

## **Special Education and Inclusion: 2022-2023 Annual Report Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is committed to student achievement and well-being. We recognize that students develop and learn in different ways, have different strengths and needs, and require different levels of support. Some students require special education programs and services to meet their needs. This school year (2022-23), there are 40,577 students (17% of total TDSB student population) with special education needs.

The work of the Special Education and Inclusion Department is guided by the goals outlined in the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) which specifically focus on improving learning experiences for students with special education needs.

Ontario Regulation 181/98 requires school boards to consider placing students with exceptionalities into regular classes with appropriate special education services before considering placement in special education classes. Some students with unique strengths and needs may require more specialized or intensive programs and supports and, in collaboration with parents/guardians/caregivers and students as appropriate, we provide the necessary placements.

In the TDSB, we continue to be responsive to the understanding that as students learn, they develop skills and so their special education service and program needs change over time. Students being welcomed, included and supported in well-resourced neighbourhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes are able to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of school life. This allows for valuable learning opportunities for groups which have been historically excluded, such as students with disabilities and intersecting identities.

The Special Education and Inclusion Department, in collaboration with all staff, is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. This includes our ongoing commitment to anti-oppression, human rights, equity, anti-racism including anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism, and anti-ableism. This commitment aligns with the TDSB Vision for Learning and the TDSB Equity Policy, and underpins all programming.

### **Outline of this Report**

In an effort to create coherence and alignment of special education and inclusion practices, programs and structures across the TDSB to foster more inclusive environments for students with special education needs, the Special Education and Inclusion Department has been focusing on the following areas:

- Challenging and Dismantling Oppressive Structures;
- Capacity Building;
- Changing Mindsets; and
- Communication and Engagement.

These focus areas are interconnected and reflect the need for shared responsibility and shared accountability in serving students with special education needs, and indeed all students.

This report outlines the following:

### **Context**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

- Multi-Year Strategic Plan
- Inclusion
- Anti-Oppression, Human Rights, Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Ableism

#### **Action Plans and Associated Timelines:**

##### **Creating Coherence and Alignment to Support Student Success**

- Challenging and Dismantling Oppressive Structures:
  - Reviewing Behaviour Intensive Support Programs (ISPs)
  - Providing Precision and Personalization Through the Individual Learning Plan
  - Implementing the TDSB K-1 Individual Education Plan (IEP) Strategy and Grade 2-12 Individual Education Plan (IEP) Review
- Capacity Building:
  - Reducing Disproportionate Outcomes by Enhancing Academic Pathways
  - Early Reading Interventions
  - Employability Skills for Students with Special Education Needs
- Changing Mindsets:
  - Mandatory Professional Learning for Senior Team
  - Professional Learning for Administrators
  - Effective Instructional Practices to Support Students with Special Education Needs
  - Professional Learning for Intensive Support Program (ISP) Staff
  - Professional Learning for Special Education and Inclusion Department Staff
- Communication and Engagement:
  - Resource Development
  - Sessions for Parents/Guardians/Caregivers
  - Website
  - Experiential Learning

### **Conclusion**

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) continues to focus on ensuring that the needs of students with special education needs are met through our commitment to challenging and dismantling oppressive structures, capacity building, changing mindsets and communication and engagement. Through shared responsibility and shared accountability, we will create a more equitable school system where the achievement and well-being of each and every student with special education needs is fostered in inclusive and accepting environments.