

Special Education Advisory Committee
Senior Superintendent's Report
November 7, 2011
Submitted by Karen Forbes

Individual Education Plan (IEP) Update

As noted in earlier reports, as of this September all IEPs are being written using our web-based application. The largest implementation group of just under 300 schools attended training sessions throughout September and into early October to learn the new application. Despite the learning curve, teachers worked extremely hard to complete their IEPs by the due date of October 18. The application requires teachers to update the status of IEPs as they work on them. What we have learned from previous years is that in the first year of implementation this requirement can get overlooked in the haste to get the IEPs printed and sent to parents. To that end, the results that are presented here don't fully represent the completion rates as subsequent follow up from our staff has confirmed that many IEPs were complete even though the status did not reflect that.

As of the due date, our reports indicated that approximately 75% of IEPs were complete. With each day, as staff followed up with schools and statuses were corrected, those numbers climbed to approximately 88% by the end of October. Another factor that our reports can't tease out with complete accuracy is those IEPs that are still within the 30 day requirement. We have approximately 6% of IEPs in the status of 'Parent Consultation' and this would be a genuine status for situations where decisions to introduce an IEP were made at IST/SST meetings subsequent to the beginning of the school year.

Our staff has used FOS and school specific data from our reports to develop action plans in support of those schools with lower completion rates. This has included personal communication with principals and teachers, sharing of information about use of the application and direct support to teachers who may require assistance. We will do another check of every school that does not have 100% completion of their IEPs to ensure that all IEPs that should be completed are, and we will intervene appropriately if there is a situation where IEPs should be finalized and are not.

Our IEP data provides the following information:

- There are 40,745 active IEPs in the system;
- 26,095 are written for boys; 14,650 are written for girls;
- IEPs for boys outnumber those for girls at every grade level;
- There is a steady increase in the number of students with IEPs through to grade 4 after which the number remains relatively constant through to grade 12 with two exceptions. The numbers are higher in grades 8 and 12. The grade 12 numbers reflect those students who remain in school until age 21. The grade 8 numbers may just reflect a larger cohort of students with IEPs, but this is an area worthy of monitoring.
- The first language for students with IEPs is represented by 117 different languages with a further 118 that fall into the category of "Other". The highest represented

languages are: English (24,657), Cantonese (1309), Tamil (1134), Mandarin (1126), Urdu (905), Spanish (797) and Somali (703).

**Special Education Advisory Committee
Senior Superintendent's Report**

November 7, 2011

This data may have greater relevance at the school level as staff can begin to analyze the school profile of students with IEPs and tailor their interventions accordingly. The reporting feature is an area that we will highlight more as we move forward now that all schools have received their introductory training on the web-based application.

Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Update

The Special Education Department has made a commitment to provide professional development on an annual basis to those who sit as members on our Family of Schools IPRCs. This year the focus was on members serving in their first or second year. Last Thursday, November 3, approximately 100 IPRC members attended sessions that provided an opportunity for new members to engage in discussions about their role while in the company of experienced colleagues. The session highlighted the regulatory responsibilities of IPRCs and the relevant sections of the TDSB Special Education Report that pertain to IPRC decision-making. The majority of time was spent in work groups that gave participants the opportunity to learn about their particular role with colleagues who share it and also to meet in mixed groupings to simulate the IPRC experience and to come to a better understanding of the perspectives of the other members of the Committee. The sessions were extremely well received. In moving forward some members have committed to working within their Families of Schools to build capacity about the IPRC process.

SEAC Alternate Community Representatives

At the regular Board meeting of May 18, 2011, the Board decided:

That up to two persons per quadrant be appointed to serve as alternates to the community representatives on the Special Education Advisory Committee following the process used to choose the community representative.

A roster of potential community representatives was available for only three of the four quadrants so a call was made to the North West in June and again in the fall for candidates interested in being alternates to apply. Applications were received, and staff has prepared a report recommending eight alternate community representatives that will be forwarded to trustees at the November 16, 2011 Board meeting.

Beverley School

Beverly School was featured on *60 Minutes* on October 23, 2011 for staff's use of new technologies like tablets to help students communicate and interact with others. With the help of tablet computers and applications, Beverley students whose autism prevents

normal speech have made breakthroughs that allow them to communicate, some for the first time. This initiative was as a result of partnership with University of Toronto.

There are 8 other projects across the Toronto District School Board who are piloting the use of **iPads** and their applications (apps). The classes range from primary to grades 6-8. The team of teacher, classroom assistant, child and youth worker in each school, examined how a specific student, or groups of students, benefit from integrating **iPad** technology. The project was facilitated by Special Education -Assistive Technology Coordinator, Angela Scarano-Iuorio and Coordinator for Autism Services, Jan Fukumoto.

Significant data was collected based on individual student needs and IEP (individual education plan) goals that were linked specifically to the use of the **iPad**.

As the pilot progressed many challenges and successes were identified by the teachers and also by system wide leaders in implementing this technology.

The **iPad** was used in a variety of ways to support students with ASD. Successful outcomes ranged from decreased prompting to increasing initiation of communication. Discussion is occurring regarding expanding the use of this technology beyond the pilot stage.

For more info, check out our AT Blog:

<http://assistivetechTDSB.blogspot.com>

or

<http://assistivetechtdsb.blogspot.com/2011/04/ipad-in-autism-classes-school-home-page.html>

System Superintendent SEAC Report

**Submitted by Cindy Burley
November 7, 2011**

Connections Initiative for Students with ASD

We have 96 students who are actively involved in Connections as of Oct. 31, 2011.

Staff working with these students were invited to a training session targeting topics that they identified as essential for their professional growth. The day was co-lead by the TDSB and the School Support Program, Surrey Place Centre.

A two day certification course for Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS) Training was offered to staff working with students using this augmentative form of communication. Fifty staff received the training. A second two-day session is scheduled for February 2012.

Professional Development for Central Special Education Staff

Last Spring staff from the TDSB and School Support Program, Surrey Place Centre developed a one day training session to address the needs of secondary students with Aspergers. An informative, detailed manual was developed to support the training. The session was presented to a focus group of Secondary School teachers in May and refined over the summer months. On the morning of October 6, an overview of the session was presented to the Special Education Department. Secondary teaching staff will have an opportunity to attend this training in February. Subsequent sessions will also be planned, as requested. Also, on October 6, central Special Education staff took part in a data-analysis exercise focusing on the Focus Five Initiative in our secondary schools. Staff combined the Focus Five data, with information from the Director's Leadership Series, which also focused on secondary schools, in order to determine best practices and to address the gaps for professional learning.

On October 13, central Special Education staff continued their work on the Board Improvement Plan, including an analysis of EQAO data, review of the system exemption message and preparation for the October 27 FOS professional learning session with MARTs/CLs/ACLs.

On October 19, central Special Education staff continued their work on developing the Essential Components for some of the exceptionalities. This year's focus will be on the Autism, Gifted, and Behaviour exceptionalities. This process will determine the standards of practice for our ISP programs that support these students.

Professional Development for Special Education Teachers

On October 27, MARTs and CL/ACLs, met with their Family of Schools consultants. At this session, school staff had an opportunity to celebrate the successes from last year's EQAO, i.e. decreases in exemptions and improvements in grade 3 and 6 reading and writing. As well, the teachers reviewed the four pillars of the Board Improvement Plan and discussed best practices. This year, the FOS consultants will be analyzing results and practices in schools to determine and address gaps through differentiated learning sessions. Movements away from large group sessions to smaller interactive groupings will allow targeted intentionality.

Special Education Speaker Series

This year, once again, we will be holding our Special Education Speakers Series. Currently four Special Education Speaker Series sessions are confirmed. At this time, topics include: the latest research about Aspergers, ADHD presented by Scarborough Hospital staff, Mental Health Issues and How to Foster Resiliency in Students.

Futures Conference

To further equity practice for all, the Toronto District School Board will host the FUTURES - Equity in Education Conference on May 3rd to 5th, 2012. The conference will provide an excellent showcase for effective practices, highlighting innovations, and grappling with the challenges arising from efforts to improve equity in education.

Conference Themes: The conference will address all areas of equitable policy and practice impacting student achievement and well-being, including the Ontario Ministry of Education's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy's eight areas of focus.

Access Form for Regional Special Education Services

A new online access form will be used beginning December 1 to access the following services: ASD team, BRS team (formerly itinerant behaviour teams), Low Incidence Consultant, Blind/Low Vision Itinerants, and Deaf/Hard of Hearing Itinerants. This online form will be received by Special Education staff who will then determine next steps, which may include a referral to the regional services or to another form of support. Since the form is online, it will allow us to collect data about student needs so that we can better direct resource allocation and address professional learning needs.

SEAC Report
Professional Support Services
November 7, 2011
Submitted by Dave Johnston

Speech-Language Pathology

On September 16, 2011, all TDSB Speech-Language Pathologists attended a session on Augmentative and Alternative Communication that was presented by Jennifer Kent-Walsh, Associate Professor, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, University of Central Florida. Dr. Kent-Walsh has done extensive teaching, research and writing in this field and her unique background as a classroom teacher and a Speech-Language Pathologist provided a unique perspective and background upon which to speak authoritatively on this topic. In addition to her teaching position, she is also Regional Coordinator, Florida Alliance for Assistive Services & Technology and Consulting Clinical Supervisor, Communication Disorders Clinic, University of Central Florida.

This was a most informative session that enhanced the understanding of AAC systems for Speech-Language Pathologists as they assist students in developing communication skills, and work with teachers and classroom assistants to help their understanding as they program for the needs of our AAC students.

Funding for Child and Youth Mental Health

Today, a memorandum was sent to all Directors of Education from Barry Findlay, Director of the Special Education Policy and Program Branch providing details of the "Mental Health and Addictions Supports for District School Boards". The announcement outlined some specific initiatives for school boards including:

Resource Guide – in 2011/2012, a Resource Guide and website will be developed to provide educators with information on this topic.

Professional Learning Opportunities – professional learning opportunities focused on capacity building in mental health and addictions will be made available. All DSBs will be provided with funding for some release time of educators to support capacity building related to mental health and addictions.

Provincial Webinar Session - reps from all DSBs will be invited to attend a provincial mental health awareness and capacity building webinar session.

Mental Health Workers – funded MCYS agencies have been given resources to support students to remain in, and enhance achievement in, schools.

Mental Health and Addiction Nurses – 144 Registered Nurses and/or Registered Practical Nurses with Mental Health and addictions expertise will be hired across the province.

Mental Health Leaders – 15 school boards have been given funding to hire Mental Health Leaders. (TDSB is not one of them)

School Mental Health ASSIST – The School mental health ASSIST team is being funded to help DSBs to build system and school capacity to support students with mental health and addictions needs.

Working Together for Kid's Mental Health – To enhance program outcomes for children and youth with mental health needs. This will be expanded beyond the current 4 existing communities during the 2011/2012 school year.

Services Statistics
October 2011

	Psychology	Social Work	Attendance	Speech / Language	OT/PT	Child and Youth Services
Referrals	3802	2408	490	2691	618	763
Completed	391	6	19	832	40	65
Wait List	2324	230	39	709	61	0

