



# TLDSB Special Education Plan

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2023-2024

**Revisions and updates current for the 2023-2024 school year  
Trillium Lakelands District School Board**

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## Section 1: Introduction

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Trillium Lakelands District School Board (TLDSB) is committed to understanding and meeting the learning needs of all students through these guiding principles, as outlined in our [2022-2027 Strategic Directions](#):

- We are a learning organization.
- We support student achievement and well-being.
- We support staff learning and well-being.
- We value equity and inclusion.
- We are committed to environmental stewardship.

We are committed to shaping equitable, inclusive, and accessible environments. We recognize that every student is unique and that each must have opportunities to achieve personal success according to interests, abilities and goals, free from barriers. To support this work, TLDSB strives to be an inclusive school system that promotes and embeds universal design for learning, principles of accessibility, human rights, and anti-discrimination.

Our priority is to provide the best possible learning opportunities and support such that all students can develop the competencies, understandings, self-confidence, and resiliency to lead healthy, successful, and fulfilling lives. We are committed to ensuring that high quality programs and services are in place for all students with special education needs.

### Special Education Plan purpose and availability

The purpose of the plan is to inform the Ministry of Education and the public about special education programs and services that are provided by TLDSB.

TLDSB has developed and will maintain this plan in accordance with the requirements for special education programs and services set out in [Regulation 306](#) under the *Education Act* and the [Special Education in Ontario: Kindergarten to Grade 12 - Policy and Resource Document \(2017\)](#). This plan is reviewed annually and amended from time to time to meet the current needs of our students with special education needs. Any amendments are submitted to the Ministry of Education for review.

A copy of the plan is available electronically. Arrangements can be made to access this plan through any of the schools and/or Education Centres. The plan is also available on the Board's website: <http://www.tldsbc.ca>

For further information regarding the provision of special education programs and services, contact the office of the superintendent of learning with responsibilities for Specialized Services.

## Section 2: The Board's annual review and consultation process

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In accordance with the [Education Act](#), the Board will conduct an annual review of the *Special Education Plan*.

### Plan development and modifications

In developing and modifying the special education plan:

1. the Board takes into consideration issues and feedback from members of the community such as parents, members of school councils, community organizations, and students;
2. this public consultation, which takes place with the assistance of the Board's [Special Education Advisory Committee \(SEAC\)](#), is maintained on a continuous basis throughout the year.

In addition to consultation with SEAC and the community, current educational research literature as well as models and practices used in other boards will be considered. Information regarding specific programs or services being reviewed will be communicated as early as possible in order to involve stakeholders in the process.

### **Special education programs, practices, and review**

Special education programs and practices are refined throughout the year and any changes are reflected in the plan. Senior Administration and Department of Specialized Services staff take part in meetings at each school to review and support effective practices, including special education programs and services in the school.

In 2022-2023, TLDSB undertook a review of special education in the Board. Facilitated by [The Critical Thinking Consortium](#), the *Special Education Review* engaged families, students, administrators, and special education, mental health, Indigenous education, and curriculum department staff to deepen the Board's understanding of what schools are doing that is working, and where improvement is needed to better support student success. The findings of the special education review will be used to refine program and service delivery in TLDSB.

In accordance with [Regulation 464/97](#) made under the *Education Act*, the Board ensures that its Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is provided with the opportunity to participate in the Board's annual review of its Special Education Plan. This participation in the plan development takes place during regular SEAC meetings. Minority reports are received by SEAC and shared in accordance with the Provincial Parent Associations Advisory Committee's [Effective Practices Handbook for SEAC Members \(Section 5.5\)](#). No minority reports were received in 2022-2023.

Each year the Special Education Plan is reviewed, updated and amended as required. Feedback on the plan is accepted through the office of the Superintendent of Learning with responsibilities for Specialized Services.

### **Section 3: The Board's general model for special education services**

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TLDSB believes that all students can learn, progress and achieve. The Board accepts and supports the belief that every student is an individual with unique strengths and needs. By fostering a culture of high expectations, the Board is committed to ensuring quality programs and services that support every student to achieve to high levels, acquire valuable skills and become engaged members of their communities.

In TLDSB, Special Education consists of the programs, services, resources and professional development of staff that will ensure opportunity for students with special needs to reach their full potential. Opportunities to learn, progress and achieve must be available for all students, in compliance with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, the *Education Act*

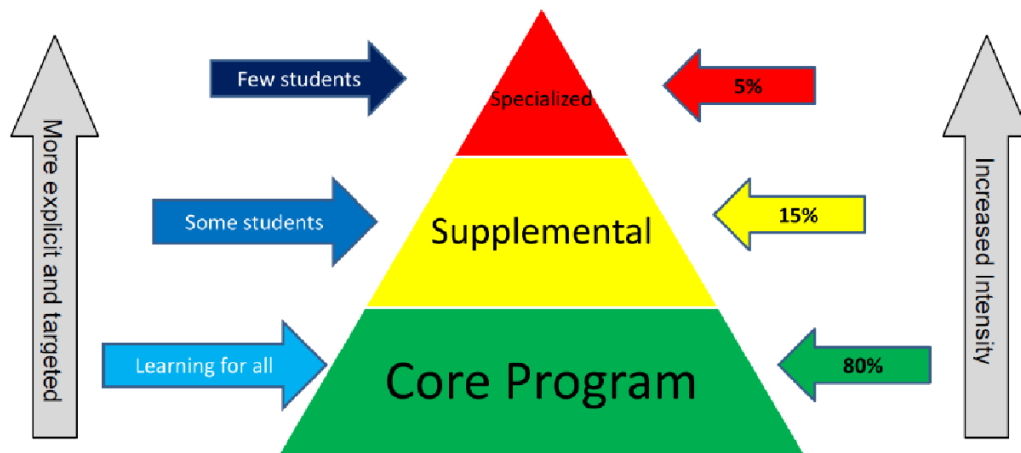
and regulations made under the act, and any other relevant legislation. All teachers share responsibility for providing high quality education opportunities for every student in their charge.

The education of students with special needs is a joint effort between home and school. The most effective special education program is one that combines the support of the parents/guardians with the resources of the school and the community. By working together as a team, a shared vision for the student can be developed and education goals prioritized.

Our guiding principles for Special Education programs and services for students with special needs align with the Ministry of Education [Learning for All](#) beliefs:

- All students can succeed.
- Each student has his or her own unique patterns of learning.
- Successful instructional practices are founded on evidence-based research, tempered by experience.
- Universal design and differentiated instruction are effective and interconnected means of meeting the learning or productivity needs of any group of students.
- Classroom teachers are the key educators for a student’s literacy and numeracy development.
- Classroom teachers need the support of the larger community to create a learning environment that supports all students.
- Fairness is not sameness.

We use a staged intervention for student support approach as a framework to guide the practice of providing high quality instruction and intervention based upon individual student needs.



### Core Program (Tier 1)

- High expectations and quality programming for all students
- Assessment and instruction are planned in relation to the curriculum for all students.



- The teacher observes, monitors student progress, and notes which students may be experiencing difficulty;
- The teacher responds to learning needs by adjusting teaching strategies;
- Responsive instruction is available to all learners;
- Examples include: Curriculum, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Differentiated Instruction (DI)

### Supplemental Program (Tier 2)

- When the teacher discovers that a student has a learning gap in a particular area, a precise program is planned to close the learning gap;
- Student progress in response to these supplemental interventions is closely monitored and instruction is adjusted, as needed;
- Supplemental interventions may occur in the regular classroom setting or in a withdrawal setting for some students;
- Examples may include: responsive reading, small group intervention to target the lagging skill, student success or resource support with a specific program to close the gap.

### Specialized Program (Tier 3)

- At times, students require intensive support to achieve learning goals;
- A few students require more intensive, precise and personalized assessment and instruction focused on closing learning gaps;
- The teacher is supported by the in-school team (elementary)/student success team (secondary), and/or system resources to develop the most effective program plan;
- Student progress in response to these intensive interventions is closely monitored and instruction is adjusted, as needed;
- Examples may include: highly specialized programming supported by the behaviour intervention resource team (BIRT); special program placement, psychoeducational assessment, speech and language services.

## Section 4: Roles and responsibilities in special education

Many roles and responsibilities are needed to support a successful special education system. The needs of the students are at the centre of our work in Special Education. The following information outlines the roles and responsibilities of those involved in special education.

Role	Responsibility
<b>The Ministry of Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sets out, through the <i>Education Act</i>, regulations, and policy/program memoranda (PPM), the legal obligations of school boards regarding the provision of special education programs and services.</li> <li>● Prescribes the categories and definitions of exceptionality.</li> <li>● Requires, through the <i>Education Act</i>, that school boards provide appropriate special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils.</li> <li>● Establishes the funding for special education through the structure of the <a href="#">funding model</a>.</li> </ul>

Role	Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Requires school boards to report on their expenditures for special education through the budget process.</li> <li>● Sets province-wide standards for curriculum and reporting of achievement.</li> <li>● Requires, through regulation, that school boards maintain special education plans, review them annually, and submit amendments to the ministry.</li> <li>● Requires through the <i>Education Act</i> and through regulation that school boards establish a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).</li> <li>● Establishes a Minister’s Advisory Council on Special Education to advise the Minister of Education on matters related to special education programs and services.</li> <li>● Operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, who are blind or have low vision, who are deafblind, or who have severe learning disabilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The school board</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establishes school board policy and practices that comply with the <i>Education Act</i>, regulations, and policy documents including PPMs.</li> <li>● Monitors school compliance with the <i>Education Act</i>, regulations, and policy documents, including PPMs.</li> <li>● Requires staff to comply with the <i>Education Act</i>, regulations, and policy documents including PPMs.</li> <li>● Provides appropriately qualified staff to provide programs and services for the exceptional pupils of the board.</li> <li>● Plans and reports on the expenditures for special education.</li> <li>● Develops and maintains a special education plan that is amended from time to time to meet the current needs of the exceptional pupils of the board.</li> <li>● Reviews the plan annually and submits amendments to the Minister of Education.</li> <li>● Provides statistical reports to the ministry as required and as requested.</li> <li>● Prepares a parent guide to provide parents with information about special education programs, services and procedures.</li> <li>● Establishes one or more Identification, Placement and Review Committees (IPRCs) to identify exceptional pupils and determine appropriate placements for them.</li> <li>● Establishes a SEAC.</li> <li>● Provides professional development to staff on special education.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Makes recommendations to the board with respect to any matter affecting issues impacting the establishment, development, and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the board.</li> <li>● Participates in the board’s annual review of its special education plan.</li> </ul>

Role	Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participates in the board’s annual budget process as it relates to special education.</li> <li>● Reviews the financial statements of the board as they relate to special education.</li> </ul>
<b>The principal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Carries out duties as outlined in the <i>Education Act</i>, regulations, policy documents, including PPMs, and board policies.</li> <li>● Communicates Ministry of Education and school board expectations to staff.</li> <li>● Ensures that appropriately qualified staff are assigned to teach special education programs.</li> <li>● Communicates board policies and procedures about special education to staff, students, and parents.</li> <li>● Ensures that the identification and placement of exceptional pupils, through an IPRC, is done according to the procedures outlined in the <i>Education Act</i>, regulations and board policies.</li> <li>● Consults with school board staff to determine the most appropriate program for exceptional pupils.</li> <li>● Ensures the development, implementation, and review of a student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP), including a transition plan.</li> <li>● Ensures that parents are consulted in the development of their child’s IEP and that they are provided with a copy of the IEP.</li> <li>● Ensures that the program is delivered as set out in the IEP.</li> <li>● Ensures that appropriate assessments are requested and that, if necessary, parental consent is obtained for these assessments.</li> </ul>
<b>The teacher</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Carries out duties as outlined in the <i>Education Act</i>, regulations and policy documents, including PPM.</li> <li>● Follows board policies and procedures regarding special education.</li> <li>● Works with the special education teacher to acquire and maintain up-to-date knowledge of special education practices.</li> <li>● Develops the IEP for students with special education needs in consultation with the special education resource teacher and the parents/guardians.</li> <li>● Provides the program for the exceptional pupil in the regular class, as outlined in the IEP.</li> <li>● Communicates the student’s progress to parents.</li> <li>● Seeks input from the parents/guardians on student strengths and needs, student programming and IEP development.</li> <li>● Works with other school board staff to review and update the student’s IEP.</li> </ul>
<b>The educational assistant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● With direction from the teacher, supports program implementation and learning strategies in the classroom.</li> </ul>

Role	Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provides feedback to the teacher to support reporting and communication with parents/guardians.</li> <li>● Provides appropriate encouragement and positive reinforcement for students.</li> <li>● Assists the teacher with preparing materials and equipment for students.</li> <li>● Encourages student independence and the development of unique talents of individual students.</li> <li>● Collects data detailing the progress of the student toward the goals of the IEP.</li> <li>● Understands and assists with the physical and behavioural needs of students.</li> <li>● Is knowledgeable in board and school philosophies, procedures and policies (i.e., physical intervention, violent incident reports, medication, etc.).</li> <li>● Maintains appropriate certification, including annual Behaviour Management System (BMS) training.</li> </ul>
<b>The special education resource teacher/department head of special education</b>	<p>In addition to the responsibilities of a teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Holds special education qualifications, in accordance with Regulation 298, to teach special education.</li> <li>● Monitors the student’s progress with reference to the IEP and supports development of modifications to the program as necessary.</li> <li>● Assists in providing educational assessments for exceptional students.</li> </ul>
<b>The early childhood educator</b>	<p>In coordination and cooperation with the classroom teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Plans for and provides education to children in Kindergarten.</li> <li>● Observes, monitors, and assesses the development of Kindergarten children.</li> <li>● Maintains a healthy physical, emotional, and social learning environment in the classroom.</li> <li>● Communicates with families.</li> <li>● Performs duties assigned by the principal with respect to the Kindergarten program.</li> </ul>
<b>The parents/guardians</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Will have access to Board policies.</li> <li>● Participates in IPRCs, parent/guardian-teacher conferences, and other relevant school activities.</li> <li>● Participates in the development of the IEP.</li> <li>● Becomes acquainted with the school staff working with the student.</li> <li>● Supports the student at home.</li> <li>● Works with the school principal and educators to solve problems.</li> <li>● Is responsible for the child’s regular attendance at school.</li> </ul>
<b>The student</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Respects and follows the requirements as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and PPMs.</li> </ul>

Role	Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respects and follows Board policies.</li> <li>• Participates in IPRCs, parent/guardian-teacher conferences, and other activities, as appropriate.</li> </ul>

## Section 5: Early identification procedures and intervention strategies

### Philosophy

In TLDSB, every student is provided with multiple opportunities to achieve their full potential. TLDSB is committed to early identification and intervention when a student presents with learning concerns at any point throughout their education. The purpose of early and ongoing identification procedures is to ensure that education programs are tailored to student strengths and needs and improve student learning.

- Early identification and intervention procedures are a part of a continuous assessment and program planning process.
- This process of knowing the learner will be initiated when a child is first enrolled in school and will continue throughout a child's school life.
- A team approach including teachers, the in-school team/student success team, parents/guardians, and the student (where appropriate) is crucial in enabling teachers to establish high quality programming for every student.

TLDSB recognizes that although some students present with learning and/or special education needs as early as, or prior to, kindergarten, others may not present with learning and/or special education needs until later in their education. TLDSB believes that by implementing ongoing early identification and intervention procedures, we will be able to identify learning needs and provide effective and targeted interventions to close learning gaps.

### The process for early identification of student learning needs

Classroom teachers get to know their students by using a variety of diagnostic assessments. The information gleaned from these assessments is used by teachers to determine what students already know and can do in order to make decisions about the next steps for learning.

A common process is followed for all students regardless of their needs, exceptionality, or diagnosis:

1. The process begins in the classroom with the teacher conducting assessments to understand the student's learning needs. These assessments include, but are not limited to, direct observation of student learning, conversations with the student, analysis of work samples, tests, running records, etc. If specific learning needs are identified from the classroom assessments, the classroom teacher will develop a plan of targeted instruction focused on closing the learning gap. The instructional plan will be monitored and adjusted by the classroom teacher.
2. If the learning gap persists, the classroom teacher will request the support of the In-School / Student Success Team to support the development of a plan to respond to these needs. Actions at this stage may include:

- a. Development of a student-specific Response to Intervention (RTI) plan. The RTI plan will include specific actions to be implemented and monitored for effectiveness.
- b. Use of supplemental assessments to gather more information about the learning needs and to guide programming decisions and adjustments to targeted instruction that is happening in the classroom.
- c. Supplemental instruction to accelerate learning in the specified area of need. Decisions regarding the frequency, intensity and duration of supplemental instruction are based upon how severe the learning gap is.

The planning of assessment and instruction for students who need additional support is an integrated and collaborative process. When chosen teaching accommodations, interventions and strategies have been applied for an adequate period of time, their effectiveness is reviewed in collaboration with members of the school team, who may provide further advice and recommendations.

Continued monitoring of students with special learning needs is expected throughout their school life. Classroom teachers and special education resource teachers/department heads of special education, under the direction of the principal, are responsible for ensuring student referrals are made to the In-School Team when a student presents with academic, behavioural or emotional concerns.

### **Procedures for notifying parents/guardians about learning concerns**

Ongoing communication between the school team and the parents/guardians is critical so that information is shared and efforts coordinated successfully on behalf of the student. This is especially true when information gleaned from classroom assessments indicate that a student is experiencing some learning challenges. TLDSB strives to foster open communication between home and school as early as possible in this process, through some or all of the following methods:

- Phone call home to discuss classroom assessments/observations and next steps for programming;
- Invitation to observe in the classroom, where appropriate;
- Invitation to attend a parent meeting or case conference to share information between home and school;
- Phone call or letter home to communicate the goals and format of any supplemental programming that is available to the student;
- Provision of a written report (e.g. the Responsive Reading Report) for students who are accessing supplemental resource support for three weeks or more. This report is a communication tool which focuses on strengths, next steps and classroom/home connections;
- Formal reports of student progress towards goals are shared at designated reporting times (e.g. Kindergarten Communication of Learning or Progress Report/Provincial Report Card);
- Invitation for parents/guardians to be involved in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) development process, where applicable.

## Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
<b>Role of the classroom teacher</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use information gleaned from diagnostic assessments to plan instruction and set appropriate learning goals for students.</li> <li>● Monitor student achievement through ongoing focused observations at the student desk and classroom level assessments.</li> <li>● Make referrals to the in-school team/student success team when students are not meeting grade expectations or demonstrating appropriate behavioural or social skills;</li> <li>● Collaborate with the special education resource teacher (SERT) or department head for special education to plan and facilitate targeted interventions.</li> <li>● Implement, monitor and provide feedback to school. intervention/student success team on Response to Intervention (RTI) plan outcomes.</li> <li>● Maintain ongoing communication with the parents/guardians.</li> </ul>
<b>Role of the special education resource teacher/department head of special education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participate in the in-school/student success team meetings.</li> <li>● Collaborate with the teacher to interpret and analyze information gleaned from classroom assessments in order to support program decisions.</li> <li>● Coordinate school level interventions, such as responsive reading or other types of small group support. Increase frequency, intensity and duration of school level interventions with programs targeting specific needs for students whose learning is not accelerating.</li> <li>● Liaise with Specialized Services Department staff, as needed.</li> <li>● Make referrals to community partners, as needed, to support the student's learning.</li> <li>● Collaborate with the classroom teacher regarding parent conferences and communication.</li> </ul>
<b>Role of the principal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Set direction for special education programs and services at the school level.</li> <li>● Establish regular in-school team/student success team meetings, ensuring the referral process to these teams is clearly understood by staff.</li> <li>● Establish early intervention as a school priority, evidenced in intentional scheduling/timetabling of interventions.</li> <li>● Ensure ongoing monitoring of student achievement and special education intervention occurs.</li> <li>● Ensure implementation of recommended actions in RTI plans for students with special education needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Role of the parents/guardians</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Advocate at school by participating in meetings, opportunities for discussions, and parent-teacher events.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work collaboratively with school and community partners to ensure all essential supports are accessed as required.</li> <li>● Provide up-to-date information about your child as it relates to the child’s learning so the teacher may adjust or modify your child’s programming.</li> <li>● Participate in two-way communication with home and school to ensure that everyone is reinforcing the same learning goals.</li> <li>● Provide learning opportunities in the home that complement the school program.</li> <li>● Understand and contribute to your child’s IEP, where applicable.</li> </ul>
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### **Procedures for special education programs and services**

The primary purpose of early identification and intervention procedures in TLDSB is to improve student achievement and close learning gaps. It is essential that the school team monitors the ongoing effectiveness of the interventions to ensure the implemented actions are having the maximum positive impact on student learning.

Sometimes, a more intensive level of programming needs to be implemented. When a student requires specialized programs and interventions, the school team may determine that an Individual Education Plan (IEP) should be developed. The IEP is:

- A document to meet the student’s needs.
- The IEP is a written plan that communicates the strengths and special education needs of the student.
- The most important educational goals for the student, as determined by classroom assessments and in consultation with the parents/guardians, are included in the IEP.
- It is a written commitment that records the learning expectations for the student and documents how the educators will meet the student’s needs at school.
- A document that changes as the student develops.
- The IEP is a living document that is continually reviewed, updated and changed based upon the student’s progress towards the learning goals and expectations within.

The school team will maintain open lines of communication between home and school. If learning concerns persist, a more specialized level of assessment may need to be considered.

### **Procedures for consideration for specialized services and/or assessment**

In complex situations where a student is not responding as expected to the programming or interventions determined by the school team, a consultation with the special education consultant will be requested. The special education consultant may suggest a referral for more direct support for to the in-school team/student success team and student, such as:

- Psycho/educational consultant
- Speech language pathologist/communicative disorders assistant
- Mental health counsellor
- Itinerant teacher for deaf and hard of hearing
- Itinerant teacher of blind low vision



- Inclusive learning team (ILT)
- Behaviour intervention resource team (BIRT)

Upon deeper review of the student's profile, including strengths, needs and interventions implemented to date, the regional team may:

- Recommend new strategies or programming suggestions.
- Conduct an observation of the student.
- Offer consultative services for the school staff who are responsible for programming.
- Recommend a referral to a community agency, pending parents/guardians consent.

If more information is required to support next steps for programming, the team may recommend a specialized assessment.

### **Referral for specialized assessment**

Referrals for specialized assessment are considered when the needs of a student are complex and the interventions implemented to date, through the early identification and response to intervention procedures, are not yielding the expected results.

The school will present evidence of interventions attempted to date including frequency, intensity and duration of student work samples, IEP, and RTI plans. Upon review of this information, the regional team may have new suggestions of strategies or interventions which are requested to be implemented before undertaking a specialized assessment, such as a psycho-educational assessment or a speech and language assessment.

It is essential to recognize that specialized assessments are intensive, and they are only approved after we have exhausted all programming and intervention options at the school level and we determine that the interventions are not yielding the expected response. The number of specialized assessments that can be prioritized each year is limited, thus the Department of Specialized Services holds the responsibility to allocate these supports based on the needs of the system.

Written parents/guardians permission is required before any specialized assessments are administered.

### **Procedures for IPRC consideration and referral to IPRC**

While the identification of a specific exceptionality or diagnosis may be helpful to provide additional information for the teacher, this is not necessary to gain access to special services or programs at school. It is very useful for the school to have access to reports and recommendations as a result of any exceptionalities or diagnoses from outside sources so that we can design the best program for the student. We welcome parents/guardians to share information with us.

### **Types of early intervention strategies used prior to referral to IPRC**

A number of programming strategies are used within the classroom and/or resource program prior to a student being referred to the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) and for students with special needs who do not meet IPRC criteria.

The following strategies are implemented as appropriate for individual students in TLDSB:

- Classroom interventions (e.g. specific and targeted interventions in the classroom by the teacher).
- IEP development, including necessary accommodations, modifications to the curriculum and/or alternative programs.
- Research (e.g. evidence-based strategies relevant to the need).
- Assistive technology (e.g. technology used to support learning).
- Diagnostic and supplemental assessment and interpretation (e.g. collecting more specific information to further understand the strengths and needs of the student).
- Programs (e.g. strategies from a specific program, such as Applied Behaviour Analysis, Collaborative and Proactive Solutions, etc.).
- Resource Support (e.g. specific and targeted interventions out of the classroom with support of the Special Education Resource Teacher, Itinerant Teacher or Department Head of Special Education).
- Development and monitoring of Response to Intervention (RTI) plans, developed by the school intervention team.
- Regional support staff involvement (e.g. support from central level staff, such as consultants, psycho-educational consultants, speech and language pathologists, mental health counsellors).
- Community partnerships (e.g. support from outside agencies, such as therapy, interventions, programming, medical reports, etc.).

### **Parents/guardians notification of referral to an IPRC**

Parents/guardians are notified if a child is being considered for IPRC referral. This notification takes place through parent/guardian interviews, phone calls, and/or normal reporting and interview meetings. A written confirmation of date, time, and place for an IPRC meeting is sent to parents/guardians prior to an IPRC meeting taking place.

### **Parents/guardians notification of consideration for Special Education programs or services**

Parents/guardians notification takes place if a student is being considered for special education programs or services. These services might include resource support, consultation with the Special Education Consultant, referral to the Behaviour Intervention Resource Team, referral for specialized assessment, mental health counsellor involvement or participation in a special education program.

This notification takes place through parent/guardian interviews or meetings, phone calls or other methods of home/school communication. In some situations, such as where a specialized assessment or mental health counsellor involvement is being considered, there is an informed consent form which requires a parents'/guardians' signature.

Additional References:

- [Ministry of Education Curriculum and Resources](#)
- [Special Education in Ontario](#)

## Section 6: The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) process and appeals

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### Context

The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) is a formal committee responsible for the identification of exceptional students and their placement in special education programs. In accordance with [Regulation 181/98](#) of the *Education Act*, every school board must establish one or more IPRCs.

In the 2022-2023 school year, a total of 1,601 IPRC meetings were conducted:

- 358 meetings held were new referrals to the IPRC.
- 1,137 meetings held were regular annual reviews by the IPRC.
- 106 review meetings were dispensed at parents'/guardians' request.

The *TLDSB Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education* is available in *Section 21* of the *Special Education Plan* to provide more information about special education programs and services, including an in-depth overview of the IPRC process.

### Referrals to the IPRC

When it becomes apparent that a student has significant special needs and that they may be an exceptional student who requires a special education program, the reasons for a referral to an IPRC should be carefully considered, and a referral to an IPRC discussed with parents/guardians. Indicators that a referral to the IPRC may need to be explored are:

- The student clearly has exceptional learning needs and/or an identified syndrome or condition.
- A significant level of programming support and modification is required.
- Probability that significant support to the student will continue to be needed over an extended period of time.
- Outside support services and agencies are involved and will likely continue to be involved.
- Student was identified by the previous board.
- Possible qualification for specialized funding (e.g., Special Education Amount or Special Incidence Portion).
- Provincial school application is being considered (e.g., learning disabilities, blind, deaf, etc.).
- Specialized equipment is required to meet student needs.
- Parent/guardian or principal request.

It is important to note that in TLDSB, an IPRC meeting is generally not required in order to access most special education programs and services. Students usually have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in place prior to considering the IPRC process.

The principal is responsible for making referrals to the IPRC. In the event of the parents'/guardians' request, the following steps are recommended prior to the formal IPRC referral:

- Parents/guardians are made aware of the program and services presently provided to the student.
- A discussion regarding the purposes of formal identification takes place.

In the event of a written request by parents/guardians to refer their child to an IPRC, the principal shall provide a written statement of approximately when the principal expects that a committee will meet for the first time to discuss the pupil. In determining this time, the principal will consider the interventions taken place to date, assessments that may be needed, and other services required. Principals may confer with the superintendent responsible for Specialized Services or designate to determine a realistic time frame for an approximate IPRC date.

## **Notice of the IPRC meeting**

At least 10 days before the IPRC meeting, the chair of the committee will send the parents/guardians written notification of the meeting. The invitation letter will provide the date, time and location of the meeting and will ask the parents/guardians to indicate whether they will attend the meeting. Parents/guardians are encouraged to attend IPRC meetings and every effort should be made to accommodate their schedule. A link to the *Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education* will be included in the invitation letter.

## **Information gathering and preparation for the IPRC meeting**

Once a referral has been made to the IPRC, the IPRC members will gather and review information in order to be ready to make well-informed decisions about identification and placement for the student during the meeting. Parents/guardians (and students over the age of 16) are entitled to be present whenever the IPRC makes its decision. As part of the preparation for the meeting, the IPRC will:

- Review the student's IEP.
- Review Response to Intervention (RTI) plan notes and programming/intervention actions to date, such as school intervention team notes, case conference notes, etc.
- Consider results of educational assessments relating to the specific area(s) of learning concern.
- Obtain, subject to consent provisions of the Health Care Consent Act, 1996, and consider health and/or psychological assessments, if it is believed that such information is required to make an accurate identification or placement decision. The IPRC may, subject to consent provisions, consult with Department of Specialized Services staff regarding external assessments in advance of the IPRC meeting.
- Consider interviewing the student if the IPRC members feel it would be useful to do so, with parent/guardian consent for students under the age of 16.
- Consider any information about the student submitted by the parents/guardians, or by the student who is 16 years of age or older.
- Consider any other information that may be relevant to the IPRC decisions; and
- Be prepared to discuss any recommendations with the parent/guardian and student and respond to questions during the IPRC meeting.

## **Roles and responsibilities throughout the IPRC process**

The IPRC is comprised of at least three members, at least one of whom must be a principal or supervisory officer of the board. Generally, the principal of the school will chair the meeting and the other two committee members will typically be the special education resource teacher/department head for special education, teacher or other board support personnel, such as a special education consultant or itinerant teacher. Parents/guardians and students over age 16 are participants, not committee members, in the IPRC process.

Role of the principal/designated chair of the IPRC:

- Makes the referral to the IPRC and establishes a date for the IPRC meeting.
- Informs school and support personnel of the date.
- At least 10 days prior to the IPRC meeting, provides notification to the parent regarding the date, time and location of the IPRC meeting and provides direction on how to access the *Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education* online (a paper copy is available upon request).
- Chairs the IPRC meeting as lead of the decision-making committee.
- During the meeting, explains the role of the IPRC, invites each person present with knowledge of the student to share information and considers information relevant to the student's strengths and needs.

Role of school staff:

- Invited to attend and form part of the decision-making committee.
- Assists in gathering information for the meeting.
- Documents the meeting in the Record of Decision.
- Presents relevant information that supports identification and placement decisions.

Role of board support personnel:

- May be invited to attend and/or form part of the decision-making committee.
- May participate in the meeting to review any recent assessment.
- May act as a resource to assist in the interpretation of reports.

Role of the parents/guardians or student over age 16 before and during the IPRC meeting:

- Invited to attend and participate in the meeting.
- Review the *Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education*.
- Share relevant reports and assessments.
- May arrange for a support person to attend the meeting, such as a community partner with information about the student's needs.
- Provide information to the committee.
- Participate in the discussion and/or ask questions.

## IPRC decisions

During the IPRC meeting, after considering all information presented, the committee will make decisions about:

- The student's identification.
- The student's placement.

If the committee requires more information or more time to make a decision, then the decision will be deferred and a new meeting date will be set to finalize the IPRC record.

## Documenting the IPRC meeting

During the IPRC meeting, a Record of Decision document will be created in the IEP database. The Record of Decision will include the following:

- The names of the committee members present.
- The names of other people present.
- The documents reviewed as part of the IPRC's preparation or that were presented during the meeting.
- The IPRC's description of the student's strengths and needs.
- The IPRC's identification decision according to the Ministry of Education's categories and definitions of exceptionalities and board determined criteria.
- The IPRC's placement decision.
- The IPRC's recommendations regarding special education programs and services, if any.
- The reasons for placing the student in a special education class or withdrawal program, if that is The IPRC's decision.
- Signature of the IPRC chair.
- Opportunity for parents/guardians to indicate whether they agree or disagree with the IPRC's decisions.
- The process is available to parents/guardians if they do not agree with the IPRC's decisions.

After the meeting, the IPRC chair will:

- Provide one copy of the Record of Decision to the parents/guardians and the student who is 16 years or older.
- Place one copy of the Record of Decision in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR).
- Ensure the IEP is developed or updated within 30 days of the IPRC and a copy delivered to the parents/guardians and student who is 16 years or older.

## Consent for placement

Following an IPRC, the school board will implement the placement decision either after the parents/guardians agree to it, or, if the parents/guardians do not agree but does not wish to appeal the decision, after the time limit for an appeal has expired. In special circumstances, if written agreement by the parents/guardians of a student is not given, and a parents/guardians choose not to appeal the decision of the committee, the Board, after 30 days, will direct the appropriate principal to place the exceptional student and to notify the parents/guardians of the action that has been taken.

## After the IPRC decision

A second (follow-up) meeting may be requested by the parents/guardians whether or not they agree with the IPRC decisions. The parents/guardians have 15 days after receiving the Record of Decision to make a written request to the student's current principal for a follow-up meeting with the IPRC. The principal will arrange for the meeting to be held as soon as possible. Then, as soon as possible after the follow-up meeting, the IPRC chair will inform the Superintendent responsible for Specialized Services and the parents/guardians if any changes were made to the IPRC decision. If any changes were made, then the IPRC chair will provide a revised statement of decision and written reasons for the changes. The parents/guardians will be asked to consent to the revised identification and/or placement decision.

If parents/guardians do not agree with the IPRC decisions, they may:

- Within 30 days of receipt of the initial IPRC decision, file a notice of appeal with the Director of Education; or,

- Within 15 days of receipt of the decision of the second (follow-up) meeting, file a notice of appeal with the Director of Education.

If the parents do not supply written agreement with the IPRC decision and also do not appeal the decisions within the time limit set for appealing, the school board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

## Annual review

An IPRC review for each identified student will take place at least once within each school year. The annual review focuses on the identification and placement of a student and is requested by the principal in the same manner as for initial IPRC referrals.

Parents/guardians may request an IPRC review by putting the request in writing to the principal. A review may be requested after a placement has been in effect for three months. A request for an IPRC review cannot be made more often than once every three months.

The parents/guardians can dispense of (waive) the annual IPRC review by informing the principal in writing that an IPRC review meeting is not necessary. Otherwise, the IPRC review meeting must be held at least once within every school year as described above.

## IPRC appeal process

If the parents/guardians do not agree with the decisions stemming from the original IPRC or the follow-up meeting of the IPRC, an appeal can be filed with a Special Education Appeal Board (SEAB). The parents/guardians may appeal:

- The identification decision that the student is, or is not, exceptional; and/or
- The placement decision, if the student is identified as exceptional.

The notice of appeal must be sent to the director of education within 30 days of receipt of the original decision or within 15 days of receipt of the decision from the second (follow-up) meeting of the IPRC and must:

- Indicate the decision with which the parent disagrees; and,
- Include a statement that sets out the nature of the disagreement.

The SEAB members are selected through the following process:

- Within 15 days of receiving the notice of appeal:
  - The school board will select one person to be a member of the SEAB.
  - The parents/guardians will select one person to be a member of the SEAB.
- Within 15 days of the selections of the parents/guardians and the school board representatives, these two appeal board members will select a chair. If the SEAB members cannot agree on a Chair, the manager of the district office of the Ministry of Education may be asked to select the chair.
- No SEAB member should have had any prior involvement with the matter under appeal, nor should the member be an employee or member of the school board or an employee of the Ministry of Education.

The chair of the SEAB will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but no later than 30 days after they have been selected (unless parents/guardians and board both provide written consent to a later date). The appeal board will receive the material reviewed by the IPRC and may interview any persons who may be able to contribute information about the matter under appeal.

The parent/guardian and child, if they are 16 years old or over, are entitled to be present and to participate in all discussions. The appeal board must make its recommendation within 3 days of the completion of the meeting. It may:

- Agree with the IPRC and recommend that the decision be implemented; or,
- Disagree with the IPRC and make a recommendation to the board about the child's identification, placement or both.

The appeal board will report its recommendations in writing, to the parent(s)/guardian(s), the student (if they are 16 years old or over) and to the school board, providing the reasons for its recommendations. Within 30 days of receiving the appeal board's written statement, the school board will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations (boards are not required to follow the appeal board recommendation). The parent/guardian may accept the decision of the school board, or may appeal to a [Special Education Tribunal](#).

In the 2022-2023 school year, no IPRC appeals were conducted.

## Section 7: Educational and other assessments

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Assessment is the process of gathering and interpreting information that accurately reflects the student's demonstration of learning. We use a variety of classroom based and system-based assessments to support student learning and achievement.

The goal of educational assessment is to improve student learning and achievement. Assessment is a daily part of classroom programs, and regular classroom assessment strategies will provide an important range of information on a student's learning needs. More details about assessments as part of an effective early identification and intervention process are outlined in *Section 5* of this plan.

For students who are experiencing learning difficulties, additional assessment beyond the classroom and/or school is sometimes needed to assist with the decisions about program directions, exceptionality determination, and placement decisions.

### Guiding principles for specialized assessment

Specialized assessment for students with special needs should:

- Build on assessment information from the classroom.
- Provide additional information needed for programming.
- Utilize current assessment tools.
- Be conducted by appropriate professionals.
- Respect student needs.



## Referrals for specialized assessment

Referrals for specialized assessment are considered by the regional team.

- Prior to conducting a specialized assessment, it may be recommended that any medical issues are evaluated and treated by the appropriate medical professional (e.g. hearing, vision, etc.).
- The school will present evidence of interventions attempted to date (e.g. including frequency, intensity and duration), student work samples, IEP and RTI plans.
- Upon review of this information, the system team may have new suggestions of strategies or interventions which are requested to be implemented before undertaking a specialized assessment, such as a psycho-educational assessment or a speech and language assessment.

It is essential to recognize that specialized assessments are intensive, and they are only approved after we have exhausted all programming and intervention options at the school level and we determine that the interventions are not yielding the expected response.

Written parent/guardian permission/informed consent is required before any specialized assessments are administered.

### Types of specialized assessment conducted in TLDSB

Specialized services staff	Qualification	Types of Assessment
Consulting psychologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Registration with the College of Psychologists of Ontario</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provides clinical supervision of psychoeducational consultants</li> </ul>
Psycho/educational consultant (Under the supervision of the consulting psychologist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Masters in Psychology or equivalent combination of education, training and experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● May conduct comprehensive psychological assessments</li> </ul>
Speech and language pathologists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Masters in Speech and Language Pathology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cognitive functioning</li> </ul>

### Communication of assessment results

Upon completion of specialized assessment, the qualified professional will complete a written report to summarize the assessment results and list associated recommendations. The assessment results will be shared by a phone call with the parents/guardians or student (if over 16) and/or a meeting at the school including school staff.

### Written report

The original report will be stored centrally in alignment with the standards determined by the college governing the professional who wrote the report.

A copy of the written report will be shared with the parents/guardians and student (if over age 16).

With parents/guardians consent, a copy of the written report will also be placed in the Ontario Student Record (OSR).

The written report will assist the parents/guardians and school team to determine program planning at the school. The report may also assist to determine if a student meets board criteria for exceptionality and referral to the Individual Placement and Review Committee (IPRC).

## Protection of privacy

Assessment reports and test protocols authored by Trillium Lakelands DSB staff are kept in alignment with requirements set out by TLDSB's records retention procedure, Privacy Information Management (PIM) procedure and the governing college of the qualified professional.

Assessment reports are available to parents/guardians, students over 16 years of age, and other authorized personnel.

Information is only shared with third party individuals with informed consent of the parents/guardians.

## Management of referrals

Each year, TLDSB specialized services department staff work with school staff to determine students who will receive speech and language and psycho/educational assessments throughout the school year.

Case management is determined by a number of factors and assessments are initiated and completed through a continuous intake process. The number of specialized assessments that can be conducted each year is limited, thus the Department of Specialized Services holds the responsibility to allocate support.

## Section 8: Specialized health supports in school settings

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A number of children require health support services in order to attend school or to assist them in their normal development. [The Ministry of Health](#), the [Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services](#) and the [Ministry of Education](#) share a joint responsibility for providing these services.

The following types of services are typically available to enable children and youths with significant health or rehabilitation needs to attend publicly funded schools. In situations where there are staffing shortages impacting service delivery, the Superintendent responsible for Special Education Services will collaborate with community partners to determine next steps:

- Nursing
- Physiotherapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech and language therapy
- Dietetic services

Referrals for school-based rehabilitation services (e.g. occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech and language therapy) are made to:

- One Kids Place in Muskoka
- Five Counties Children's Centre in Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton

Referrals for nursing and health services are made to [Home and Community Care Support Services \(HCCSS\)](#).

Through the Ministry of Education, school boards provide:

- The administration of medication
- Lifting
- Positioning
- Oral feeding (not g-tube feeding)
- Toileting
- Maintenance of physiotherapy and occupational therapy
- Speech and language services (oral language interventions, supports for students who are non-verbal, and comprehensive assessments)

The services mentioned above facilitate necessary health accommodations for children with special health needs in publicly funded schools.

Due to the widespread geographic area of Trillium Lakelands DSB, these supports are provided by different agencies in various regions of the board.

### **Community partnerships for services in schools**

Further information on working with public and private Third Party Services for student support can be found on the board website at <https://www.tlidsb.ca/community-partnerships-for-services-in-schools/>.

## **Section 9: Categories and definition of exceptionalities**

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The Board uses the [Ministry of Education categories and definitions of exceptionalities](#) to identify students through the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process. To assist with consistency in the identification process, TLDSB also uses assessment data specific to the exceptionality criteria for use by the IPRC. These guidelines include the characteristics of the student, assessment information required, and documentation required to support the particular exceptionality determination.

The following information outlines the Ministry of Education's categories of exceptionalities.

### **Behavioural**

A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance, and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following:

- Difficulty with building and/or maintaining interpersonal relationships.
- Excessive fears or anxieties.
- A tendency for compulsive reaction.
- An inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination thereof.

## **Communicational**

### **Autism**

A severe learning disorder that is characterized by:

- a) Disturbances in:
  - Rate of educational development
  - Ability to relate to the environment
  - Mobility
  - Perception, speech, and language
- b) Lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language.

### **Deaf and hard of hearing**

An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.

### **Speech impairment**

A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors; that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages; and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm, and stress.

### **Language impairment**

A learning disorder characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or the use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may:

- a) involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; and
- b) include one or more of:
  - Language delay
  - Dysfluency
  - Voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based

### **Learning disability**

One of a number of neurodevelopmental disorders that persistently and significantly has an impact on the ability to learn and use academic and other skills that:

- Affect the ability to perceive or process verbal or non-verbal information in an effective and accurate manner in students who have assessed intellectual abilities that are at least in the average range.
- Results in (a) academic underachievement that is inconsistent with the intellectual abilities of the student (which are at least in the average range), and/or (b) academic achievement that can be maintained by the student only with extremely high levels of effort and/or with additional support.

- Results in difficulties in the development and use of skills in one or more of the following areas: reading, writing, mathematics, work habits and learning skills.
- May typically be associated with difficulties in one or more cognitive processes, such as phonological processing; memory and attention; processing speed; perceptual-motor processing; visual-spatial processing; executive functions (e.g., self-regulation of behaviour and emotions, planning, organizing of thoughts and activities, prioritizing, decision making).
- May be associated with difficulties in social interaction (e.g., difficulty in understanding social norms, or the point of view of others); with various other conditions or disorders, diagnosed or undiagnosed; or with other exceptionalities.
- Is not the result of a lack of acuity in hearing and/or vision that has not been corrected, intellectual disabilities, socio-economic factors, cultural differences, lack of proficiency in the language of instruction, lack of motivation or effort, gaps in school attendance or inadequate opportunity to benefit from instruction.

## **Intellectual**

### **Giftedness**

An advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.

### **Mild intellectual disability**

A learning disorder characterized by:

- An ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and support services.
- A learning style that profits from a hands-on, concrete and applied approach.
- An individually-paced and practical approach to academic subjects.
- An expectation of successful independent living.
- A potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, economic self-support and meaningful and significant contributions to family and society.

### **Developmental disability**

A severe learning disorder characterized by:

- An ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate individualized intellectual development and learning.
- Complex and multiple needs requiring modified and alternative programming.
- Significant areas of need may include communication, basic living skills, social interaction and adjustment, impulse control and behaviour, and functional academics.

## Physical

### Physical disability

A condition of physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations, to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of pupils without exceptionalities who are of the same age or developmental level.

### Blind and low vision

A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance.

## Multiple

### Multiple exceptionalities

A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities, that is of such nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.

## Section 10: Special education placements provided by the Board

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Each year, special education programs and placements required are determined based on student needs and available resources. The TLDSB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is consulted during this process, and input is used to develop programs and services available to students.

### Range of special education placements

TLDSB is committed to considering the regular classroom as the placement of first choice when such a placement meets the pupil's needs and is in accordance with parental wishes. The Board, however, recognizes that a regular classroom placement may not meet the needs of every pupil. With this in mind, a range of options, including placement in a special class (with integration when/where appropriate) will be considered for pupils whose needs cannot be met in the regular classroom environment.

The following outlines the range of placements that exist in TLDSB:

- Regular class with indirect support from a special education teacher
  - The student is placed in the regular class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialized consultative services from a special education teacher.
  - The classroom teacher plans with the needs of all learners in mind, incorporating universal design for learning, differentiated instruction and responsive programming to meet the specific needs of individual students.
  - Accommodations and/or modifications to the regular program are delivered by the classroom teacher according to the Individual Education Plan.
  - An IPRC is not required.

- Regular class with resource assistance
  - The exceptional student is placed in the regular classroom for most or all of the day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified special education teacher.
  - Instructional interventions, modifications and/or accommodations are also provided and continually assessed by the classroom teacher, supported by the special education resource teacher (SERT).
  - The IEP is developed by the classroom teacher, in consultation with the SERT and parents/guardians.
  - The classroom teacher, in collaboration with the SERT, is responsible for developing, implementing, evaluating and reporting on the special education portion of the program.
  - Ongoing consultation among the teachers, support staff, parents/guardian, and student is integral to the student's progress.
  - An IPRC is not required.
- Regular class with withdrawal assistance
  - The exceptional student is placed in the regular classroom and receives instruction outside of the classroom for less than 50% of the school day, from a qualified special education teacher.
  - The withdrawal sessions are often scheduled in flexible blocks of time over the course of the school year.
  - Support is provided to the student as outlined in the IEP.
  - Instructional interventions, modifications and/or accommodations are also provided and continually assessed by the classroom teacher and supported by the special education personnel.
  - An IEP is developed by the classroom teacher and SERT, in consultation with the parent.
  - Ongoing consultation among the teachers, support staff, parents/guardians, and student is integral to the student's progress.
  - An IPRC is recommended, however, is not always required for this level of intervention.
- Special education class with partial integration
  - Through IPRC, the exceptional student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class for at least 50% of the school day, but is integrated into a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.
  - The programming in the special education class is led by a qualified special education teacher.
  - The exceptional student will also spend time in a regular classroom with appropriate modifications and accommodations, depending on individual needs.
  - Instructional interventions, modifications and accommodations are also provided and continually assessed by the special education program teacher and the integration teacher(s).
  - An IEP is developed by the special education program teacher in consultation with the integration teacher, and the parent/guardian.

- Special education personnel are responsible for developing, implementing, evaluating and reporting on the special education portion of the program.
- Ongoing consultation among the teachers, support staff, parents/guardians, and student is integral to the student's progress.
- Special education class full time
  - Through IPRC, the exceptional student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class for a full school day;
  - The programming in the special education class is led by a qualified special education teacher;
  - Instructional interventions, modifications and accommodations are also provided and continually assessed by the special education program teacher;
  - An IEP is developed by the special education program teacher in consultation with the parent; and
  - Ongoing consultation among the teachers, board staff, support staff, parents and student is integral to the student's progress.

### **TLDSB special education system classes**

The following description outlines the variety of special education class program placements available in TLDSB. The location and nature of these placements is reviewed on an annual basis through consultation with SEAC, school and central special education staff and the Principal Advisory Group. The superintendent responsible for Specialized Services approves the locations of these programs.

Special education class programs include:

#### **Practical Academic and Life Skills Programs (PA&LS) - Elementary and Secondary**

An intensive full time placement for students with an identified behavioural or communicational exceptionality who are struggling with social, emotional, and behavioural safety in the regular classroom

- Full time placement with opportunities for supported integration into mainstream classroom settings
- Focus areas include:
  - Academic Gap Closing
  - Executive Functioning Skills
  - Emotional Regulation Skills
  - Social Skill Development
  - Resilience and Coping Skills
- Certain requirements must be fulfilled for consideration as a candidate including age requirements, academic, adaptive and psychological assessments, and on-going involvement with the Special Education Area Consultant.
- Programming is developed in consultation with community partners who are supporting the student.
- Demission guidelines include successful integration for the majority of the day, parents'/guardians' or student over the age of 16 request, and failure to benefit from the goals of the program.



### **Academics, Independence & Mental Fitness (AIM) - Elementary**

An intensive and targeted small class placement designed to meet the IEP goals of students with an identified developmental disability.

- Specialized programming may include basic living skills, social skills, communication, functional academics, and self-regulation strategies.
- Where appropriate, opportunities for integration are provided. The goal is to prepare students for life in the community after high school, and integrated transition planning is part of the program.
- Entry into the program is through an IPRC.
- Certain requirements must be fulfilled for consideration as a candidate including age, requirements, academic and psychological assessments, on-going involvement of the Board's Specialized Services team.

### **New program pilot for 2023-2024: Communications Classes - Elementary and Secondary**

Communications classes support students in Grades 1-3 and 7 to 10 experiencing significant challenges with communication and who, in spite of intensive support, intervention and/or appropriate accommodations and modifications, are not experiencing significant progress in the regular classroom setting.

#### **Alternative settings:**

##### **Home instruction**

The use of this placement must be approved by the superintendent responsible for home instruction.

- The student receives instruction in their home or alternate setting approved by the principal.
- A home instruction teacher provides the instruction.
- The program is monitored by the principal of the school.
- An IEP is developed by the principal or school resource teacher.
- Home instruction programs are considered as temporary placements when alternatives in the school setting are not meeting student needs due to safety or illness.
- While on home instruction, efforts should continue to develop appropriate long-term programming for the student.

##### **Education and Community Partnership Programs (ECP)**

When the placements within the Board are not meeting a student's needs, school staff, in consultation with district special education staff, community agencies, and parents/guardians will discuss and explore other options for a student. These options may include Education and Community Partnership Programs (ECP) both within and outside the district. The space in these programs is extremely limited. Acceptance into the alternative setting is often through the agency in consultation with Board specialized services staff.

TLDSB has several ECP agreements with facilities in the TLDSB geographic area. The following table lists the ECP programs operating in TLDSB.

**ECPP and TLDSB Programs**

Program	Agency Partner(s)
Sprucehill Adventures	CHIMO Youth and Family Services
Balsam Lane	CHIMO Youth and Family Services
Adventure Quest	CHIMO Youth and Family Services Boys and Girls Club of Kawartha Lakes

**Range of placement options available by exceptionality**

**Elementary**

Category	Definition	School resource program	System resource program	System special classes
<b>Behaviour</b>	Behaviour	✓		✓
<b>Communication</b>	Autism	✓		✓
	Deaf and hard of hearing	✓		
	Language impairment	✓		
	Speech impairment	✓		
	Learning disability	✓		
<b>Intellectual</b>	Gifted	✓		
	Mild intellectual disability	✓		
	Developmental disability	✓		✓
<b>Physical</b>	Physical	✓		
	Blind and low vision	✓		

Category	Definition	School resource program	System resource program	System special classes
Multiple	Multiple exceptionalities	✓		✓

### Secondary

Category	Definition	School resource program	System special classes
Behaviour	Behaviour	✓	
Communication	Autism	✓	✓
	Deaf and hard of hearing	✓	
	Language impairment	✓	
	Speech impairment	✓	
	Learning disability	✓	
Intellectual	Gifted	✓	
	Mild intellectual disability	✓	
	Developmental disability	✓	✓
Physical	Physical	✓	
	Blind and low vision	✓	
Multiple	Multiple exceptionalities	✓	✓

Due to the widespread geography of the board and the low incidence of students who are blind or deaf, these students are currently served with an itinerant teacher, special education teachers and/or educational assistant support rather than special program placements.

## Guidelines and process for admission

### Regular class and resource program placements

Placement	Guidelines for admission	Admission process
<b>Regular class with indirect support</b>	Environmental, instructional and assessment accommodations in place, student still needs assistance and/or assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Referral to in-school team/student success team with recommendation for monitoring</li> <li>● Ongoing service from school resource program</li> </ul>
<b>Regular class with resource assistance</b>	Student requires accommodations and modifications of up to 50% of the regular curriculum, or requires alternative curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recommendation of support through the in-school/student success team</li> <li>● Classroom assessments to support need</li> </ul>
<b>Regular class with withdrawal assistance</b>	Student requires skill specific instruction in a small group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recommendation of support through in-school/student success team</li> <li>● Classroom and resource assessments to support need</li> <li>● Supplemental formal assessment as required</li> <li>● Formal identification if need expected to be long-term</li> </ul>
<b>Special Education class programs</b>	Specific guidelines are available below for each type of program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Formal assessment</li> <li>● Referral to IPRC</li> </ul>

### Special education programs

This chart outlines the specific types of special education class programs. Class size follows the requirements of [Regulation 298 of the Education Act](#). The location and feasibility of offering the classes is determined on an annual basis according to system needs.

Program name	Description
<b>AIM program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The AIM program is an intensive full-time placement for students with an identified behavioural or communicational exceptionality who are struggling with social, emotional and behavioural safety in the regular classroom</li> <li>● Full time placement with opportunities for supported integration into mainstream classroom settings</li> </ul>

Program name	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Focus areas will include:</li> <li>● Academic gap closing</li> <li>● Executive functioning skills</li> <li>● Emotional regulation skills</li> <li>● Social skill development</li> <li>● Resilience and coping skills</li> </ul>
<b>PA&amp;LS program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Practical Academics &amp; Life Skills Program in Trillium Lakelands DSB is an intensive and targeted small class placement designed for students with an identified developmental disability who are struggling to meet their IEP goals in the regular classroom.</li> <li>● Specialized programming may include basic living skills, social skills, communication, functional academics, and self-regulation strategies.</li> <li>● Where appropriate, opportunities for integration are provided. The goal is to prepare students for life in the community after high school, and integrated transition planning is part of the program.</li> </ul>
<b>Communications class program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communications classes support students in Grades 1-3 and 7 to 10 experiencing significant challenges with communication and who, in spite of intensive support, intervention and/or appropriate accommodations and modifications, are not experiencing significant progress in the regular classroom setting.</li> </ul>

### **Guidelines for determining change of placement or identification**

A change of placement should be considered based on the following guidelines:

- A student has made sufficient progress to be able to return to a less intensive setting (regular program, resource program).
- A student’s needs have increased such that an alternative setting is required (e.g. ECPP)
- A student has been in the program for two years or more, and would receive limited benefits from remaining in the program.
- Parents/guardians no longer wish a student to remain in the program and an alternative program that meets the student’s needs is suitable.

A change of identification should be considered based on the following guideline:

- New assessment, medical, or other information indicates a different identification is more appropriate.

### **Determination of support provided in placements**

Special Education service levels including numbers of staff are determined through the budget process and input of SEAC.

After staffing levels are approved through the budget process, support levels for each placement are determined through the following process:

### **Resource teachers and special program teachers**

Information on needs is collected from the system. The superintendent of Specialized Services recommends support levels. Guidelines for determining allocation of teaching staff are:

- Number of students in the school.
- Level of need of the school based on principal input, area Superintendent input and assessment data.
- Access to special classes or programs both within the school and within the family of schools
- Number of students presenting with significant needs.

Final school assignments are reviewed by senior administration and a final staffing plan is approved by the Superintendent of Special Education.

### **Educational assistants**

In May each year, the Principal Advisory Group under the direction of the superintendent responsible for Specialized Services reviews EA allocations assigned for special education programs and service deliveries in each school. The overall needs of the school are reviewed on a regular basis by the school and central staff and adjustments are made as required. The senior administration team approves final support levels. For emerging needs due to students entering the system, additional support allocations are assigned by the Superintendent responsible for Specialized Services.

One of the guiding principles for students with special needs is to foster inclusion. Promoting independence and participation for these pupils is a focus. All students require and have access to academic support through the classroom teacher, and yet some require a significantly increased level of support to optimize their outcomes. The following guidelines, listed in order of priority (high to low) are used to determine staffing allocations in each placement and school.

1. Physical needs
2. Safety issues
3. Behavioural needs
4. Social needs
5. Communication needs
6. Academic needs

## **Section 11: Individual Education Plans (IEP)**

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The Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student, based on a thorough assessment of the strengths and needs that affect the student's ability to learn and to demonstrate learning.

### **Process for dispute resolution**

A team approach should underlie the IEP process. Students and parents/guardians play an invaluable role in the development of the IEP. Open communication between home and school will help ensure that both the parents/guardians and school staff have similar expectations with respect to the student's special education programs and services.

If parents/guardians or the student have concerns about the IEP, the following steps should be taken until the concern can be rectified:

1. Contact the teacher and/or the resource teacher to discuss the situation.
2. If the situation has not been resolved, contact the Principal and request help in dealing with the matter.
3. If necessary, contact the superintendent in charge of the school involved.

Refer to the [TLDSB Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education](#) for more information.

## Section 12: Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario

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Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario:

- Are operated by the Ministry of Education.
- Provide education for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, who are blind or have low vision, who are deafblind, or who have severe learning disabilities; provide an alternative education option.
- Serve as regional resource centres for students who are deaf, blind, have deaf/blind or have severe learning disabilities.
- Provide preschool home visiting services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, who are blind or have low vision, who are deafblind, or who have severe learning disabilities.
- Provide outreach and home-visiting services to parents of preschool children who are deaf or hard of hearing, are blind or have low vision, or are deafblind.
- Develop and provide learning materials and media for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, are blind or have low vision, or are deafblind.
- Provide school board teachers with resource services.
- Provide an alternative education option.
- Provide professional development for teachers.

More information can be found at the [Ministry of Education Provincial and Demonstration Schools Branch website](#).

### Provincial Schools for the blind and blind/deaf

The following Provincial Schools offer services students who are blind or have low vision or are deafblind:

- W. Ross Macdonald School in Brantford
- Centre Jules-Léger in Ottawa (language of instruction is French)

These schools provide:

- Education for students who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind.
- A provincial resource centre for the visually impaired and deafblind.
- Support to local school boards through consultation and the provision of special learning materials, such as Braille materials, audiotapes, and large-print textbooks.

- Professional services and guidance to ministries of education on an inter-provincial, cooperative basis.

Programs are tailored to the needs of the individual student and:

- Are designed to help these students learn to live independently in a non-sheltered environment.
- Are delivered by specially trained teachers.
- Follow the Ontario curriculum developed for all students in the province.
- Offer a full range of courses at the secondary level.
- Offer courses in special subject areas such as music, broad-based technology, family studies, physical education, and mobility training.
- Are individualized, to offer a comprehensive “life skills” program.
- Provide through home visiting for parents and families of preschool deaf/blind children to assist in preparing these children for future education.

## **Provincial Schools for students who are deaf or hard of hearing**

The following Provincial Schools offer services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students:

- Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf in Belleville
- Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf in Milton
- Robarts School for the Deaf in London
- Centre Jules-Léger in Ottawa (language of instruction is French)

These schools provide elementary and secondary school programs for deaf students from preschool level to high school graduation. The curriculum follows the Ontario curriculum and parallels courses and programs provided in school boards. Each student has his or her special needs met as set out in his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP). Schools for the deaf:

- Provide rich and supportive bilingual/bicultural educational environments which facilitate students’ language acquisition, learning, and social development through American Sign Language (ASL) and English, or through Langue des Signes Québécois (LSQ) and French.
- Operate primarily as day and residential programs.
- Provide residential facilities five days per week for those students who do not live within reasonable commuting distance from the school.

Each Provincial School has a resource services department that provides:

- Consultation and educational advice to parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing and to school board personnel.
- Information brochures.
- A wide variety of workshops for parents, school boards, and other agencies.
- An extensive home-visiting program delivered to parents of preschool children who are deaf or hard of hearing by teachers trained in preschool and deaf education.

## **Demonstration Schools for students who have severe learning disabilities**

Although the primary responsibility to provide appropriate educational programs for students with learning disabilities remains with school boards, the Ministry recognizes that some students require a



residential school setting for a period of time. The Ministry of Education provides services for children with severe learning disabilities at four Demonstration Schools:

- Amethyst School, London
- Centre Jules-Leger, Ottawa
- Sagonaska School, Belleville
- Trillium School, Milton

Demonstration Schools were established to:

- Provide special residential education programs for students between Grades 4 and 11.
- Enhance the development of each student’s academic and social skills.
- Develop the abilities of the students enrolled to a level that will enable them to return to programs operated by a local school board within two years.

A teacher education program is provided at each Demonstration School. This professional learning program is designed to share methodologies and materials with teachers of Ontario school boards. Information about the programs offered should be obtained from the schools themselves.

Each demonstration school has an enrolment of not more than forty students.

### **Application to Provincial Schools and Demonstration Schools**

Admittance to a Provincial School (for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, who are blind or have low vision or who are deafblind) is determined by the Provincial Schools Admission Committee in accordance with the requirements set out in [Regulation 296](#).

Application for admission to a Demonstration School (for students with severe learning disabilities) is made on behalf of students by the school board, with parental consent. The Provincial Committee on Learning Disabilities (PCLD) determines whether a student is eligible for admission. Although the primary responsibility to provide appropriate educational programs for students with learning disabilities remains with school boards, the Ministry recognizes that some students require a residential school setting for a period of time.

### **Transportation to Provincial or Demonstration Schools**

Transportation to Provincial Schools is provided by Trillium Lakelands District School Board. Transportation arrangements are developed on an individual basis. For students who need significant assistance, an educational assistant or other caregiver may be provided to accompany the student.

### **Current Year Statistics (2023-2024)**

<b>Provincial Schools</b>	<b>Number of TLDSB students attending</b>
Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf	0
W. Ross MacDonald School for the Blind	1
Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf	0
Robarts School for the Deaf	0
Amethyst Demonstration School	0
Centre Jules-Leger	0

Provincial Schools	Number of TLDSB students attending
Sagonaska Demonstration School	0
Trillium Demonstration School	0

## Section 13: Special Education staff

Individuals in several roles support the delivery of Specialized Services in TLDSB. These roles are filled by employees of the board, and by persons contracted to provide service in some areas.

Qualifications for special education support personnel are in accordance with recognized professional qualifications in each area of expertise.

The deployment of special education support personnel is determined on an annual basis by the Superintendent Responsible for Specialized Services.

A list of special education support staff appears on the following pages.

Elementary	FTE (Full Time Equivalent) 2023-2024 (updated 07/11/2023)	Staff Qualifications
<b>Teachers of exceptional students</b>		
<i>Teachers for resource-withdrawal programs</i>	52.40	Minimum Special Education Part I
<i>Teachers for self-contained classes incl. ECPP</i>	20.0	Minimum Special Education Part I
<b>Other special education teachers</b>		
<i>Itinerant teachers</i>	11.0 (E/S)	Minimum Special Education Part I in specific area
<i>Teacher diagnosticians</i>	0.0	Minimum Special Education Part I
<i>Coordinators</i>	0.0	
<i>Consultants</i>	5.0 (E/S)	Special Education Specialist Preferred
<b>Educational assistants in special education</b>		
<i>Educational assistants</i>	206.0	Post-secondary, related diploma, experience working with individuals with special needs
<b>Other professional resource staff</b>		
<i>District Principal</i>	1.0 (E/S)	OCT, Principal Qualifications, Special Education Qualifications
<i>Psychologists</i>	1.0 (E/S)	Registered with the College of Psychologists and Psych Associates
<i>Psychoeducational Consultants</i>	5.0 (E/S)	Master of Arts, Psychology or bachelor of education with applicable experience
<i>Psychiatrists</i>	0.0	
<i>Speech language pathologists</i>	4.0 (E/S)	Masters, Speech Language Pathology

Elementary	FTE (Full Time Equivalent) 2023-2024 (updated 07/11/2023)	Staff Qualifications
<i>Audiologists</i>	0.0	
<i>Occupational therapists</i>	0.0	
<i>Physiotherapists</i>	0.0	
<i>Communicative Disorder Assistants</i>	4.0 (E/S)	Post-secondary in CDA
<b>Paraprofessional resource staff</b>		
<i>Orientation and mobility personnel</i>	0.0	
<i>Oral interpreters</i>	0.0	
<i>ASL/English Interpreters</i>	0.0	Post-secondary, related diploma, experience (Educational Assistant)
<i>Transcribers</i>	0.0	
<i>Interveners</i>	0.0	
<i>Auditory verbal therapists</i>	0.0	

Secondary	FTE (Full Time Equivalent) 2023-2024 (updated 07/11/2023)	Staff Qualifications
<b>Teachers of exceptional students</b>		
<i>Teachers for resource-withdrawal programs</i>	7.0	Minimum Special Education Part I
<i>Teachers for self-contained classes incl. ECPP</i>	17.67	Minimum Special Education Part I
<b>Other special education teachers</b>		
<i>Itinerant teachers</i>	11.0 (E/S)	Minimum Special Education Part I in specific area
<i>Teacher diagnosticians</i>	0.0	Minimum Special Education Part I
<i>Coordinators</i>	0.0	
<i>Consultants</i>	4.0 (E/S)	Special Education Specialist Preferred
<b>Educational assistants in special education</b>		
<i>Educational assistants</i>	47.0	Post-secondary, related diploma, experience working with individuals with special-needs
<b>Other professional resource staff</b>		
<i>District Principal</i>	1.0 (E/S)	OCT, Principal Qualifications, Special Education Qualifications
<i>Psychologists</i>	1.0 (E/S)	Registered with the College of Psychologists and Psych Associates
<i>Psychoeducational Consultants</i>	5.0 (E/S)	Master of Arts, Psychology or bachelor of education with applicable experience

Secondary	FTE (Full Time Equivalent) 2023-2024 (updated 07/11/2023)	Staff Qualifications
<i>Psychiatrists</i>	0.0	
<i>Speech language pathologists</i>	4.0 (E/S)	Masters, Speech Language Pathology
<i>Audiologists</i>	0.0	
<i>Occupational therapists</i>	0.0	
<i>Physiotherapists</i>	0.0	
<i>Communicative Disorder Assistants</i>	4.0 (E/S)	Post-secondary in CDA
<b>Paraprofessional resource staff</b>		
<i>Orientation and mobility personnel</i>	0.0	
<i>Oral interpreters</i>	0.0	
<i>ASL/English Interpreters</i>	0.0	Post-secondary, related diploma, experience (Educational Assistant)
<i>Transcribers</i>	0.0	
<i>Intervenors</i>	0.0	
<i>Auditory verbal therapists</i>	0.0	

### Services provided by special education staff

School-level staff role	Responsibility
Regular program teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborates with the resource teacher in the development of IEPs.</li> <li>Provides program modifications and accommodations.</li> <li>Evaluates student progress.</li> </ul>
Special education resource teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans and develops school special education supports.</li> <li>Models differentiated instruction in the regular classroom.</li> <li>Collaborates with the regular program teacher in the development of IEPs.</li> <li>Provides consultation to regular program teachers.</li> <li>Delivers programs in flexible blocks and groupings to students with special needs.</li> <li>Evaluates student progress.</li> </ul>
Special education program teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaches program of exceptional students who have been placed in the program by IPRC.</li> <li>Collaborates with the resource teacher and the integration teachers in the development of the IEPs.</li> <li>Plans and delivers special education programs.</li> <li>Collaborates with regular teacher for integration of students.</li> </ul>
Special education department head (Secondary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops secondary programs for students with special needs.</li> </ul>

School-level staff role	Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops IEPs in consultation with regular classroom teachers.</li> <li>Plans instruction with regular program teachers.</li> </ul>
Educational assistants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides general support for students with special needs under the direction of teachers.</li> <li>Assists students requiring intensive support.</li> <li>Delivers teacher developed programs to students individually or in small groups.</li> <li>Carries out IEP strategies as directed by the teacher.</li> </ul>

District and area support staff role	Responsibility
Special education consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide leadership in professional development.</li> <li>Build capacity in school staff.</li> <li>Advise on educational assessments.</li> <li>Consult about student programs.</li> <li>Select and implement resources.</li> <li>Ensure special education procedures are followed.</li> <li>Oversee the IPRC process.</li> <li>Liaise with outside agencies.</li> </ul>
Psychologists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct educational and behavioral assessments.</li> <li>Interpret outside assessments.</li> <li>Make program recommendations.</li> </ul>
Psychoeducational consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administer educational assessments.</li> <li>Interpret outside assessment information.</li> <li>Consult about program.</li> <li>Select and Implement resource.</li> </ul>
Speech language pathologists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess speech and language.</li> <li>Consult about programs.</li> <li>Provide professional development for teachers.</li> <li>Select and implement resources.</li> <li>Support augmentative communication.</li> </ul>
Communicative disorders consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement programs and provide direct and indirect services to students with communicational exceptionalities under the supervision of the TLDSB speech and language pathologists</li> </ul>
Itinerant teachers (blind/low vision; deaf and hard of hearing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult regarding individual student needs in specialized areas.</li> <li>Provide programming assistance for individual students.</li> </ul>

District and area support staff role	Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise about program delivery for students in specialized areas (deaf, blind).</li> </ul>

## Section 14: Staff development

The evolution of information regarding special education necessitates regular professional development for teachers, administrators, and support staff.

### Goals for staff development

The goal of staff development is to build capacity to optimize outcomes for students with special needs. This is achieved by:

- Supporting professional learning to foster ongoing improvement of practice.
- Providing staff with adequate skills and knowledge to meet the needs of special education students.
- Keeping staff informed of what is current with new Ministry and board initiatives.
- Enabling staff to maintain professional requirements.
- Providing adequate and up to date professional resources in special education.

### Staff input

Staff provide input into the staff development plan in a number of ways:

- Feedback from administrator and SERT meetings.
- System surveys.
- Input from Special Education Advisory Team
- Gap analysis of needs.
- Individually identified needs.
- Research into innovative interventions and current practices in other school boards.
- Response to current Ministry initiatives.

In order to provide responsive and effective professional development in special education, all staff are included.

### Professional development focus

Professional development opportunities are prioritized, planned and provided based on the following influencing factors:

- Ministry of Education initiatives.
- Feedback from Ministry staff related to reviews (IEP, equipment).
- Feedback from PD sessions and meetings carried out this year.
- Input from principals.
- Consultation from SEAC through regular meeting updates on programs, services and initiatives, and participation in the Board's annual budget process.
- Feedback from parents/guardians gathered through ongoing service delivery.

- Feedback related to health and safety issues.
- Feedback from staff surveys.

TLDSB will continue to focus its professional learning opportunities for staff specific to our key purpose, the learning of all students.

During the 2022-2023 school year, TLDSB undertook a full review of special education programs and services to inform a three-year plan. A preliminary report was prepared in spring 2023 to inform programming decisions for the 2023-2024 school year.

The special education professional learning focus for 2023-2024 will prioritize:

- Leveraging universal design for learning as an effective means to promote equity in our classrooms and ensure entry points for all learners in all classrooms and school communities
- Continuing to position special education resource teachers/special education department heads as school leaders by increasing coaching and mentoring capacity
- Development of a framework for schools to use current data to plan for impactful classroom strategies, accommodations and interventions alongside a clear plan for monitoring and refinement
- Ensuring system clarity on effective in-school team procedures and expectations in TLDSB to ensure consistent application
- Building capacity for staff to develop high-quality IEPs to drive programming designed to close gaps and increase student achievement

Each year the Superintendent of Learning responsible for Special Education, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, establishes a professional development budget, allocating funds to support the professional learning of educational assistants, teachers, principals, system class teachers, and system level special education staff (consultants, assessment staff, etc.).

The budget is presented to SEAC for consultation and approved by the Board.

## **Section 15: Specialized equipment for learning**

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The Board purchases equipment which is provided for student use for instructional, care and mobility purposes. The Board has a procedure that outlines in detail how to obtain individualized equipment for students:

### **How is equipment requested?**

Equipment can be requested by the school when there is a documented educational or health related need. Equipment requests are considered by an intake committee comprised of central specialized services staff.

For equipment requests which meet [SEA \(Special Equipment Amount\) 2023-2024 guidelines](#):

- The request includes a written recommendation by a qualified, regulated professional supporting the claim.

- The report must include a diagnosis of the condition that requires the essential equipment to support the student's needs.
- Recommendation by qualified professionals must state that it is essential for the student to have the equipment to access the Ontario curriculum and/or alternative curriculum.
- The Individual Education Plan (IEP) describes how the equipment would be used for the student in the school.
- No existing or similar equipment is available for the student in the system.
- The equipment does not provide safety risks to the student or others.
- The equipment is compatible with other board systems.

Approved requests are purchased through the central special education budget. An annual budget for equipment is established.

### **Role of parents/guardians**

Parents/guardians are important partners in education. Information from home will assist in appropriate programming and planning.

It is helpful to share copies of reports or assessments prepared by professionals who have supported your child with the school via the Special Education Resource Teacher or Head of Special Education. If there is a recommendation for specialized equipment in the report, then the Special Education Resource Teacher or Head of Special Education will follow the process for requesting this for your child.

### **How is the equipment funded?**

As part of its Funding Model, the Ministry of Education provides a per pupil amount to school boards to assist in covering equipment costs.

The Ministry of Education further supports the purchase of adaptive (non-computer based) equipment which costs more than \$800 per student. In order to be reimbursed for the amount spent over \$800, school boards must pay the \$800 deductible amount and attest to compliance with the SEA Guidelines.

The Ministry of Education reserves the right to conduct a paper audit of the files submitted for consideration in the SEA process in the spring of each year, prior to the transfer of funds to the school board. This process would involve the review of a random sampling of 10% of the SEA files by a Ministry Education Officer.

### **Maximizing resources to benefit students**

We regularly monitor our Specialized Equipment for Learning budget and process, and we adjust practices to ensure we are maximizing efficiencies.

These efficiencies include:

- A reduction in the paperwork required for a Specialized Equipment Request, thus allowing the school staff more time devoted to direct service to students.
- We no longer purchase individual printers or scanners for students, except in unique situations as determined through consultation with the Superintendent of Learning with responsibilities for Specialized Services (or designate).



- Wherever possible, Ministry-licensed software will be provided to meet the specific needs of the student (ex. text-to-speech, word prediction and speech-to-text) rather than purchasing programs that present a significant cost to the board.
- Reassigned (gently used) computers or devices will be provided for new SEA claims where possible and where these items meet the documented needs of the student.
- Ongoing check ins will occur to ensure technology is being used.
- A process for managing, reviewing, tracking and maintaining equipment is established at each school to ensure that every effort is made to prevent loss, damage and/or theft of equipment.

## Section 16: Accessibility

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Most of the facilities within Trillium Lakelands District School Board are fully accessible. This includes facilities that were originally designed for accessibility in accordance with the building code in effect at the time of construction, and facilities that have been modified to meet student needs. It continues to be a goal of the Board that all buildings are accessible to all students within the jurisdiction.

As buildings are upgraded, the Board will continue to remain cognizant of the students within the District and attempt, wherever possible, to enable students to attend their neighbourhood school. It is recognized that building accessibility is a factor in the placement of some students. Improvements to the accessibility of buildings are made on an annual basis and compliance with new forthcoming Accessibility legislation will be made.

Accessibility in TLDSB also aligns with the required Ontario Standards including customer service, employment, information technology, transportation and design of public spaces.

Information about accessibility in TLDSB can be found at <https://www.tlgsb.ca/accessibility/>

## Section 17: Transportation

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Trillium Lakelands District School Board transportation information is available at <https://www.tlgsb.ca/transportation-information/>.

The Board recognizes that some students require specialized transportation arrangements, such as specific supports, accommodations or safety plans. Specialized transportation plans are developed in consultation with the school team, parents/guardians, special education consultants and transportation services personnel. Requests for specialized transportation services are submitted to the Superintendents responsible for Specialized Services and Transportation Services (or their designates) for approval. It can take up to two weeks for specialized transportation arrangements to be fully in place following the request.

An Individual Student Transportation Plan (ISTP) is developed when individualized accommodations or unique considerations are required for boarding/deboarding, in-transit services (including support personnel) and/or emergency services. The ISTP is kept on file with the Transportation Services Department and shared with the bus operator.

## Eligibility

Students in system special education programs, including TLDSB's care, treatment custody and corrections programs, receive transportation according to the Board transportation policy and procedure.

As outlined in Section 12 of this plan, transportation to Provincial Schools is provided by Trillium Lakelands District School Board. These arrangements are developed on an individual basis. For students who need significant assistance, an educational assistant or other caregiver may be provided to accompany the student.

There are no provisions for transportation to summer school in Board procedures.

## Student Safety

The safety of our students is of the utmost importance to us. When there are significant safety considerations that involve a student's transportation to and from school, a case conference is held. The school team, parents/guardians and special education personnel work together to build an individualized plan to ensure the safety of all.

Bus operators are currently required to meet the following safety criteria:

- Have training in First Aid, CPR, and EpiPen (or similar generic devices).
- Have a criminal record check (Vulnerable Sector Screening).

Other specific requirements are outlined in the Operator Contracts and/or the *BU-3026 Transportation Procedure* found at <https://www.tldsb.ca/transportation-information/>

## Section 18: Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

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As outlined in [Regulation 464/97](#) of the Education Act, TLDSB has a Special Education Advisory Committee which advises the Board on any matter affecting the establishment and development of special education programs and services in respect of exceptional pupils of the Board. Members are appointed to SEAC by Board motion in accordance with this regulation.

The nomination process, meeting information, current SEAC Membership, SEAC roles and responsibilities, and other information can be found on the [TLDSB SEAC webpage](#).

### Roles and responsibilities

A Special Education Advisory Committee of a Board may make recommendations to the Board in respect of any matter affecting the establishment, development and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the Board.

Before making a decision on a recommendation of the committee, the Board shall provide an opportunity for the committee to be heard by the Board and before any other committee of the Board to which the recommendation is referred.

The Board shall ensure that its SEAC is provided with the opportunity to participate in the Board’s annual review, under [Regulation 306 of the Revised Regulations of Ontario 1990](#), of its special education plan.

The Board shall ensure that its SEAC is provided with the opportunity to participate in the Board’s annual budget process under Section 231 of the Act, as that process relates to special education.

The Board shall ensure that its SEAC is provided with the opportunity to review the financial statements of the Board, prepared under Section 252 of the Act, as those statements relate to special education.

SEAC regularly participates in information, consultation, and discussion of the following areas:

- Regulation 464 (SEAC) review of requirements
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act information
- Annual review of Special Education Plan
- Review of Special Education Services
- Special Education budget input
- Special education staffing and range of placements
- Review of board financial statements
- Association News;Special Presentations

### Meeting times, places, format, and public access

Specific meeting times, dates, and locations are determined by the committee in June in accordance with the Regulation governing SEAC. These meetings are open to the public and are held monthly. The draft meeting schedule for 2023-2024 is:

Date	Location
September 5, 2023	Lindsay and Muskoka Education Centres
October 3, 2023	Haliburton County Education Centre
November 7, 2023	Lindsay and Muskoka Education Centres
December 4, 2023	Lindsay and Muskoka Education Centres
January 9, 2024	Lindsay and Muskoka Education Centres
February 6, 2024	Lindsay and Muskoka Education Centres
March 5, 2024	Lindsay and Muskoka Education Centres
April 2, 2024	Lindsay and Muskoka Education Centres
May 7, 2024	Lindsay and Muskoka Education Centres
June 4, 2024	Haliburton County Education Centre

For further information or to confirm meeting times and locations please contact the office of Superintendent of Specialized Services at 1-888-526-5552.

## **Nomination process**

Individuals are nominated for membership on SEAC as outlined in Regulation 464/97. The Board will endeavour to contact local associations and advertise through the media to obtain nominations for the committee. Guidelines for final membership composition will include geographic and exceptionality representation.

## **Members**

The SEAC membership list is updated annually or as necessitated by changes. A current list of SEAC members and associations they represent is available at <https://www.tlidsb.ca/special-education-advisory-committee/>

## **Input to the SEAC**

Parents/guardians and other members of the public can give input to the SEAC committee. Correspondence to the committee can be addressed to:

The Trillium Lakelands District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee  
300 County Road 36  
Lindsay, ON, K9V 4R4

Telephone contacts to the committee can be directed to the executive assistant to the superintendent of learning responsible for Specialized Services at 1-888-526-5552.

## **Section 19: Coordination of services with outside agencies**

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The seamless transition of students with special needs into and from board programs requires advance planning, communication, and coordination.

The superintendent of Specialized Services is responsible for overseeing these transition processes. School and central special education staff work together with parents/guardians/students and community agencies to ensure a successful transition.

For all of the areas described below, parent permission for release of information and/or assessment is obtained before any information is shared between the school board and other services.

### **Transition from preschool programs**

Each spring our schools and the central special education staff plan for the entry of students into the system for the following September. Information is gathered from kindergarten registration, community agencies, and provincial schools. Following this information gathering, individual case conferences are arranged with parents/guardians, students, and school personnel to plan in detail for students with significant needs. A plan for staff support and/or specialized programming or equipment, if required, is developed. Communication with parents/guardians happens throughout this process.

## Transition from programs for school age students

Throughout the year, students enter and exit the system from other educational settings. This includes students from:

- One school to another within our district
- Other school boards
- Care and treatment programs
- Provincial schools

In these situations, it is recommended that the planning process start as early as possible to ensure adequate resources are available to support individual students. For students with special education needs entering the system, the school will determine the level of need through information gathered in the registration process or through parent contacts.

If the principal determines that the student has significant needs and may need additional support beyond the classroom teacher and resource teacher, a referral is made to the area special education consultant, who does a review of student needs. This review involves review of assessment and other written information available, contact with previous school, and parent interview. A home visit or student observation may also take place in this case.

Following this review, a recommendation is made to the Superintendent of Specialized Services. This recommendation may include that additional special education supports, programs or services be made available to the school. Other times, there may be a referral to IPRC for special program placement, or entry into another school in the board. In order to arrange for additional services that may be required for a student, the entry of a student may be briefly delayed until staff and other supports can be in place. This process is necessary to ensure student safety and success.

## Transition from TLDSB to other programs

For students leaving the board, due to relocation or graduation, contact is made with the receiving educational setting and information is shared.

The OSR is sent to the new school (if applicable) as soon as the student has registered and the OSR request has been made. Assessment and other information can also be sent to the school earlier provided the parent/guardian and/or student (if applicable) consent to do so has been obtained.

For identified students, as outlined in the provincial Individual Education Plan standards, transition plans are developed for specific students 14 years of age or older. The IEP contains the transition plan.

The development of transition plans for students with special education needs often involves collaboration with community partners. In recognition of this need for collaboration, the Ministry of Education has committed to working with two other ministries – Children and Youth Services, and Community and Social Services – to build on and improve the existing continuum of supports for young people with developmental disabilities.

As of 2014, integrated transition planning is available to all young people (14 years of age and older) who meet the definition of having a developmental disability under any of the three ministry legislation frameworks. The intent of integrated transition planning is for all who support the young person with a

developmental disability to work collaboratively in order to facilitate a smooth transition to post-secondary pathways. Integrated transition planning involves principals, educators, students and their families, and others who support the young person such as community service and health care providers. For more information, please contact your school or review the Ministry's [website](#).

## Assessment information

Assessment information available for students who come into the system from other jurisdictions or programs is accepted for use in TLDSB, provided it meets the standards of assessment required in this Board (see *Section 7: Educational and Other Assessments*).

For students needing additional assessment, the procedures outlined in the assessment section are followed. Assessment timelines are as outlined in this section as well.

## Section 20: Submission and availability of Board plan

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The *TLDSB Special Education Plan* is available to the public. The public is informed about the availability of this plan through:

- The TLDSB website: [www.tlidsb.ca](http://www.tlidsb.ca)
- School newsletters
- Special Education Advisory Committee
- School or central staff

The plan is submitted to the Ministry when required or requested per yearly Ministry of Education directives per the [Part B: Standards for school boards' special education plans](#).

## Section 21: Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education

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The purpose of the *Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education* is to provide parents/guardians/caregivers with information about special education services within TLDSB and the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC). The guide also sets out the procedures involved in identifying student exceptionalities to help determine their placement and supports, or appealing such decisions.

The *TLDSB Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education* is available in PDF format online at <https://www.tlidsb.ca/programs/special-education/>

You may also request a printed copy from your school office or from the office of superintendent of Specialized Services at 1-888-526-5552.