collaborate and plan for inclusive delivery.
- Engage school leaders in an assessment of school structures and procedures to improve capacity to accommodate and differentiate for diverse learning needs (e.g. class schedules with increased core and longer periods) (EADSNE, 2004).
- Continue to ensure that additional human and financial supports are provided to schools prioritizing the implementation of models of inclusion.
- Consider additional remodelling of HSP to increase inclusion for students in the junior division.

Year 3 and Beyond:

- Adjust the structural supports and human and financial resources as needed.
- Continue to move towards eliminating the structures that stream students.

Research and Review

Years 1 and 2 (2017–18 to 2018–19):

- Provide avenues for all staff and families to share their expertise and ideas to influence the direction in the continued implementation of models of inclusion at the school and system level.
- In consultation with Research and Information Services, York University, and participating schools in the HSP Models of Inclusion and Delayed Pathways collaborative inquiries, begin the process of an

annual review of the impact of inclusive models in participating schools to inform school improvement, with the potential for a longitudinal study to assess impact.

- Superintendents and school staff will track student outcomes resulting from local models of inclusion.
- Provide a comprehensive report of the manifestations of streaming/structured pathways at the elementary (K-8) level (e.g. special education/gifted programming, enriched programming, International Baccalaureate programming, arts-based programs, alternative programs, Extended and French Immersion, itinerant music programming, etc.) with concrete recommendations for interrupting practices that contribute to inequitable outcomes for historically and presently marginalized student groups.
- Share TDSB data, research findings and learnings to the proposed Ministry of Education expert panel reviewing streaming in Ontario schools (Quan, 2017)
- Ongoing monitoring and reporting of schools involved in the HSP Inclusion and Delayed Pathways collaborative inquiries to ensure that the intention of inclusion is adhered to, and the effects of the policies in their local contexts match those intentions, hence intent matching impact.

Year 3 and Beyond:

- Develop a comprehensive report outlining the efforts and impact of inclusive models across the TDSB.

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REVISED

Written Notice of Motion for Consideration (Trustees King and Shan, on behalf of Trustee Ehrhardt)

From: Denise Joseph-Dowers, Senior Manager, Governance and Board Services

In accordance with Board Bylaws 5.15.45, notice of the following motion was provided at the regular meeting of the Program and School Services Committee on May 8, 2024 and is therefore submitted for consideration at this time.

5.15.45 Motions must first be introduced as a Notice of Motion to provide advance notification of a matter, ...

5.15.51 A Notice of Motion submitted to a Committee, will be considered at a subsequent Committee meeting.

Annual Reporting on Student Attendance

Whereas, student attendance at school is a contributing factor to achievement and well-being, and

Whereas, students across Canada are reportedly missing more school in recent years, with illness, mental health and lack of supports in schools being cited as potential reasons [reference: [Kids missing more school since pandemic, CBC analysis finds | CBC News](#)]; and

Whereas, student attendance is a key performance indicator in the 2024-2028 multi-year strategic plan, as directed by the Ministry of Education; and

Whereas, additional data may help identify areas for resource allocation to improve attendance and thereby, achievement and well-being;

Therefore, be it resolved:

- a) That the Director report annually to the Program and School Services Committee on school attendance, either as a part of existing reporting, or as a standalone annual report; and
- b) That the report at Part (a) include information on:
 - i. summary of reasons for absences based on safe arrival attendance reporting, **and data available from social work and attendance staff**;
 - ii. any discernible trends over time; categorical information on chronic absences;
 - iii. any insights about challenges or barriers to school attendance gleaned from students, staff, and community **including data**

collected via Supervised Alternative Learning and Alternative Attendance program staff, social work and attendance staff, etc.;

- iv. any current actions and recommendations, to support improved school attendance;
- v. any current or potential work with partners to support information-sharing or actions to improve school attendance e.g., Supervised Alternative Learning, Alternative attendance programs, etc.

Written Notice of Motion (Trustees Williams and King, on behalf of Trustee de Dovitiis)

From: Denise Joseph-Dowers, Senior Manager, Governance and Board Services

In accordance with Board Bylaws 5.15.45, the following motion is submitted as notice at this time and for consideration at the next regular meeting of the Program and School Services Committee.

5.15.45 Motions must first be introduced as a Notice of Motion to provide advance notification of a matter, ...

5.15.49. A Notice of Motion will not be debated at the meeting at which it is introduced.

5.15.50 A Notice of Motion submitted to the Board, will be referred to the appropriate Committee for consideration.

Latin/a/o/x Task Force

Whereas, the student community of the Latin-America diaspora in TDSB is 4.7% of all students as per the TDSB Student Census 2023; and

Whereas, students of the Latin-America diaspora have experienced some of the highest percentage of students being failed by the educational system from kindergarten straight through to graduation from high school and thereafter. As an example:

- In the most recent Early Years Development Instrument, taken system-wide to all senior kindergarten students in 2018, one-fifth of all students of the Latin-America diaspora were measured as vulnerable in two out of the five domains measured. This was amongst the highest percentage of senior kindergarten students by racial group that were assessed as vulnerable within this assessment.
- After students who identify as Indigenous, students of the Latin-America diaspora, have the lowest percentage of students graduating over a half decade between 2016-2020 when compared to all other ethnicity, racial groups. During this period, the average rate of graduation for Latin/a/o/x students is 76% while the TDSB had an average graduation rate of 85%. While graduation rates for students of Latin-America diaspora have gone up significantly throughout this time period, the proportion has remained consistently lower than all other groups by race except for students that identify as Indigenous.
- In 2020-21, only 39% of Latin-America diaspora students confirmed placement in a college or university opportunity compared to 55% of all year 4 plus students in the TDSB; and

Whereas, collectively this analytical breakdown of students of the Latin-America diaspora indicates a population of students who have been failed by the educational system and as a result have not reached their potential within the TDSB; and

Whereas, there continues to be multiple barriers including both systemic and structural barriers both within and outside of the educational system for students of the Latin-America diaspora; and

Whereas, these structural and systemic barriers may also differentiate for students of the Latin-America diaspora based on their multiple intersecting identities including but not limited to being: Black, Indigenous, Black/Afro-Indigenous, racialized, Muslim, Jewish, LGBTQ+, disabled, neurodivergent, English language learners, newcomer, precarious immigration status or undocumented to name a few; and

Whereas, the TDSB has a commitment to ensuring that all of TDSB students are given equitable opportunities and where opportunity gaps exist, the TDSB has a duty and responsibility to apply resources to create better outcomes; and

Whereas, there is a significant opportunity to bring in to the conversation outside partners including those of the Latin-America diaspora and prioritizing those historically and present-day oppressed at the intersecting identities of Black, Indigenous, Black/Afro-Indigenous, racialized, Muslim, Jewish, LGBTQ+, disabled, neurodivergent, English language learners, newcomer, precarious immigration status or undocumented to name a few as part of the effort to improve the life circumstances, wellbeing and educational success of students of the Latin-America diaspora.

Therefore, be it resolved:

- (a) That the Director establish a Latin/a/o/x Task Force to address the educational challenges faced by students of the Latin-America diaspora; to improve academic performance, reduce dropout rates, and provide better support for students of the Latin-America diaspora and their families;
- (b) The Latin/a/o/x Task Force create a working group that identifies actions that can be taken by the Board to increase the educational success of students from the Latin-America diaspora;
- (c) The Latin/a/o/x Task Force create a second working group inclusive of student voice, educators, parents/guardians, and community partners to identify priorities and best practices to improve the learning experience and educational success of TDSB students of the Latin-America diaspora;
- (d) The Director provide a report on the work of the Latin/a/o/x Task Force with recommendations for consideration by the Board.

Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands

We acknowledge we are hosted on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Anishinaabe (A NISH NA BEE), the Haudenosaunee (HOE DENA SHOW NEE) Confederacy and the Wendat. We also recognize the enduring presence of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

Reconnaissance des terres traditionnelles

Nous reconnaissons que nous sommes accueillis sur les terres des Mississaugas des Anichinabés (A NISH NA BAY), de la Confédération Haudenosaunee (HOE DENA SHOW NEE) et du Wendat. Nous voulons également reconnaître la pérennité de la présence des Premières Nations, des Métis et des Inuit."

Funding Information Requirement

At the special meeting held on March 7, 2007, the Board decided that to be in order any trustee motion or staff recommendation that would require the Board to expend funds for a new initiative include the following information: the projected cost of implementing the proposal; the recommended source of the required funds, including any required amendments to the Board's approved budget; an analysis of the financial implications prepared by staff; and a framework to explain the expected benefit and outcome as a result of the expenditure.

[1]Closing of certain committee meetings

(2) A meeting of a committee of a board, including a committee of the whole board, may be closed to the public when the subject-matter under consideration involves,

- (a) the security of the property of the board;
- (b) the disclosure of intimate, personal or financial information in respect of a member of the board or committee, an employee or prospective employee of the board or a pupil or his or her parent or guardian;
- (c) the acquisition or disposal of a school site;
- (d) decisions in respect of negotiations with employees of the board; or
- (e) litigation affecting the board. R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, s. 207 (2).

(2.1) Closing of meetings re certain investigations – A meeting of a board or a committee of a board, including a committee of the whole board shall be closed to the public when the subject-matter under considerations involves an ongoing investigation under the Ombudsman Act respecting the board



Our Mission

To enable all students to reach high levels of achievement and well-being and to acquire the knowledge, skills and values they need to become responsible, contributing members of a democratic and sustainable society.

Strategic Directions

Equity: Equity is a principle that will continue to guide the TDSB in all that it does. Equity will be foundational to all TDSB work and will be embedded throughout the strategic directions.

Truth and Reconciliation: We commit to the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action.

Belong: All students belong, are engaged, and valued in an inclusive environment.

Achieve: All students reach high levels of achievement, success, and personal development.

Thrive: All students graduate with the confidence, skills, and knowledge to thrive.

Revitalize: All students and staff learn and work in inclusive, safe, and modern environments.

We Value

- Each and every student's interests, strengths, passions, identities and perspectives on their education
- Partnerships with students, parents/guardians/caregivers, staff, community partners, and education partners
- A strong public education system that promotes full participation by identifying, removing, and preventing accessibility barriers so that all students, including students with disabilities/special education needs and intersecting identities, are provided with opportunities to realize their full potential
- The diversity of students, parents/guardians/caregivers, staff, community partners, and education partners
- Shared leadership and respectful working relationships
- Accountability and innovation
- The contributions of a highly skilled and diverse staff
- Digital citizenship and environmental stewardship

