

**HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Monday, June 4, 2018**

TELECONFERENCE AGENDA

6:00 pm

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Recommendation to approve the Special Education Plan
4. Adjournment

J. Colantino

HWDSB 2018-19 Special Education Plan

Compliance with the <i>Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans (2000)</i> reproduced in full in <i>Special Education in Ontario Kindergarten to Grade 12 Policy and Resource Guide (2017)</i>	Report on the provision of Special Education Programs and Services 2017-18	Amendments to the 2018-19 Special Education Plan
Special Education Programs and Services		
Model for Special Education	√	√
Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process	√	√
Special Education Placements Provided by the Board	√	√
Individual Education Plans (IEP)	√	√
Special Education Staff	√	√
Specialized Equipment	√	√
Transportation for Students with Special Education Needs	√	√
Transition Planning	√	√
Provincial Information		
Roles and Responsibilities	√	√
Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities	√	√
Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario	√	√
Other Related Information Required for Community		
The Board's Consultation Process	√	√
The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)	√	√
Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies	√	√
Educational and Other Assessments	√	√
Coordination of Services with Other Ministries or Agencies	√	√
Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings	√	√
Staff Development	√	√
Accessibility (AODA)	√	√
Parent Guide to Special Education	√	√

Additional Information:	
Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies for Provision of Services by Regulated Health Professionals, Regulated Social Service Professionals, and Paraprofessionals (PPM 149) posted on school board website.	√
Special education is included in our ongoing self-improvement with respect to the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement.	√

Document:	Format:	Please indicate the URL of the document on your website (if applicable)
Special Education Report Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Board Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Electronic file <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paper copy	http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementary/supports/special-ed/resources/
Parent Guide to Special Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Board Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Electronic file <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paper copy	http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementary/supports/special-ed/resources/
Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies for Provision of Services by Regulated Health Professionals, Regulated Social Service Professionals, and Paraprofessionals (PPM 149).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Board Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Electronic file	http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Establishing-Working-Relationships-with-Third-Party-Professionals-Paraprofessionals-Procedure.pdf

Name of the Director of Education: Manny Figueiredo

Signature of the Director of Education

July 2018

HWDSB

2018-2019 Special Education Plan

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Special Education Plan

Table of Contents

Section Content		Page
Special Education Programs and Services		
1	Model for Special Education	3
2	Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process	5
3	Individual Education Plans (IEP) and Transition Planning	9
4	Special Education Placements Provided by the Board	13
5	Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies	15
6	Early Literacy Strategy	17
7	Tier 2 and 3 Special Education Supports & Placements	19
8	Staff Development	28
9	Summary of Special Education Staffing and Qualifications	32
10	Specialized Equipment	33
11	Transportation for Students with Special Needs	34
12	Roles and Responsibilities	37
13	Categories of Exceptionalities	38
14	Provincial and Demonstration Schools	44
15	Educational and Other Assessment	49
16	Medical/Health Supports	53
17	Accessibility (AODA)	56
18	Consultation Process	57
19	Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee	58
20	Working Together: A Guide to Special Education and Student Services	62

1. Model For Special Education

Supports and Services

The Board provides a spectrum of special education supports and services for students. This spectrum includes both in-school as well as itinerant support, short-term intervention services, and placements in regular class, special class and at Glenwood Special Day School. The Board endeavours to meet the needs of all students accessing Specialized Services supports in the most enabling environment, in accordance with parental preference. The Board's practice, consistent with the Ministry direction is that, wherever possible, special learning needs are addressed within the home school.

Continuous evaluation and assessment is an integral part of educational programming for all students. Monitoring progress, reviewing program interventions, and making changes in instructional practices that result in increased student achievement are the hallmarks of Specialized Services.

Many professionals, including classroom teachers, early childhood educators, itinerant teachers, special education teachers, educational assistants, school administrators, communicative disorders assistants, special education consultants, speech-language pathologists, kinesiologist, psychoeducational consultants, social workers, and system special education teams provide services to assist schools to build on the strength and meet the needs of all students, and in particular those with special education needs. In addition, the Board works collaboratively with many community partners in the provision of services for students.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board has established the following Strategic Directions:

MISSION

We empower students to learn and grow to their full potential in a diverse world.

COMMITMENT

We are committed to learning, equity, engagement and innovation.

TAGLINE

Curiosity. Creativity. Possibility.

PRIORITIES

Positive Culture and Well-Being

We will build student and staff well-being through positive climate strategies and supportive relationships.

Student Learning and Achievement

We will improve student learning and achievement through effective instructional strategies.

Effective Communication

We will improve our communication through comprehensive strategies.

School Renewal

We will optimize opportunities to invest in improved school facilities.

Partnerships

We will strengthen our collaboration with new and existing community partners to enhance opportunities for students.

The Specialized Services Department hold the following shared beliefs:

- ✓ *All students can succeed to high expectations.*
- ✓ *All classes can and should offer differentiated and engaging forms of instruction.*
- ✓ *The majority of students with special education needs can and should have their needs met in a regular class environment in their home school.*
- ✓ *Successful instructional practices are founded on evidence-based research, tempered by experience.*
- ✓ *Each student has their own unique patterns of learning and as such assessment and instruction should be tailored to the student's particular learning and motivational needs.*
- ✓ *Success for all students occurs when teachers know their students, know where their students are and where they need to go in their learning, and know how to get them there.*
- ✓ *Successful plans, programs, and/or services for many students with special needs require a shared responsibility between schools, families, and community agencies/partners.*
- ✓ *Specialized Services supports are focused on closing achievement gaps, raising the achievement bar, and nurturing the wellbeing of students.*
- ✓ *Inclusion and equity is provided through a spectrum of services (regular class, at-risk student intervention, self-contained setting with individualized and consultative integration).*
- ✓ *Specialized Services supports are administered in a manner that respects the student's right to privacy, dignity, and cultural sensitivity.*
- ✓ *Specialized Services supports are based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students, such that students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.*
- ✓ *Fairness is not sameness.*

Instructional Practices

In HWDSB, instruction that can respond to a group of students and yet can also be tailored to the unique needs of students with particular learning needs is encouraged, based on the principles of three related instructional approaches:

- ✓ **Universal Design** – using teaching strategies or materials that address the special needs of a specific student or students, but are also of benefit and appropriate for all students;
- ✓ **Differentiated Instruction** – adapting instruction, materials, and assessment methods to suit the differing interests, learning styles and abilities of students; and
- ✓ **A Tiered and Responsive Approach to Prevention and Intervention** – employing a systematic approach to assessment, instruction, and appropriate interventions to respond to individual needs.

2. Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)

Informal Approaches to Solving Problems

Many informal processes can be put in place as soon as concerns/needs are identified. These include a variety of different strategies based on information gathered regarding a child's specific needs, interests, and learning style. When parents/guardians identify their child has special education needs or is experiencing difficulty learning, the first step is to talk with the classroom teacher. The teacher, in collaboration with the support services available at the school, will endeavour to help the student reach their full potential.

For children who have needs requiring additional support, a team is often formed to develop a plan. The School Resource Team may vary depending on the identified needs. This team works collaboratively to determine the best program and teaching strategies for the student. The team *may* include:

- ✓ School staff - including the principal, vice-principal, learning resource teacher, Special Education teacher, classroom teacher, educational assistant
- ✓ System staff - including Specialized Services Department Manager or System Principal, speech-language pathologist, psychoeducational consultant, special education consultant, social worker, special assignment teacher
- ✓ Community partners – including Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant (HNHB) – Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) manager, or community agency representative

The team works with parents/guardians to support the student through collaboration, consultation, and the sharing of information in order to identify appropriate interventions and strategies. The active involvement of parents/guardians is encouraged as it enhances the effectiveness of the team. Parents/guardians provide insights and observations which may help in assessing skills and identifying their interests. The decision might be made to proceed to an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC). The IPRC will determine if the student meets criteria to be identified as an exceptional pupil.

An **exceptional pupil** is defined as a pupil whose behavioural, communication, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that they are considered to require a special education program and/or supports.

A **special education program**, is defined as an educational program that is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation and that includes a plan containing specific objectives and an outline of educational services that meets the needs of the exceptional pupil. A special education program can be provided in a variety of settings, including a regular class or a self-contained special education class.

Special education services are defined as facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing, supporting and/or implementing a special education program.

The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)

Regulation 181/98 of the Education Act requires all school boards to set up Identification, Placement and Review committees. The purpose of the committee is to determine if a student

should be identified as an exceptional pupil and states the exceptionality and the appropriate placement that will best meet the student's needs.

The Committee is composed of at least three people. One member will be either a supervisory officer or principal who acts as chairperson. Two or more members could include another principal, a vice-principal, a learning resource teacher (LRT), a special class teacher, or a special education consultant. The Committee will decide:

- ✓ Whether or not the student should be identified as exceptional;
- ✓ Determine or review the students strengths and needs statements
- ✓ Identify the areas of the student's exceptionality; and
- ✓ Decide an appropriate placement for the student.

After the initial meeting, the identification and placement are reviewed by an IPRC at least once per school year.

IPRC Process

The IPRC process, as per Regulation 181/98, is as follows:

a) Referral to an IPRC

Your child's school's principal may refer your child to an IPRC when the principal and the child's teacher(s) believe that your child may benefit from a special education program. You will receive a letter to inform you of this.

As a parent, you can request an IPRC meeting for your child if you think it would be appropriate. You do this by writing a letter to the principal of your child's school to request an IPRC meeting.

In addition to the notification of an initial IPRC meeting, the parents/guardians of the student are to receive the HWDSB parents' guide (*Working Together: A Guide to Special Education and Student Services*) in the appropriate format. The handbook is available on the HWDSB website <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementary/supports/special-ed/resources/> in several languages.

b) Parent /Guardian Involvement

The school will provide the parents/guardians with a copy of any information that will be considered by the IPRC. The parents/guardians will be invited to attend and participate in all committee discussions and decisions, and have the right to request the attendance of others at the IPRC meeting.

c) Gathering Information

Upon making the decision to proceed to an IPRC meeting, the school begins gathering information for the IPRC to consider in making its decision. Information gathered may include:

- ✓ The student's educational background;
- ✓ The Individual Education Plan (if one has been previously developed);
- ✓ Any previous system meeting or IPRC documentation;
- ✓ Parent information form;
- ✓ Medical or outside agency reports, as appropriate;
- ✓ Standardized test/reports;
- ✓ Curriculum-based assessment, diagnostic tests and checklists;
- ✓ Report cards;
- ✓ Work samples; and

- ✓ Statement of strengths and needs.

d) Identification

The IPRC will issue a written Statement of Decision which will state:

- ✓ Whether the committee has determined that the student should be identified as exceptional; and
- ✓ The specific exceptionality/exceptionalities as per Ministry definitions and Board-approved criteria.

e) Statement of Strengths and Needs

The Statement of Strengths and Needs should:

- ✓ Include individualized statements addressing academic, social/emotional and/or physical skills;
- ✓ Be completed in draft form by the referring school with parent/guardian and/or student input;
- ✓ Be included in draft form in the IPRC referral package;
- ✓ Be reviewed in its draft form at the IPRC meeting; and
- ✓ Be revised at the IPRC meeting, if necessary.

f) Recommending Placement

The IPRC shall consider whether placement in a regular class, with appropriate special education services, will meet the student's needs and is consistent with the parent's/guardian's preferences. If, after considering all of the information, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a regular class would meet the student's needs and is consistent with the parent's/guardian's preferences, the IPRC will decide in favour of placement in a regular class (Reg. 181/98 s.17). If, after considering all of the information, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a special education class would meet the student's needs and is consistent with the parent's/guardian's preferences, the IPRC will decide in favour of this placement.

The decision of the committee, and the reasons(s) for the decision, will be written on the *Statement of Decision* form, issued by the committee.

g) Annual Review Meetings

A Review IPRC meeting is to be held at least once in each school year unless the parent/guardian of the student gives a written notice dispensing with the annual review to the principal of the school at which the special education program is being provided. A Review IPRC considers the same information as an Initial IPRC. The committee will review:

- ✓ The placement and identification and decide whether they should be continued or whether changes should be made.

h) Requests for Reviews

A review IPRC meeting may occur if a parent requests, in writing, for a review or if the principal of the school gives written notice to the parents regarding a review. Such requests may be made at any time after a placement has been in effect for three months, but may not be made more often than once in every three month period. (Reg. 181/98 s. 21(2)).

i) Communicating the IPRC Decision

As soon as possible after the IPRC meeting, the chair shall send a copy of the *Statement of Decision* to:

- ✓ The parent/guardian;
- ✓ The student, if he/she is 16 years of age or older; and
- ✓ The principal of the school that made the referral, for inclusion in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR).

j) A Guide to Special Education and Student Services

The parents' guide, *Working Together: A Guide to Special Education and Student Services*, is a document that schools provide to parents/guardians before an IPRC meeting, or at any time, in order to provide parents/guardians with information regarding HWDSB services, and information about the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) process. The document is available on-line <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementary/supports/special-ed/resources/>

k) Process for Resolving Disputes

Throughout the entire IPRC process, schools work with parents/guardians to resolve any disputes. The principal is responsible to ensure that parents/guardians understand their rights, that they have a copy of the parents' guide *Working Together: A Guide to Special Education and Student Services*, and that any concerns are addressed in an atmosphere of cooperation and respect. A special education consultant, the Principal of Special Education, the school's Supervisory Officer and the Superintendent with responsibility for Special Education are available to assist both schools and parents/guardians with the process for resolving disputes. The Ministry document, *Shared Solutions*, may also help all parties to resolve issues that arise. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/shared.pdf>

l) Pre-Appeal Process

If the parents/guardians agree with the IPRC's determination, they will be asked to indicate, by signing their name(s) that they are in agreement. If the parents/guardians do not agree with the decision, they have 15 days following receipt of the decision to give written notification to the Secretary of the Board (Director of Education).

The following steps will be offered to parents/guardians in the event that they wish to consider an appeal of the IPRC decision regarding exceptionality and/or placement:

- ✓ The Chair of the IPRC will offer to re-convene the members of the committee so that the parents/guardians can share their concerns. If this meeting is requested, it will occur prior to the dates for the formal appeal process as outlined in Regulation 181/98.
- ✓ If the parents/guardians are satisfied with the results of this meeting, the process leading to an appeal will end at this point.
- ✓ If parents/guardians are not satisfied with the results of the meeting, or do not wish to have this meeting, the Board will offer the parents/guardians an opportunity to discuss their concerns with an impartial mediator who has no previous knowledge of the case and who has a background in special education. The Chair of the IPRC will coordinate this meeting. The Board will pay the expenses of the mediator.
- ✓ If the parents/guardians wish to have this meeting, it will occur prior to the dates for the formal appeal process as outlined in Regulation 181/98.
- ✓ If parents/guardians are satisfied with the results of the meeting with the mediator, this mediation process is complete.
- ✓ If parents/guardians are not satisfied with the results of the meeting with the mediator, or do not wish to have this meeting, the appeal process as described in Regulation 181/98 will begin.

m) Appeal Process – Regulation 181/98

If the parent/guardian does not agree with the IPRC decision, a written notice of appeal may be filed with the Secretary of the Board within 30 days of the original decision or within 15 days of receiving the decision of a review meeting. This notice of appeal must indicate the decision with which the parent/guardian disagrees and must include a statement explaining why they disagree.

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- ✓ The Board will arrange for a special education appeal board to be established to hear the appeal.
- ✓ The appeal board will be composed of three people: one member selected by the Board; one member selected by the parents/guardians of the student; and a chair, who is selected jointly by the first two members. If those two members cannot agree, the appropriate district manager of the Ministry will select a chair.
- ✓ The first two selections shall be made within 15 days of the Board receiving notice of appeal. The Chair shall be selected within 15 days of the first two members being chosen.
- ✓ Members of the appeal board may not have any prior knowledge of the matter under appeal.
- ✓ The Chair of the appeal board will arrange for a meeting, which will be conducted in an informal manner, to take place at a convenient time and place within 30 days of his/her selection unless written consent is received from both the parents/guardians and the Board agreeing to a later date.
- ✓ The Chair may invite to the meeting anyone who can contribute information with respect to the matters under appeal.
- ✓ The appeal board shall make its recommendation(s) in writing within 3 days of completing the meeting, stating whether it agrees or disagrees with the original IPRC decision, make recommendations about the pupil's identification and/or placement and give reasons for its decision and recommendations.
- ✓ The board shall provide written notice within 30 days indicating what action it will take after considering the appeal board's decision and recommendations.
- ✓ Parents/guardians may accept the appeal board's decision, or, if they do not accept the appeal board's decision, they may file a written request for a Special Education Tribunal.

3. Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Transition Planning

In 2017 a document entitled *Special Education in Ontario Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Resource Guide* was made available to school boards to improve the consistency and quality of the program planning for students who are receiving special education programs and services. The IEP standards are included in this document and are intended to help improve communication with parents/guardians about how their child will progress through the Ontario curriculum and about how that progress will be monitored.

http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/os/onschools_2017e.pdf

3.1 Individual Education Plans

An IEP is a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student. It is based on the student's strengths and needs as identified through appropriate assessment tools. The IEP identifies learning expectations that are modified from or

alternative to the expectations given in the curriculum policy document for the appropriate grade and subject or course, and/or any accommodations and special education services needed to assist the student in achieving their learning expectations.

If the IPRC identifies a student as an exceptional pupil, and if the parent/guardian agrees with the IPRC identification and placement decisions, then an IEP will be developed for the student within 30 school days of the student's placement in a special education program based on the statements of strengths and needs determined at the IPRC. An IEP can also be developed for a student in order for him/her to receive a special education program and/or related services, even if he/she has not been identified through the IPRC process. In this case, the school may determine an IEP is necessary in order to assess the student's achievement based on modified and/or alternative expectations, or the student requires accommodations for instruction and/or assessment purposes.

Accommodations

The term *accommodations* is used to refer to the special teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and/or individualized equipment required to enable a student to learn and to demonstrate learning. Accommodations do not alter the provincial curriculum expectations for the grade.

Modifications

Modifications are changes made in the age-appropriate grade-level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs. These changes may involve developing expectations that reflect knowledge and skills required in the curriculum for a different grade level and/or increasing or decreasing the number and/or complexity of the regular grade level curriculum expectations.

This may occur in language and mathematics. In other subjects, such as social studies, history, geography, and science and technology, and in most secondary school courses, the number and/or the complexity of the learning expectations may be increased. With this type of programming, the affected subjects or courses would be identified in the IEP as subjects or courses with modified expectations.

Alternative Expectations

Alternative expectations are developed to help students acquire knowledge and skills that are not represented in the Ontario curriculum. Because they are not part of a subject or course outlined in the provincial curriculum documents, alternative expectations are considered to constitute *alternative programs*. Examples of *alternative programs* include: speech remediation, social skills, and orientation/mobility training

3.2 Transition Plans

A transition plan must be developed for *all students who have an IEP*, whether or not they have been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) and including those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness. The transition plan is developed as part of the IEP.

At the discretion of the board, a transition plan may also be developed for students who receive special education programs and/or services but do not have an IEP and have not been identified as exceptional.

All transition plans must be developed in consultation with the parent/guardian, the student (as

appropriate), the postsecondary institution (where appropriate), and relevant community agencies and/or partners, as necessary.

The transition plan must be reviewed as part of the review of the IEP. The results of each review should be used to update the transition plan. If the student has no particular need of support during transitions, the transition plan should state that no actions are required. When transition needs are identified for the student, school board staff must ensure that a transition plan is in place that addresses those needs.

These new requirements are the result of a new Ministry Memorandum, No. 156.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/ppm156.pdf>

Transition planning for students with special education needs begins with the student's entry to school and continues throughout their school career until the student exits from school. Transition planning is an important process for all students.

Entry to School Process

In the HWDSB engages in a collaborative partnership with our community with regard to the entry to school process for students with special needs who have been involved with community partners. A committee with representation from the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, HNHB – LHIN McMaster Children's Hospital, Early Words, the City of Hamilton, and Community Living meet to implement the process for a smooth transition into school. This entry to school process was developed to build parent confidence by communicating the programs, supports and services that are available to students in schools. It also assists the schools to have available the resources required for September when the student arrives.

The committee begins meeting in September a year prior to the student entering school. In December, an information sheet entitled *Tell Us About Your Child* (that is to be completed for the designated school board) and an invitation to a *Parent/Guardian Information Night* (held in January and a part of the **Parents as Partners** series) is distributed. In the spring, individual intake meetings are held with the parents, individuals they wish to invite, school and board staff, pre-school teachers and resource teachers, and case managers from HNHB – LHIN. Discussions at these meetings focus on the child's strengths and needs, in order to arrange appropriate supports and services to be available in September. With parents'/guardians' consent, school staffs are encouraged to visit the student in their pre-school setting. For those students who have not been attending early learning and care environments and are unknown to pre-school providers of services for children with special needs, they can also be included in the entry to school process at any time during the spring. For a few children we are unaware of their special needs until they attend school in the fall and schools and parents/guardians can request a meeting with system support staff to implement specialized programs and services to support the child in the school setting.

Individual Education Plans and Transitions

As per Ministry Program/Policy Memorandum 156, all IEPs will include transition plans, as of September 2nd, 2014 [see section 3: Individual Education Plan (IEP)].

Grade to Grade Transition Process

Policy/Program Memorandum 140 requires that school board staff must plan for the transition between various activities and settings involving students with ASD. The HWDSB believes that the transition process is important for all students with special needs.

Elementary to Secondary School Transition

Students with special needs transitioning from elementary to secondary school have the following components to their transition plan:

- ✓ Same as any other student where appropriate;
- ✓ The Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) review is held in the Fall of each student's grade eight year with the appropriate secondary special education staff in attendance with parents, other support staff and community services;
- ✓ Transition meetings with secondary schools occur at varying times throughout the grade eight year as determined mutually by the sending and receiving school. Students with special needs are a focus in these discussions to ensure a successful transition;
- ✓ Host secondary schools also host a variety of visits and events to which their incoming grade nine students are invited;
- ✓ Community and Continuing Education (CEC) offers summer school programs in the home secondary school for students entering grade nine.
- ✓ Transition for Inclusive Pathways materials were shared with various stakeholders and are available in the web portal under Special Education Documents.
- ✓ A **Parents as Partners** session entitled Transition to Secondary School is offered in a high school in the spring. Parents of students with special needs, in inclusive settings or in a special class, hear an overview of that important process and have the chance to talk with pairs of teachers from elementary, middle, and secondary schools about how they support that important time in their son's or daughter's life.

Beyond Secondary School Transitions

The transition from school to work, further education, and community living can be particularly challenging for some exceptional students. The probability of a successful transition is significantly increased when schools work with parents/guardians, employers, community agencies, and providers of further education to develop coordinated transition plans for exceptional students. School principals are required to ensure that a transition plan is prepared, as part of the Individual Education Plan (IEP), for each exceptional student who is 14 years of age or older, unless the student is identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness. These requirements are set out in Ontario Regulation 181/98. The Regulation designates the school principal as the individual responsible for ensuring that transition plans are developed and maintained in accordance with the regulation. The process must include consultation with:

- ✓ the parent/guardian (and the student, if age 16 or over); and
- ✓ community agencies and postsecondary educational institutions as the principal considers appropriate.

Students with developmental disabilities usually leave high school in their 21st year although some students choose to leave earlier.

Transition from high school can be a very challenging time; uncertainty about the future coupled with the loss of familiarity and routines can be trying. This can also be an exciting time as students and their families anticipate the next phase in their lives.

HWDSB continues to work with CONTACT Hamilton on processes for transitioning students with intellectual disabilities from high school to community supports. The Integrated Transition Plan has been initiated for students between the ages of 14 and 17, via a collaborative community endeavour through the lead agency, CONTACT Hamilton. Transition plans for students with developmental disabilities are developed and shared between schools, parents, students and community staff.

In addition HNHB-LHIN works with HWDSB staff to support the transitioning of students with physical needs from one location to another and from one program or grade to another. This is done through the referral process set up by HNHB-LHIN.

Parents as Partners

The Parents as Partners program continues to evolve based on feedback from participants in the program, in order to be responsive to parental needs.

Transitions to Post Secondary

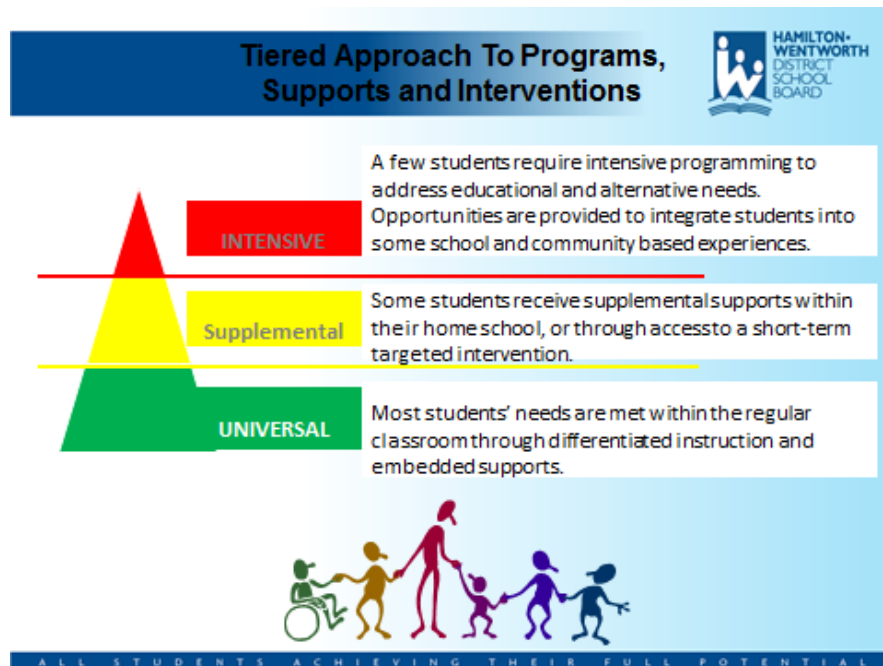
The Transition for Inclusive Pathways (TIPS) was revised to support the planning of student as they move into the pathway of their choice following secondary school. TIPS was revised to include a checklist for parents and educators including a calendar with events which offer supports from the age of 14 to school exit. An extensive bank of community information was collated and shared on the HWDSB website.

4. Special Education Placements Provided by the Board

Service Options

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board offers placement options for students with special education needs.

- ✓ ***A regular class with indirect support*** where the student is placed in a regular class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialized consultative services.
- ✓ ***A regular class with resource assistance*** where the student is placed in a regular class 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.
- ✓ ***A regular class with withdrawal assistance*** where the student is placed in a regular class and receives instruction outside the classroom, for less than 50 per cent of the school day, from a qualified special education teacher.
- ✓ ***A special education class with partial integration*** where the student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class in which the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for at least 50 per cent of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.
- ✓ ***A special education class full time***, where the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for the entire school day.



HWDSB meets the needs of our students through a tiered approach.

Most (Tier 1 - Universal) students' needs are met within the regular classroom through differentiated instruction, accommodations and modifications that may be communicated in the individual education plan.

Some (Tier 2 - Supplemental) students receive supplemental supports within their home school or through access to short term, targeted interventions or programs.

Few (Tier 3 - Intensive) students require intensive programming to address educational and alternative needs which may be provided within a regular classroom, through targeted intervention or in an alternative placement. HWDSB's goal is always to work to develop skills in students so they can be integrated within a regular class, school and community.

The special learning needs of all students, wherever possible, can and should be addressed in regular class placement within the home school. Thus, before considering the option of placement in a special education class, the Board considers whether placement in a regular class, with appropriate special education services, will meet the student's needs.

Consideration of special class placement generally occurs only after differentiated strategies and/or modified programs and/or short-term interventions have been implemented, documented and evaluated in the regular class setting but have not proven sufficient to meet the student's needs. Parents/guardians are always given the option, if that is their preference, to have the student's placement remain in a regular class in the home school, regardless of the student's individual needs.

Every special class placement recommendation is made to allow the student's needs to be met in the most enabling environment. Most exceptional students attend programs with their age appropriate peers, with a focus on integration opportunities that are in accordance with student's strengths and needs. Once an IPRC has recommended special class placement, and parents/guardians have consented, the Special Education Services Department informs the current school of the location of the program offered. Students are offered special class placements in accordance with their needs and profiles, and as close to home as possible. Parents/guardians are given the opportunity to visit the potential receiving school. At any time, parents/guardians may withdraw the placement and request a change of placement.

If the parent/guardian accepts the special class placement offer, then the principal of the sending school, in consultation with the school's Special Education Consultant, will initiate a transition plan that meets the needs of the student, and those of the sending and receiving schools.

In rare instances, a student's name may be placed on an awaiting placement list if no appropriate special class has an available position. The student's specific program interventions are documented in an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Students who transfer into Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board from a special class placement in another board first register at their home school. The home school, with support from Specialized Services staff, will review the student's profile to determine if identification and special class placement are necessary within HWDSB.

5. Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Early Identification Process has been designed to create a smooth transition from pre-school into our school system and to establish a positive relationship with the families of children with special needs. Early intake meetings put in motion the processes for additional support, equipment, augmentative communication supports, and community supports such as occupational therapy or physiotherapy.

a) Involvement of other Ministry/Agencies

Involvement with other Ministries and community agencies is an essential component to the Early Identification School Entry Process for student with special needs. Ongoing planning and coordination occurs to facilitate a smooth transition from pre-school agencies to the school system. The agencies involved in this process are as follows:

- ✓ Affiliated Services for Children and Youth; Early Words, Blind-Low Vision and Infant Hearing Programs
- ✓ HNHB – LHIN
- ✓ Community Living Hamilton
- ✓ McMaster Children's Hospital Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre (Children's Developmental Rehabilitation Program (CDRP), Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation (DPR), Autism Spectrum Disorder Service and Child and Youth Mental Health Program, Specialized Developmental and Behavioural Services (SDBS))
- ✓ Red Hill Regional Family Day Care
- ✓ Ministry of Child and Youth Services (MCYS)

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board also has links to the following agencies:

- ✓ Umbrella Family and Child Centres of Hamilton

- ✓ The Ontario Association for Child Care in Education
- ✓ The Association of Early Childhood Educators: Hamilton Branch
- ✓ The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
- ✓ Woodview Mental Health and Autism Services

School board support staff provide in-service annually to preschool resource teachers on topics related to school entry, and the school entry intake process for the upcoming school year. A parent/guardian information night presented by members of the school entry committee provides an overview of the transition process to Kindergarten programs as well as specific programs and services available in the board.

b) School Entry Intake Process

The school entry intake process has been designed to meet the needs of children for whom developmental and/or medical concerns have been identified during their preschool years.

This process starts in early in January when community therapists and Resource Teachers assist parents/guardians in completing a “Tell Us About Your Child Form.” Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board and the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board together hold a parent information meeting in late January where parents learn about the entry to school process and deliver their forms. Parents/guardians are then invited to attend an individualized School Entry Intake Meeting for their child.

Along with representatives of childcare, medical, preschool special needs support organizations involved in their child’s care, they provide information about their son or daughter to school board personnel (e.g. board resource staff, school principal, learning resource teacher, Kindergarten teacher). Each student’s interests, strengths and needs are presented, required equipment and services are discussed, and plans are made for spring and summer transition process, September placement and programming. Parents/guardians are encouraged to share as much information as possible, including professional assessments. School board personnel are invited to observe the child in their childcare setting and parents/guardians are encouraged to visit the school at their school Kindergarten event and during the late summer.

Determination of the need for system resources is made during the School Entry Intake Process, and may include:

- ✓ Intensive Support Services Team
- ✓ Special Education Consultant
- ✓ Blind-Low Vision Itinerant Support
- ✓ Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program
- ✓ Speech and Language Pathologist
- ✓ Occupational Therapy Support (provided through
- ✓ Physiotherapy Support (provided through HNHB – LHIN
- ✓ Nursing Support (provided through HNHB

Documentation received during the School Entry Intake Meetings is reviewed by Specialized Services Department staff during the allocation of resources to schools for the upcoming school year. Transportation needs are also identified, and where specialized transportation is considered essential, a request is completed by the school principal and submitted to the Superintendent of the school or program for review prior to approval.

Parents/guardians are encouraged at registration time to share as much information as possible, regarding any services they have received. It is the teacher's responsibility to gather information regarding a student through the Social History form, completed by the parent, as well as through observation and informal assessments. The teacher is required to inform parents/guardians regarding any concerns they have during scheduled parent/guardian observations in February, although open dialogue is expected at any time the teacher has a concern.

Parents/guardians, school board personnel and community partners work together to be sure that the necessary supports are in place to provide a positive school-entry experience. A planned transition to school will help to prepare for future success. Depending on the specific needs, the process may include:

- ✓ Obtaining parental consents and school referrals to assist with coordinated transition to school;
- ✓ Identifying the persons who have worked with the child in the past and those who will continue to do so ongoing;
- ✓ Identifying the persons who will play a role in supporting the child at school;
- ✓ Identifying the support staff who will continue to work with the school as part of the transition to school; and
- ✓ Developing the program, supports and services that will be in place to meet the child's needs once in school.

Additional meetings at the school may be scheduled to discuss specific program requirements. The principal may request assistance from system Special Education/Specialized Services staff. The school will consult with parents/guardians regarding any meetings.

6. Early Literacy Strategy

The tiered approach to prevention and intervention is a systematic approach to providing high-quality, evidence-based assessment and instruction and appropriate interventions that respond to students' individual needs. As with all good instruction, it is based on frequent monitoring of student progress and the use of assessment data, focusing on learning rate and level, to ensure quality instruction for all students (tier 1) as well as identify students who are having difficulty (tier 2) and to plan specific assessment and instructional interventions of increasing intensity to address their needs effectively.

a) Reading Specialist

The Reading Specialist is a new role in 2017-18, to support the Board's priority of *All Students Reading by end of Grade One (where developmentally appropriate)*. Reading Specialists will support Kindergarten and Grade 1 educators in enhancing literacy instruction in the classroom, and work with children within classrooms as they co-deliver with classroom educators, appropriate strategies and interventions. Interdisciplinary teams of administrators, teachers, developmental early childhood educators, learning resource teachers, speech and language pathologists, psychoeducational consultants, early years, special education consultants, elementary program consultants, and researches (E-BEST) will work together to optimize the learning outcomes for students.

b) Making It KLLIC! (Kindergarten Language & Literacy in the Classroom) and Class Act Kits

The Making It KLLIC! Program was provided to all schools in 2010-11 as a universal approach to supporting the development of oral communication and early literacy. In addition, the program was

differentiated and responsive to individual needs, with some schools offering the program as a tier 2 (an intervention for some students), rather than a tier 1 (an intervention for all students) strategy, depending on the needs of the particular students in the class, and in alignment with the implementation of the kindergarten program. School Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) continue to support the program's implementation.

Class Act kits were developed in order to serve small groups of Kindergarten and grade one students at tier 2 who required more assistance to develop critical early literacy and meta-linguistic skills. These kits are also available in French for students in French immersion who requires extra support in this area. In 2012-13, school SLPs supported the continued implementation of the kits, differentiating the activities appropriately to meet individual student needs. A collaborative team of teachers, 21st Century Learning Consultant and Speech Language Pathologist developed the Class Act App for use on the iPad which supported the use of technology in the classroom. This app was updated to be utilized on the Explain Everything App that is part of the HWDSB catalogue for all schools.

The implementation of the Making It KLLIC! Program and the Class Act kits has continued to increase educator's knowledge in the areas of language, literacy, phonological awareness, articulation and grammar. Data gathered has continued to show an increase in the students' skills in rhyme, alliteration, and sound segmentation. The collaboration between SLPs, classroom teachers and Designated Early Childhood Educators (DECEs) has increased their knowledge of each other's role in supporting early literacy skill development.

Making It KLLIC! Program and Class Act kits are supported by Communication Services. SLPs will offer demonstration and training to Kindergarten teachers and Early Childhood Educators (DECEs) new to Kindergarten.

c) START Reading Program

The START (Structured Activities for Reading Together) Reading Program grew out of a project that was formerly known as Structured Reading and has been supported by an inter-disciplinary team of Specialized Services personnel and Program Consultants. A gap that affected a few students was identified between the Class Act and LLI interventions, and as such the START Reading Program was introduced in a number of schools to address this gap between interventions. The program addresses several basic areas of language acquisition including alphabet knowledge, decoding/encoding rules, and symbolic representations.

d) Empower™ Reading Program

The Empower™ Reading Program, developed by the Learning Disabilities Research Program (LDRP) at Sick Kids, Toronto <http://www.sickkids.ca/LDRP/Empower-Reading/>, provides a direct instruction, multi-strategic reading program for students with reading difficulties. Empower™ Reading is a remedial reading program that addresses core learning problems of struggling readers by teaching a set of five effective strategies for decoding and spelling words and for understanding text. (Empower™ Teacher Guide, 2009, pp.13-14)

HWDSB currently offers four Empower™ Reading modules:

Empower™ Reading Decoding and Spelling: Grade 2-5 [110 Lessons]

Empower™ Reading Decoding and Spelling: Grade 6-8 [90 Lessons]

Empower™ Reading Comprehension & Vocabulary: Grade 2-5 [70 lessons, pilot schools only]

Empower™ Reading High School: A Secondary School Literacy Program [70 lessons, one semester course]

As part of the Secondary Program Strategy, in September of 2014, Empower™ Reading High School: A Secondary School Literacy Program, became available to all secondary schools. Program availability is dependent on the student needs within each school.

7. Tier 2 and 3 Special Education Supports and Placements

HWDSB supports a tiered approach to the delivery of appropriate program supports. Tier 1 involves programming for all students, while tier 2 supports involve specific, duration-specific, instruction and intervention for some students (approximately 5-15 % of students). Tier 2 supports generally occur at the home school and in the regular classroom. However, they can also involve short-term placement at a system site, with students returning to the regular classroom following the intervention. Tier 3 supports involve targeted and increasingly more specific intervention for a few students who require it (approximately 1-5% of students). The following descriptions provide information on tier 2 and 3 Special Education supports offered in HWDSB.

Support Service	Elementary	Secondary
Learning Resource Teachers (school-based resource)	X	X
Educational Assistants (school-based resource)	X	X
Psychoeducational Consultants	X	X
Speech-Language Pathologists	X	X
Special Education Consultants	X	X
Social Workers	X	X
Character Networks (behaviour support)	X	X
Centres for Success (short-term learning disability intervention)	X	
Intensive Support Services Team (complex needs)	X	X
Assistive Technology Team	X	X
Itinerant Teachers: Deaf / Hard of Hearing	X	X
Itinerant Teachers: Visual Impairment	X	X
Itinerant Teachers: Empower Reading Program	X	
Itinerant Teachers: Gifted	X	X
Kinesiologist	X	X
Communicative Disorders Assistants	X	X

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

Speech/language pathologists (SLPs) work as a team with the educators in the kindergarten classroom to provide a classroom-based approach, to help develop students' oral communication and literacy skills. These skills include speech pronunciation, understanding of spoken language and correct use of words, word order and word endings, as well as early pre-reading skills. Parents/guardians are provided with information at all steps of the process and are offered programming materials to do at home. This collaborative classroom model facilitates professional learning between educators and SLPs that supports the capacity building in both professions' knowledge. By providing services in the classroom, there has been a reduction in the number of students that require formal speech and language assessments and facilitates the early identification of students requiring additional support.

The SLP, in consultation with the teacher(s), determines that some kindergarten students have additional needs and may benefit from small group and specific classroom activities for oral language and/or literacy skills. Informed written parent/guardian consent is required for this intervention to occur. A few students are also identified who require formal, more detailed speech/language and early literacy assessments to determine the level of classroom support needed, or to make referrals for other services. For these students, an information brochure and a referral form is required to obtain parent/guardian consent.

The Speech and Language Program

In addition to the KLICC! and Class Act programs, HWDSB offers the Speech and Language Program to provide intensive support for Grade 1 students with moderate to profound language delays accompanied, in many cases, by a speech impairment. The students' speech/language assessments indicate moderate to profound expressive language and/or articulation delays with average receptive language skills and/or average cognitive skills.

Instruction is based on the grade one curriculum with a speech and language focus. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed for each student. Maximum class size is twelve students. Classroom support is provided by a teacher with Special Education qualifications, a part-time Communicative Disorders Assistant and part-time Speech-Language Pathologist. The program focus for students may include the following:

- ✓ development and remediation of basic skills in listening, speaking, vocabulary knowledge and functional language for students whose language difficulties are not primarily the result of second language acquisition
- ✓ assistance in developing social skills related to weak communication skills;
- ✓ development of experimental and early reading

Placement is for up to one school year. The following year the student returns to a regular class in his/her home school. Transition meetings are held at the end of the school year with the parents and home school.

Coordination with Hamilton Preschool Speech and Language Services – Early Words

A closely coordinated relationship exists between the HWDSB and Hamilton Preschool Speech and Language Services – 'Early Words' for students in Year 1 of Kindergarten.

Early Words will accept referrals from school board speech-language pathologists for children who are new referrals to Early Words, present with severe speech delay/disorders, are in year one

of Kindergarten and the referral is made prior to December 31st. These children will be eligible for up to, but not necessarily 10 sessions, of treatment, and will be discharged from Early Words upon completion of their block of treatment, by Kindergarten Year 2 or upon pickup by HNHB-LHIN (formerly CCAC), whichever comes first.

For children who are currently being served by Early Words and are in Kindergarten year one as their services are completed they will be discharged, at the latest by Kindergarten year two entry.

Early Words will accept referrals from school board speech-language pathologists for children who present with concerns for fluency who are enrolled in either year one or year two of Kindergarten, and the referral is made prior to December 31st; Early Words will serve these children until they are picked up for service by the HNHB – LHIN (formerly Community Care Access Centre - CCAC) or grade 1 entry, whichever comes first.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

In addition to providing individual psychological assessments to students across the elementary and secondary panels, and offering consultation to schools, members of Psychological Services support various system initiatives and programs (as outlined below):

Centre for Success Program

- ✓ Building classes with Centre teachers
- ✓ Providing interactive presentations about LD to students (if requested)
- ✓ Create student learning and profiles based on information from psych reports

Gifted Programming

- ✓ Co-ordinate Board's Gifted screening process
- ✓ Support the Enrichment and Innovation Centre
- ✓ Collaborate with teachers providing programming for gifted students
- ✓ Participate in Board's Leadership committee for Gifted Program
- ✓ Respond to external requests for information about HWDSB screening process
- ✓ Train all grade 4 teachers and several Learning Resource Teachers on the CCAT-7
- ✓ Liaise with publisher regarding data and documentation for schools
- ✓ Serve on HWDSB's Acceleration Review Team

Cognitive Screening for Speech and Language Classes

- ✓ Provide cognitive screening assessments on a *select* group of young students who are potential candidates for the Grade 1 Speech and Language Classes

Executive Functioning: Building Teacher Capacity

Psychological Services is working on a project to create classroom-based "Executive Powers" lesson plans and classroom activities (Tier 1) for educators to embed in their everyday practices. The focus is on grades 4-6. This project is in the initial phase.

- ✓ Offer several "Lunch and Learn" sessions on what is Executive Functioning
- ✓ Prepared and co-lead a Summer Institute for Educators
- ✓ Hold a focus group with select administrators and educators to secure feedback on various aspects of the projects

KTEA-3 Assessment Measure

- ✓ Launch and co-lead with Special Education, the training for all elementary and secondary Learning Resource Teachers (LRTs)
- ✓ Be the “go-to-team” (Psych Consultants and Special Education Consultant) for questions and concerns about this measure across the system
- ✓ Create materials to enhance the learning of the KTEA-3
- ✓ Provide information and mini-workshops about the KTEA-3 to colleagues across Specialized Services
- ✓ Liaise with publisher regarding content, scoring and also technology questions/concerns
- ✓ Offer several workshops on a Learning Resource Teacher Professional Development Day
- ✓ Continue planning for Year 2 consolidation of skills with Learning Resource Teachers

SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

Social Work Services provides service to students in all HWDSB schools and across all three tiers of intervention for students who are experiencing impaired school functioning, including anxious behaviour, mood related difficulties and problematic school attendance. Social workers provide direct service to students, families as well as professional consultation to school staff to enhance their capacity to support students and families. This can be done on an individual student basis or in a group format.

Social Work Services also offers specialized support specific to student needs within the Hamilton Indigenous community, students identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender ++ as well as students identified as having Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Given the extent of the challenges facing students and families within the Hamilton community, Social Work Services works closely with our children’s service sector to provide system navigation and to ensure coordinated services are available to our students. This includes formal partnerships, participation on community tables, referrals to services and shared service delivery where appropriate.

We offer a number of evidence-based program that support students, for example: Cool Little Kids, Families Worrying Less together, Stressbusters, Chilled Program, Teen Activation Group and Missing Pieces.

INTENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

The Intensive Support Services (ISS) Team is an interdisciplinary team that provides supports and services to enhance the academic achievement and wellbeing of students with complex communication and/or multiple neurodevelopmental needs. This reflects a shift away from diagnostically specific services, except where mandated by the Ministry of Education (PPM 140 and the Connections for Students Process). The team is comprised of teachers, speech-language pathologists, educational assistants, a social worker, and an Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Consultant.

In order to support schools in addressing the individual needs of students, the team that combines a strength based approach with evidence-based practices that include Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), PEERS (Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relationship Skills), Social Communication, and the principles of Structured TEACCHing (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication Handicapped

Children). The Team provides education and training, consultation and student-specific assessment and/or programming recommendations and strategies in the areas of communication, social interactions, behaviour and functional skills.

The Elementary Social Communication Program (E-SCP)

The Elementary Social Communication Program (E-SCP) provides intensive intervention for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) whose most significant challenges are in the realms of social communication and higher order thinking. The E-SCP student continues to attend their home school and 1 day a week attends the program school for direct instruction in social communication, self-regulation and social problem-solving skills. The E-SCP Teacher and Educational Assistant provide weekly support in achieving those goals in the students' home school, collaboratively with the school team and the school-assigned ISS team members.

Secondary Social Communication Program (SSCP):

The SSC Program supports students diagnosed with high-functioning autism who are able to earn secondary credits and are not able to reach their full potential without specialized support for their social thinking, executive function and self-regulation challenges.

Students in SSCP benefit from direct teaching in how to have successful relationships and interactions at home, at school and in their community. Skill areas addressed include understanding emotions of self and others, communication, relationship development, understanding of self as a learner, and self-advocacy.

Transition supports to post-secondary and community opportunities are planned and facilitated. The students earn a customized learning strategy credit each year.

Connections for Students:

Connections for Students is a cross-Ministry initiative between the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) and the Ministry of Education (EDU). In Hamilton, Connections ensures that a student being discharged or transitioning from McMaster Children's Hospital's Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) is supported in a coordinated, evidence based and seamless way. This is accomplished through an identified collaborative team, goal-setting and problem-solving process.

Each student's Connections team is chaired by the student's school principal (or designate) and includes parents/guardians, teacher(s), the classroom teacher (and, as possible, Educational Assistant) the school's Learning Resource Teacher, a MCH School Support Program consultant (SSP), member(s) of the HWDSB ISS team, and other relevant community or school board personnel. The school's Special Education Consultant is invited to all meetings and copied on Connections minutes. Where necessary, Manager of Intensive Support Services also meets with the Principal and relevant school staff to introduce the Connections process and their roles on the Connections student's team.

Connections meetings require a parent/guardian present and reminders are provided to all team members prior to each meeting. A student's Connections team works together within a student-centered and strength based model, facilitating the use of evidence-based practices, including Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), to achieve the goals established by the team through assessment and the systematic use of data. Joint problem-solving, classroom consultation, visual strategies and resources, formal school-based professional development, peer awareness presentations, and

assistance with incorporating Structured TEACCHing principles and other evidence based strategies within the student’s IEP and programming are amongst the supports provided.

The Connections team generally meets every 4-6 weeks to support the student for up one year after notification of the child’s transition from IBI. At each meeting transition goals are reviewed and updated and plans and responsibilities of team members are identified. Between meetings, goals are tracked and the identified members of the student’s Connections team provide hands-on support to the school and classroom.

Following the conclusion of the Connections For Students process, the designated members of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board’s ISS team in collaboration with the school and other special education staff continue to provide ongoing classroom and school support to the student.

Intensive Support Services/Communication Services/Early Years/Special Education

A Parents as Partners Advisory Committee runs an evening series for parents of children and youth with special needs. The Advisory Committee is comprised of members of SEAC, Special Education Services, Communications Services, Early Years and Intensive Support Services. These workshops take place at various locations across HWDSB and child-minding and a light supper is provided. This year evening sessions provided families with information on: Going to Kindergarten, Supporting the Transition to Secondary School, Understanding Your Child’s IEP and Self-Regulation vs Anxiety.

BLIND AND LOW VISION ITINERANT SUPPORT

The Blind/Low Vision team is comprised of 3.5 itinerant teachers that currently support legally blind students and low vision (in accordance with Policy/Memorandum 76C) in both the elementary and secondary panels. Some of their responsibilities include: providing direct Braille instruction and transcription; accommodating and modifying curriculum; supporting assistive technology; transitioning students to Secondary and Post-Secondary education/careers; assisting with the IPRC process and working as a liaison with system personnel and outside agencies. In order to support students who are blind or have low vision, HWDSB has contracts with outside agencies to provide Orientation and Mobility Services.

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

Itinerant Support

Itinerant teachers of deaf/hard of hearing students collaborate with school and board personnel (i.e. FM technician, educational audiologist), parents/guardians, and community agencies on an ongoing basis to ensure that their students are provided with an optimal learning experience. Recognizing the potential academic and social implications of hearing loss, and the need for early identification and intervention, they work closely with regular classroom teachers to design, implement, and assess individualized programs for their students as required utilizing the family’s preferred mode of communication (i.e. oral or sign language). To further support student learning, these specialized teachers interpret audiograms and reports from the audiologist and instruct school staff about the use and care of technological resources (i.e. amplification equipment, such as: hearing aids and cochlear implants and FM systems). Direct programming for students typically focuses on supporting and developing auditory, speech, language, and academic skills

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program

A Total Communication (TC) approach for supporting students who are deaf or hard of hearing in grades one to six, as identified through the IPRC process is offered at Queensdale Elementary School. The program allows accessibility to language through a variety of modes including but not limited to sign language, written and spoken English, finger spelling, speech reading, gestures, drawings, and the use of amplification and technology. Total Communication allows the individual student to use the mode of communication that is most appropriate and comfortable in a given situation. Parent input is valued in determining communication methods. The ultimate goal of the Queensdale Deaf and Hard of Hearing program is to prepare students to return or move to the most appropriate program for their needs by providing extra language intensive support across all subject areas either in a special class setting or within a regular class/integrated setting with support from an Educational Assistant if needed and/or a specialized Teacher of the Deaf.

CHARACTER NETWORKS PROGRAM

The Character Networks (CN) program provides a tiered approach to addressing challenging behaviour in key areas of Executive Functioning including; Information Processing, Flexibility & Adaptability; Social Communication & Social Functioning; and Self-Regulation.

An area of focus has been the development of a tiered, integrated and multi-disciplinary (ASD, FASD, Early Years, CN, Social Work, Psych, School Speech Language Pathologists) approach to working with students with challenging behaviour. Staff collaborate to facilitate best practice and specialized interventions associated with a student's particular profile. This multidisciplinary team supports an integrated approach to service delivery, ensuring multiple perspectives are considered upfront in the strategies and supports provided to students and the staff supporting them.

Implementation Support

The Implementation Support (IS) teachers work in the home schools with staff and students. They are the first point of contact when schools require support in managing students with challenging behaviour.

Schools may consult with their Implementation Support teacher when in-school supports have been exhausted and significant social, self-regulatory and problem solving challenges persist. These IS teachers also work proactively with school teams to plan IEPs, Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs) and Safe Intervention Plans (SIPs).

Character Networks: Special Class Programs

The CN Special Class Programs are elementary self-contained class interventions. The majority of students assigned to the Character Network: Special Class Program experienced significant socio-emotional, self-regulation and/or learning difficulties. CN Special Classes offer a self-contained setting with a high staff-to-student ratio.

The program combines grade-level appropriate curriculum with the delivery of a pro-social skills based program. Classroom and system staff involve and work with community support agencies as appropriate, to assist in anger management and social skills development. In order to assist in the transference of skills to other parts of the school environment, staff collaborate and work closely with school staff, system staff, and the students' families on specific aspects of the program.

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER (FASD)

The HWDSB FASD team consists of members from Social Work and Special Education.

The FASD team provides support to students and staff and assist caregivers in connecting to community resources. The team is able to provide guidance on the development of IEPs, Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs) and Safe Intervention Plans (SIPs) through school consultation processes as well as through professional development opportunities specific to supporting students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

HWDSB is represented on the Hamilton Community FASD Resource Team and has a strong connection with the Hamilton FASD Caregiver Support Group.

GIFTED

Gifted Itinerant Support

Itinerant Teachers for the Gifted work with classroom teachers, support staff and administration to provide enhanced program strategies that support the learning profile of students who meet the Gifted criteria. Regular classroom teachers are supported through the gathering and sharing of resources, web pages and sites for teachers about gifted programming and higher order thinking skills. Itinerant teachers build capacity to understand the complexities of the gifted learner.

Gifted Centre Program

HWDSB operates two Enrichment and Innovation Centres. These Centres provide enrichment programming for students with a Gifted identification approximately five times per year. The Enrichment and Innovation Centre currently welcomes nearly 500 students a month.

Instruction focused on helping students to learn more about their strengths and challenges, their learning style and how to self-advocate, has been utilized to encourage students to think beyond the curriculum, and take academic risks. Students learn how to incorporate higher order thinking skills in all they do.

Gifted + Intensive Intervention Special Class

Gifted Special Class placement is considered for students who, even with the provision of more intensive programming in regular class and with programming through the Enrichment and Innovation centre, are still experiencing difficulty. Placement in special class is determined through the IPRC.

Gifted + Special Classes are for students in grades 6-8 and focus on developing higher-order thinking skills. The use of technology plays a key role in the area of accommodations for many of these students. Extensions to the curriculum lessons support the students with acquiring a deeper understanding of themselves as learners.

LEARNING and INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

The Centre for Success Program

The Centre for Success Program is a strength-based, strategy-focused HWDSB developed, intervention program, designed to enable students with diagnosed learning disabilities to be able to identify and explain their personal learning profiles, develop a thorough understanding of the use of their assistive technology in order to maximize opportunities for them to demonstrate their learning, and to be able to self-advocate for the implementation of specific strategies to support their learning.

Comprehensive: Classes

The comprehensive classes in both the elementary and secondary panels are composed of a maximum of 16 students and are staffed by 1 teacher with special education qualifications and a minimum of 1.0 Educational Assistant. The classes are asset-based and the students in each class share similar profiles. These profiles provide the detail that the teacher uses to create individualized and group instruction and upon which assessment will be based. Students in each panel have opportunities for integration into regular class programs based upon their interests and ability to do so. Students at the secondary level may also be receiving credits from integration.

Graduated Support Program

The Graduated Support Program is a self-contained secondary class program for students who are not working towards a secondary diploma. Students in the program are capable of a certain level of independence in the community, either as a future employee or as a volunteer. Although it is a self-contained program, students can be integrated into other classes as is individually appropriate for the particular student.

The program is a 2 class program. The Junior Class, for students who are age appropriate for grades 9 through 12, focuses on solidifying functional, employability skills. Students receive instruction in functional communication, academics, self-care, and social interaction skills. The Senior program, for students ages 18 to 21, focuses on community connections and involvement, and includes experiential work opportunities and other skill development (ex., bus training). Work-related skills and independence within the community are the primary goal for the older students.

Educational Programs in Care, Treatment, Custody and Corrections Programs

HWDSB continues to provide extensive programming for those students whose needs are such that they cannot be met in a traditional community school. The Board currently has signed 15 Memoranda of Understanding for Care, Treatment, Custody and Correctional Programs with 9 different approved community agencies for the delivery of Care, Treatment and Corrections programming in 30 different classrooms (5 elementary, 25 secondary) across Hamilton. Of these classes:

- ✓ 22 classes are “Care and/or Treatment” classes with foster/mental health/health care agencies (5 elementary & 17-secondary);
- ✓ 3 classes are delivered in “Community Based Youth Justice” settings (all secondary) and
- ✓ 5 classes are delivered at the secondary level in “Open Custody and Detention” sites.

The agencies with whom the Board partnered in the delivery of Care, Treatment and Corrections services in are:

- ✓ Banyan Community Services;
- ✓ Lynwood Charlton Centre;
- ✓ Dawn Patrol Child & Youth Services;
- ✓ Hatts-Off Specialized Services;
- ✓ Hamilton Health Sciences;
- ✓ Salvation Army in Canada;
- ✓ White Rabbit Treatment Homes;
- ✓ Woodview Mental Health & Autism Services
- ✓ The John Howard Society of Hamilton, Burlington and Area

Program Numbers and Locations

Type of Special Class/Program	2017-18	2018-19
ASD Class	5 classes: Pr. / Jr. 5 classes: Jr. / Int. 7 classes: Secondary	6 classes: Pr. / Jr. 5 classes: Jr. / Int. 8 classes: Secondary
Social Communication Program	1 program: Elementary 2 programs: Secondary	1 program: Elementary 2 programs: Secondary
Speech/Language Class	4 programs Gr. 1	4 programs Gr. 1
Centre for Success Program	3 programs Gr. 5, 6 & 7	2 programs
Comprehensive Class	6 classes: Jr. 13 classes: Int. 8 classes: Secondary	7 classes: Jr. 12 classes: Int. 8 classes: Secondary
Gifted Class	2 classes: Jr. / Int.	2 classes: Jr. / Int.
Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program	1 program: Pr. / Jr.	1 program: Pr. / Jr.
Character Network: Special Class Program	3 classes: Pr. / Jr. 5 classes: Jr. / Int.	3 classes: Pr. / Jr. 4 classes: Jr. / Int.
Graduated Support Program	5 locations Secondary	5 locations: Secondary
Developmental Class	2 classes: Pr./Jr. 3 classes: Int. 6 classes: Secondary	3 classes: Pr./Jr. 3 classes: Int. 7 classes: Secondary
Multiple Class	2 classes: Pr. / Jr.	2 classes: Pr. / Jr.
Glenwood Special Day School	9 classes:	9 classes

8. Staff Development**Development**

The goal of staff development is to increase staff expertise and capacity (i.e. knowledge and skills) in order to provide appropriate support and programming for students who are at-risk and/or have special education needs. It is important that staff development be provided for the system by Specialized Services staff.

The following staff development sessions/opportunities were provided to the system in 2017-18

Special Education Staff

Multi-Session LRT PD were offered throughout the year and delivered in a multidisciplinary format.

Topics included;

- ✓ Special Education Services team supports
- ✓ Communication Services team supports
- ✓ Intensive Support Services team supports
- ✓ Psychological Services team supports
- ✓ Social Work Services team supports
- ✓ Sharing Your “Voice”
- ✓ Individual Education Plans
- ✓ Behaviour Support Plans/Safety Intervention Plans
- ✓ Assistive Technology
- ✓ Alternative Assessment Tools
- ✓ SPEDAssist Refresher
- ✓ Breakout Sessions – choices
- ✓ Foundations in Literacy
- ✓ iPad/AT
- ✓ Gifted Programming in the Regular Class
- ✓ Executive Function
- ✓ Discovery Centre
- ✓ Specialized PE Equipment & Inclusive Practices
- ✓ Modified IPP
- ✓ Auditory Processing
- ✓ Individual Education Plan (IEP) standards
- ✓ Special Education Regional Consultants and Coordinators Conference
- ✓ Moderation process for Levels of Need with School Teams
- ✓ IEP writing support at schools
- ✓ Introduction of an IEP for NTIP
- ✓ Working with individual schools to write Behaviour Support Plans and Safe Intervention Plans
- ✓ Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and our Schools
- ✓ Non Violent Crisis Intervention (NVCi) Training,
- ✓ NVCi-ASD and NVCi – Verbal Intervention
- ✓ Tier 2 Behavioural Intervention for compliance training
- ✓ Gifted Itinerant Teacher support for IEP planning
- ✓ My Amazing Changing Self

Psychological Services Staff

- ✓ Consultation to grade 4 and LRTs on the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT)
- ✓ Early Reading Interventions
- ✓ Understanding various cognitive/learning profiles (e.g., Learning Disabilities, slow learner profile)
- ✓ Understanding cognitive indices of the WISC-V
- ✓ Understanding context and information from psychoeducational reports/student profiles
- ✓ Understanding and issues specific to the diagnosis of an Intellectual Disability
- ✓ Executive Functioning strategies
- ✓ Ministry of Education identification criteria/new LD criteria and clinical diagnosis
- ✓ Various childhood disorders (e.g., ADHD, anxiety)
- ✓ Progress monitoring tools

- ✓ Reading Development for Teachers (AQ course)
- ✓ KTEA-3 training for Learning Resource Teachers
- ✓ Positive Psychology – workshops
- ✓ The Mentally Healthy Classroom – workshops
- ✓ ADHD sessions for educators, support staff and parents

Intensive Support Services Staff

- ✓ Effective Strategies for Students with ASD
- ✓ Structured TEACHing
- ✓ Supporting Learning Styles and Differences in Students with ASD and other Developmental Disabilities
- ✓ Addressing Challenging Behaviours through-principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis
- ✓ Total Communication
- ✓ The HOW and WHY of Communication with Switches
- ✓ Informal Assessment Tools for Exceptional Students
- ✓ Augmentative and Alternative Communication
- ✓ Proloquo To Go
- ✓ Functional Independence Skills Handbook to support Learning
- ✓ MyGaze Software training
- ✓ Social Communication
- ✓ Boardmaker and beyond
- ✓ Social Thinking and Actions in the Classroom for Kids (STACK)
- ✓ It Takes Two to Communicate: Facilitating communication skills in students with complex developmental needs

Social Work Services Staff

- ✓ Duty to Report – Child in Need of Protection
- ✓ Role of Social work
- ✓ Attendance in-services pertaining to new legislation
- ✓ Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorders (FASD) presentation
- ✓ Compassion Fatigue
- ✓ New Immigrant Mental Health and Trauma
- ✓ Students Engaging in Sexualized Behaviour
- ✓ Multiple presentations on mental health awareness and literacy, including Anxiety and Suicidal Behaviour
- ✓ Universal programming to promote Positive School Climate
- ✓ Supporting a Grieving School

Communication Services Staff

- ✓ Beyond Behaviour Management – Book Club
- ✓ Embedding Phonics and Syllable Instruction to Support Struggling Readers
- ✓ Vocabulary Building: The Cornerstone of Literacy and Socio-Emotional Development
- ✓ Supporting Struggling Readers (offered twice this year)
- ✓ Interactive Read Alouds
- ✓ Reading & Writing Connection

All Specialized Services staff participated in the following staff development sessions/opportunities in 2017-2018:

- ✓ Anaphylaxis

- ✓ Safe Schools
- ✓ WHMIS Training

Educational Assistants:

Professional development sessions were available for all Educational Assistants throughout the 2017-18 school year

- ✓ Non Violent Crisis Intervention Re-certification
- ✓ Supporting Self-Regulation in Learners with ASD and other Developmental Disabilities
- ✓ Structured Teaching – Supporting Learning Styles and Differences in Student with ASD within a special class environment
- ✓ Accommodations vs Skills Building Strategies
- ✓ Compassion Fatigue
- ✓ My Amazing Changing Self
- ✓ FASD Overview
- ✓ Explain Everything and Assistive Tech
- ✓ Working with Students struggling with Anxiety
- ✓ Compassion Fatigue
- ✓ Self-Regulation for All
- ✓ ASD Learning Styles using the Format of Structured Teaching
- ✓ Overview of Discovery Centre resources
- ✓ Health and Safety
- ✓ Sign Language
- ✓ Workplace Violence, Harassment and Bullying
- ✓ Sometimes I'd Rather Be Eating Gelato-Caring for Yourself - Valerie Spironelli
- ✓ Effective Strategies for Students with ASD and other Developmental Disabilities
- ✓ Michelle McVittie – McMaster Youth Mental Health

9. Summary of Special Education Staff and Qualifications			
Special Education Staff: Elementary Panel	17/18	18/19	Staff Qualifications
Self-Contained Class Teachers	64.0		Special Education Additional Qualifications
Learning Resource Teachers	133.1		Special Education Additional Qualifications
Principal: Special Education Services	1.0		Principals I-II
Special Education Consultants	6.0		Special Education Specialist
Itinerant Teachers: Deaf/Hard of Hearing	5.0		Special Education Additional Qualifications
Itinerant Teachers : Blind/Low Vision	3.0		Special Education Additional Qualifications
Itinerant Teachers: Intensive Support Services	3.0		Special Education Additional Qualifications
Intensive Support Services: Applied Behaviour Analysis(ABA)	1.0		Special Education Specialist
CN CPS – Special Assignment	11.0		Special Education Additional Qualifications
CN LRT	1.0		Special Education Additional Qualifications
Itinerant Teachers: Centre for Success	3.0		Special Education Additional Qualifications
Consultant: Assistive Technology	0.5		Special Education Additional Qualifications
Gifted – Special Assignment	3.0		Special Education Additional Qualifications
Itinerant Teachers: Empower Trainers	2.0		Special Education Additional Qualifications
21 st Century Special Class – Special Assignment Teacher	1.0		Special Education Additional Qualifications
Educational Assistants: Special Education	491.5		College Training Certificate
Communication Disorders Assistants	5.0		College Training Certificate
Kinesiologist	0.5		B.A.; Kinesiology Certification
Manager: Psychological Services	0.5		Psychologist
Psychoeducational Consultants	11.0		Master of Psychology
Manager: Intensive Support Services	0.5		Masters in related field
Speech-Language Pathologist: Intensive Support Services	3.0		Speech-Language Pathologist
Manager: Communication Services	0.5		Speech-Language Pathologist
Speech-Language Pathologist	13.0		Speech-Language Pathologist
Manager: Social Work Services	0.5		Master of Social Work
Social Workers	14.0		Master or Bachelor of Social Work
Social Worker: Intensive Support Services	1.0		Master or Bachelor of Social Work
Mental Health & Well Being Liaison Manager	0.5		Master of Social Work/or equivalent
Mental Health Strategy Implementation Lead	0.0		Master of Social Work/or equivalent
Special Education Staff: Secondary Panel	17/18	18/19	Staff Qualifications
Self-Contained Class Teachers	33.0		Special Education Additional Qualifications
Learning Resource Teachers	39.0		Special Education Additional Qualifications
Principal: Special Education Services	1.0		Principals I-II
Special Education Consultants	3.0		Special Education Specialist
Itinerant Teacher: Deaf/Hard of Hearing	1.0		Special Education Additional Qualifications
Itinerant Teacher: Blind/Low Vision	0.5		Special Education Additional Qualifications
Itinerant Teachers: Intensive Support Services	2.0		Special Education Additional Qualifications
21 st Century Special Class – Special Assignment Teacher	1.0		Special Education Additional Qualifications
Communication Disorders Assistant	2.0		College Training Certificate
Consultant: Assistive Technology	0.5		Special Education Additional Qualifications
Educational Assistants	88.0		College Training Certificate
Kinesiologist	0.5		B.A.; Kinesiology Certification
Manager: Psychological Services	0.5		Psychologist
Psychoeducational Consultants	5.0		Master of Psychology
Manager: Intensive Support Services	0.5		Masters in related field
Manager: Communication Services	0.5		Speech-Language Pathologist
Speech-Language Pathologist: Intensive Support Services	2.0		Speech-Language Pathologist
Manager: Social Work Services	0.5		Master of Social Work
Social Workers	14.0		Master or Bachelor of Social Work
Mental Health & Well Being Liaison Manager	0.5		Master of Social Work/or equivalent
Mental Health Strategy Implementation Lead	0.0		Master of Social Work/or equivalent

9. Specialized Equipment

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AMOUNT (SEA)

HWDSB purchases specified equipment for students with special education needs in order for these students to be able to access the Ontario Curriculum and/or to attend school. As per Ministry direction, HWDSB is expected to make cost effective choices about acquiring appropriate equipment and will ensure that students (where appropriate), teachers and board staff who work with the student have received training in order to make the best use of the equipment.

HWDSB Board responsibilities include ensuring that:

- ✓ equipment is functioning properly and that the equipment is meeting students' needs;
- ✓ equipment is replaced as required when students outgrow equipment or when equipment wears out through use;
- ✓ upgrades and refurbishment are considered as an option before replacement;
- ✓ equipment is reused by/transferred to other students when no longer required by the student for whom it was purchased;
- ✓ efforts are made to share equipment among several students when appropriate and possible; and
- ✓ reasonable efforts are made to acquire a fair market value when disposing of used equipment.

The need for special equipment must be supported by the IEP for the student. The IEP must demonstrate that the student is using the equipment, and, where appropriate, that the student is using the equipment for provincial testing.

Special Equipment Amount (SEA) Funding

HWDSB allocates internally funds to support the costs associated with purchasing equipment for students with special needs who require it. In addition, the Ministry provides Special Equipment Amount (SEA) funding to school boards to assist with the costs of equipment essential to support students with special education needs where the need for specific equipment is recommended by a qualified professional.

The Board receives a SEA per pupil amount allocation of \$10,000 plus an amount based on the Board's average daily enrolment for computer related equipment. For non-computer based equipment, the Board is responsible for the first \$800. Anything in the excess of this amount is covered by the SEA claim. The Board is responsible for:

- ✓ the purchase of equipment that costs less than \$800 for students who require low-cost items;
- ✓ insurance costs;
- ✓ consumables such as toner and paper for printers;
- ✓ the cost of parts for upgrading or refurbishing equipment; and
- ✓ staff costs for managing and purchasing equipment, set-up, repairs and training.

Students do not have to be identified as exceptional students through the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) process for boards to apply for SEA funding, but their need for equipment must be recommended by a relevant qualified professional and the equipment cannot be available through the board's regular funding arrangements. Prior to ordering, a trial period occurs in order to determine the benefits of the recommended equipment.

Eligible equipment includes items required to meet students' personal care and safety needs such as lifts. Other examples of eligible expenses include:

- ✓ FM systems;
- ✓ soundfield systems;
- ✓ print enlargers for students with low vision;
- ✓ computer hardware;
- ✓ software that provides access to curriculum (e.g., operating systems and accessibility programs);
- ✓ adjustable desks or computer tables;
- ✓ Braille;
- ✓ symbol or letter voice translators;
- ✓ communication aids;
- ✓ positioning devices for sitting, standing and lying;
- ✓ personal care items;
- ✓ lifts or harnesses for moving students;
- ✓ warranties; and/or
- ✓ service contracts for technology
- ✓ where possible, equipment is to be shared among several students
- ✓ where possible, SEA equipment will be re-used.

10. Transportation for Students with Special Needs

The Board-designated school for Special Education students will be the school at which the student is placed in a self-contained classroom as determined by the Identification Placement and Review Committee, which may be the student's home school or another school location. Eligibility for transportation services will be dependent on an assessment of the individual student's physical and/or intellectual capabilities. This may result in the placement being in the closest accessible environment, should the home school not meet the student's accessibility requirements. As well, students with special needs who attend their own home school, but are limited by conditions relating to intellectual, physical, emotional or severe communication challenges may also receive special transportation to and from school. The request for this personalized transportation service is initiated by the school principal and must be supported by the appropriate Superintendent of Student Achievement and the Superintendent of Leadership and Learning: Specialized Services.

Students in Care, Treatment and Correctional Facilities and students attending Provincial and Demonstration Schools are eligible to receive transportation services. Access to transportation is initiated through a request by the Principal through Specialized Services to Transportation Services.

For students enrolled in the Gateway program (for suspended and/or expelled students), the parent/caregivers will arrange for the transportation of their child to and from this temporary placement. However, personalized transportation may be considered for the Gateway program or other Ministry programs if extenuating circumstances exist, as long as it is supported by the appropriate Superintendent of Student Achievement.

For students attending elementary Centre Programs transportation is offered to these locations if necessary. In most cases, students are transported in the most cost-effective manner possible.

However, from time to time, students may be transported in smaller groups, or individually. Decisions regarding mode of transportation are made by Transportation Services, in consultation with the school and/or Specialized Services and the parent/guardian.

Increased emphasis will be placed on developing skills through targeted interventions to support students to ride in the most inclusive form of transportation possible for the student.

The Consortium will supply cart seats, booster seats and harnesses to the Operator as required. The Operator will return this equipment to the Consortium upon request or be invoiced the value of a replacement. It is the sole responsibility of the Operator to ensure all car seats, booster seats and harnesses are installed and used properly in accordance with manufacturer specifications.

The Operator shall ensure that each vehicle is equipped with a device that provides contact with the Operator's main dispatcher will be maintained during the scheduled bus routes. The Operator shall ensure a Dispatcher is available with appropriate support during peak times or times of inclement weather

All vehicles used to transport students shall predominantly display an "empty" sign whenever the vehicle is unoccupied. School buses must predominantly display this sign in a clearly visible rear window of the vehicle and passenger vans/cars must predominantly display the sign in visible window location.

The flashing signal lights shall be activated when the vehicle is stopped to pick up or discharge pupils.

In the case of wheelchair vehicles, this will also include the loading and unloading of students, manual ramp operation and tie-down procedures.

Each driver shall have and maintain in good standing at all times, a valid driver's license for the class of equipment driven as required by the *Public Vehicles Act* and the *Highway Traffic Act (Ontario)* and the regulations thereunder, and local municipal by-laws.

Upon Consortium request, the Operator will make available for review their driver training manuals. In addition, upon Consortium request, training records will be made available at the Operator's place of business for review. The Consortium retains the right to request changes or additions to the Operator's training programs for drivers at its sole discretion.

All drivers shall successfully complete all pertinent training with respect to First aid, Ep Pen and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act prior to transporting students under this agreement. Additional mandatory training requirements to enhance service may be introduced by the Consortium at its sole discretion during the term of this contract at the Operator's expense.

The driver shall ensure that the safety latches on all passenger doors are in use when any students are in the vehicle.

PROVINCIAL INFORMATION

12. Roles and Responsibilities

The Ministry of Education

- ✓ Defines, through the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda, the legal obligations of school boards regarding the provision of special education programs and services, and prescribes the categories and definitions of exceptionality;
- ✓ Ensures that school boards provide appropriate special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils;
- ✓ Establishes the funding for special education through the structure of the funding model. The model consists of the Foundation Grant, the Special Education Grant, and other special purpose grants;
- ✓ Requires school boards to report on their expenditures for special education;
- ✓ Sets province-wide standards for curriculum and reporting of achievement;
- ✓ Requires school boards to maintain special education plans, review them annually, and submit amendments to the ministry;
- ✓ Requires school boards to establish Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs);
- ✓ Establishes Special Education Tribunals to hear disputes between parents and school boards regarding the identification and placement of exceptional pupils;
- ✓ Establishes a provincial Advisory Council on Special Education to advise the Minister of Education on matters related to special education programs and services;
- ✓ Operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind, or who have severe learning disabilities.

The district school board or school authority

- ✓ Establishes school board policy and practices that comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- ✓ Monitors school compliance with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- ✓ Requires staff to comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- ✓ Provides appropriately qualified staff to provide programs and services for the exceptional pupils of the board;
- ✓ Obtains the appropriate funding and reports on the expenditures for special education;
- ✓ 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;
- ✓ Reviews the plan annually and submits amendments to the Minister of Education;
- ✓ Provides statistical reports to the ministry as required and as requested;
- ✓ Prepares a parent guide to provide parents with information about special education programs, services, and procedures;
- ✓ Establishes one or more IPRCs to identify exceptional pupils and determine appropriate placements for them;
- ✓ Establishes a Special Education Advisory Committee;
- ✓ Provides professional development to staff on special education.

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

- ✓ Makes recommendations to the board with respect to any matter affecting the establishment, development, and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the board;
- ✓ Participates in the board's annual review of its special education plan;

- ✓ Participates in the board’s annual budget process as it relates to special education;
- ✓ Reviews the financial statements of the board as they relate to special education;
- ✓ Provides information to parents, as requested;
- ✓ SEAC participates in a wide range of committees.

The school principal

- ✓ Carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/ program memoranda, and through board policies;
- ✓ Communicates Ministry of Education and school board expectations to staff;
- ✓ Ensures that appropriately qualified staff are assigned to teach special education classes;
- ✓ Communicates board policies and procedures about special education to staff, students, and parents;
- ✓ Ensures that the identification and placement of exceptional pupils, through an IPRC, is done according to the procedures outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and board policies;
- ✓ Consults with parents and with school board staff to determine the most appropriate program for exceptional pupils;
- ✓ Ensures the development, implementation, and review of a student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP), including a transition plan, according to provincial requirements;
- ✓ Ensures that parents are consulted in the development of their child’s IEP and that they are provided with a copy of the IEP;
- ✓ Ensures the delivery of the program as set out in the IEP;
- ✓ Ensures that appropriate assessments are requested if necessary and that parental consent is obtained.

The teacher

- ✓ Carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/ program memoranda;
- ✓ Follows board policies and procedures regarding special education;
- ✓ Maintains up-to-date knowledge of special education practices;
- ✓ Where appropriate, works with special education staff and parents to develop the IEP for an exceptional pupil;
- ✓ Provides the program for the exceptional pupil in the regular class, as outlined in the IEP;
- ✓ Communicates the student’s progress to parents;
- ✓ Works with other school board staff to review and update the student’s IEP.

The special education teacher, in addition to the responsibilities listed above under “the teacher”

- ✓ Holds qualifications, in accordance with Regulation 298, to teach special education;
- ✓ Monitors the student’s progress with reference to the IEP and modifies the program as necessary;
- ✓ Assists in providing educational assessments for exceptional pupils.

The parent/guardian

- ✓ Becomes familiar with and informed about board policies and procedures in areas that affect the child;
- ✓ Participates in IPRCs, parent-teacher conferences, and other relevant school activities;
- ✓ Participates in the development of the IEP;
- ✓ Becomes acquainted with the school staff working with the student;

- ✓ Supports the student at home;
- ✓ Works with the school principal and teachers to solve problems;
- ✓ Is responsible for the student’s attendance at school.

The student

- ✓ Complies with the requirements as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- ✓ Complies with board policies and procedures;
- ✓ Participates in IPRCs, parent-teacher conferences, and other activities, as appropriate.

13 Categories of Exceptionalities

The Ministry of Education provides the list of categories and definitions of exceptionalities. The following five categories of exceptionalities have been identified in the Education Act definition of *exceptional pupil*:

- ✓ Behaviour;
- ✓ Communication (ASD; Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing; Language Impairment; Speech Impairment; Learning Disability);
- ✓ Intellectual (Giftedness; Mild Intellectual Disability; Developmental Disability);
- ✓ Physical (Physical Disability; Blind and Low Vision); and
- ✓ Multiple.

HWDSB identifies students as exceptional through the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process, according to the Ministry categories and the HWDSB criteria.

A review of the Learning Disabilities criteria for identification began in January 2015 in response to changes to PPM 8 (Policy/Program Memorandum 8: Identification of and Program Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities). A multi-disciplinary team will make recommendations in 2015-16 to the Board regarding the revised criteria.

Behaviour

Ministry Definition	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships; b) excessive fears or anxieties; c) a tendency to compulsive reaction; or d) an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory or other health factors, or any combination thereof.
Board Criteria	A written report from a member of either the College of Psychologists or the College of Physicians and Surgeons or a Social Worker from the College of Social Work and Social Service Workers which identifies and describes significant and persistent behaviour problems (externalizing or internalizing); and Evidence of all of the following which adversely affect educational performance of self and/or others:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) consistently poor educational performance that is primarily due to severe and persistent behaviour problems rather than to learning factors; b) behaviour problems that are evident in more than one setting at school and may be evident in the home and the community and have persisted for more than six months; and c) current documentation (ex., report cards; IEP; assessment; work samples) that indicates the strategies and/or supports in academic and behavioural programming that are in place to support the student’s learning needs.
--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Communication: ASD

Ministry Definition	<p>ASD</p> <p>A severe learning disorder that is characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) disturbances in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ rate of educational development; ✓ ability to relate to the environment; ✓ mobility; and ✓ perception, speech, and language; and b) lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language.
Board Criteria	<p>A written report from a professional member of the College of Psychologists or the College of Physicians and Surgeons which gives a diagnosis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ASD/ASD Spectrum Disorder, or other forms of Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) (Current DSM criteria); or b) Childhood Disintegrative Disorder; c) Asperger’s Disorder; or d) Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDDNOS); and <p>Documentation (ex., report cards; IEP; assessment; work samples) of one or more of the following which adversely affect educational performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) social interaction impairment; b) communication impairments as documented by a Speech and Language assessment; c) restricted and stereotyped patterns of behaviour, interests and activities (ex., repetitive motor mannerisms or persistent preoccupation with parts of objects); d) ritualistic and compulsive behaviour; and/or e) poor self-regulation skills.

Communication: Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing

Ministry Definition	An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.
Board	Documentation (ex., report cards; IEP; assessment; work samples) that educational

Criteria	<p>performance, social and/or other activities are adversely affected by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a significant chronic conductive or permanent hearing loss (bilateral or unilateral) as documented by an audiologist, and b) a delay or disorder in one or more communication skills, such as receptive/expressive language or articulation as documented by a Speech and Language assessment.
-----------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Communication: Language Impairment

Ministry Definition	<p>A learning disorder characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; and b) include one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ language delay; ✓ dysfluency; and/ or ✓ voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based.
Board Criteria	<p>Evidence of the following which adversely affect educational performance as documented by a Speech and Language assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) moderate to profound impairment in oral expressive language functioning, which may be accompanied by a speech disorder and/or receptive language disorder, which is not due to intellectual deficits and/or cultural difference; and b) a Psychoeducational assessment which indicates that the best estimate of cognitive functioning is within the average range or higher or a Speech and Language assessment which indicates that the best estimate of receptive language functioning is within the average range or higher.

Communication: Speech Impairment

Ministry Definition	<p>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.</p>
Board Criteria	<p>Evidence of the following which adversely affect communication and educational performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a severe to profound impairment in articulation, phonology, motor speech and/or fluency which may significantly reduce social and/or emotional development as documented by a Speech and Language assessment; and/or b) phonological or motor speech disorders resulting in severely to profoundly unintelligible speech as documented by a Speech and Language assessment.

Communication: Learning Disability

Ministry Definition	The Ministry of Education defines learning disability as 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.
Board Criteria	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Best Estimate of assessed intellectual functioning is within the Average range (beginning at the 16th percentile) or higher as documented by a Psychoeducational assessment. 2. Academic underachievement that is consistent with Average intellectual abilities as documented by a Psychoeducational assessment. 3. Learning challenges as documented by a Psychological assessment associated with difficulties in one or more psychological/cognitive processes, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonological processing • Memory • Attention • Working memory • Processing speed • Perceptual-motor • Visual-spatial processing • Visual-motor integration • Executive functions 4. Documentation indicates that achievement in Reading, Writing, Mathematics or Learning Skills can be developed and maintained by the student only with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modified expectation and/or • Significant accommodations and/or • Alternative expectations <p>*Documentation must include report cards, Individual Education Plan (IEP), assessment summaries and work samples</p>

Intellectual: Giftedness

Ministry Definition	An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.
Board Criteria	<p>Board Criteria - Non-ELL</p> <p>WISC-IV Assessment Full Scale at or above the 99th percentile OR Verbal comprehension Index (VCI) at the 99th percentile, General Ability Index (GAI) at the 99th percentile, and the Perceptual Reasoning Index (PRI) at or above the 50th percentile OR Perceptual Reasoning Index (PRI) at the 99th percentile, General Ability Index (GAI) at</p>

	<p>the 99th percentile, and the Verbal Comprehension Index (VCI) at or above the 50th percentile</p> <p>WISC-V Assessment Full Scale at or above 98th percentile OR Verbal (Expanded Crystallized) Index (VECI) at or above the 98th percentile OR Nonverbal Index (NVI) at or above the 98th percentile OR General Ability Index (GAI) at or above the 98th percentile</p> <p>Board Criteria – ELL WISC-IV Assessment (any of the above) OR Full Scale at the 95th percentile, and either the VCI or the PRI at the 98th percentile, with the other index (VCI or PRI) at or above the 50th percentile</p> <p>WISC-V Assessment (any of the above) OR Full Scale (FSIQ) General Ability Index (GAI) or Nonverbal Index (NVI) at or above the 95th percentile</p>
--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Intellectual: Mild Intellectual Disability

Ministry Definition	<p>A learning disorder characterized by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and supportive services; b) an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development; and c) the potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.
Board Criteria	<p>Evidence of each of the following four criteria which adversely affect educational performance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the best estimate of assessed intellectual functioning is below the 9th percentile as documented by a psychoeducational assessment; and b) adaptive functioning skills (if assessed) are above the Moderate to Profound range of delay according to current DSM criteria as documented by a member of the College of Psychologists or the College of Physicians and Surgeons; and c) weak academic functioning as documented by a standardized academic assessment (or, for very young students who cannot demonstrate a baseline score on standardized tests, school documentation as evidence); d) documentation (ex., report cards; IEP; assessment; work samples) indicates that academic performance is considerably below grade level curriculum

	expectations and requires significant curriculum modifications and/or accommodations and/or alternative specialized programming.
--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Intellectual: Developmental Disability

Ministry Definition	A severe learning disorder characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development; b) ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development; and c) a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.
Board Criteria	Evidence of each of the following criteria which adversely affects educational performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a Moderate to Profound delay according to current DSM criteria in overall intellectual functioning as documented by a psychoeducational assessment (augmented by a language assessment where appropriate; and b) a Moderate to Profound delay in adaptive functioning skills according to DSM criteria as documented by a member of the College of Psychologists or by the College of Physicians and Surgeons; and c) a severe delay in academic functioning as documented by a standardized academic assessment (or for students who cannot demonstrate a baseline score on standardized tests, school documentation as evidence) or a written statement in the psychoeducational report which may indicate that the student is not testable; and d) documentation (ex., report cards; IEP; assessment; work samples) indicating that academic performance is severely below grade level curriculum expectations and requires extensive curriculum modifications and/or accommodations and/or alternative specialized programming.

Physical: Physical Disability

Ministry Definition	A condition of such severe 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.
Board Criteria	Documentation (ex., report cards; IEP; assessment; work samples) that educational performance is adversely affected by a chronic physical and/or orthopaedic condition which requires special assistance in learning situations as documented by a qualified medical practitioner.

Physical: Blind and Low Vision

Ministry Definition	A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.
Board Criteria	Documentation (ex., report cards; IEP; assessment; work samples) that educational performance is adversely affected by a condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision as documented by a written medical diagnosis from an eye specialist.

Multiple

Ministry Definition	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 disorder, impairments, or disabilities.
Board Criteria	Evidence of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) students must meet the criteria of at least two exceptionalities, and it is not possible to determine a primary exceptionality which accounts for the student’s difficulties in educational achievement; and b) the combination of disorders, impairments or disabilities are of such severity and complexity that, for educational achievement, the student requires a multi-faceted approach to learning; and c) documentation (ex., report cards; IEP; assessment; work samples) of academic achievement which is well below age-appropriate curriculum expectations that indicates the need for considerable curriculum modifications and/or accommodation, and/or alternative specialized programming.

14. Provincial and Demonstration Schools

Provincial Schools and provincial Demonstration Schools:

- ✓ Are operated by the Ministry of Education;
- ✓ Provincial Schools Branch oversees the policies and operation of these schools;
- ✓ Qualified teachers who are employed by the Provincial Schools Authority or seconded from District School Boards deliver the educational programs;
- ✓ The Provincial Schools Resource Services Department provides a range of services to families and school boards in support of students who are blind, deaf-blind, low-vision, deaf, hard of hearing or who have a severe learning disability;
- ✓ Programs include workshops, on-line learning opportunities and early intervention programs designed to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and ideas so that students across the province are able to achieve their full academic potential
- ✓ Provide an alternative education option;
- ✓ Serve as regional resource centres for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind;
- ✓ Provide preschool home visiting services for students who are deaf or deaf-blind;
- ✓ Develop and provide learning materials and media for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind;
- ✓ Provide school board teachers with resource services;
- ✓ Play a valuable role in teacher training;

- ✓ Provide residential services and programs for those students living outside the day travel area.

W. Ross Macdonald School: School for the Blind and Deaf-Blind

W. Ross Macdonald School is located in Brantford and provides education for students who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind. The school provides:

- ✓ A provincial resource centre for the visually impaired and deaf-blind;
- ✓ 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 interprovincial, 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;
- ✓ The Resource Services Library, which provides Braille and alternate print formats for students across Ontario. For more information on this service please go to aero.psbnet.ca;
- ✓ A learning centre that offers information to parents, students, educators and other professionals.

Provincial Schools for the Deaf

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

- ✓ Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf in Belleville (serving eastern Ontario)
- ✓ Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf in Milton (serving central and northern Ontario)
- ✓ Robarts School for the Deaf in London (serving western Ontario)
- ✓ Centre Jules-Léger in Ottawa (serving francophone students and families throughout Ontario)

The Provincial Schools Admission Committee in accordance with the requirements set out in Regulation 296 determines admittance to a Provincial School. 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 their special needs met as set out in their 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;
- ✓ In the elementary grades, the ASL curriculum is fully implemented to provide the student with an understanding of their first language (American Sign Language);
- ✓ Operate primarily as day schools;

- ✓ Provide residential facilities five days per week for those students who do not live within reasonable commuting distance from the school.

School boards provide transportation to Provincial Schools for students.

Each school has a Resource Services Department, which provides:

- ✓ Consultation and educational advice to parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children and 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 deaf and hard-of-hearing preschool children by teachers trained in preschool and deaf education.

Provincial Schools for those with Learning Disabilities

Application for admission to a provincial Demonstration School 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. The Demonstrations Schools were established to:

- ✓ Provide special residential education programs for students between the ages of 5 and 21 years;
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Deliver specialized educational instruction;
- ✓ Residential services and programs;
- ✓ Specialized programming in association with Attention Deficit hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD);
- ✓ Teacher training and consultation services to school boards who have similar services and programs serving the needs of LD students in their local community.

In addition to providing residential schooling for students with severe learning disabilities, the provincial Demonstration Schools have special programs for students with severe learning disabilities in association with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD). These are highly intensive, one-year programs.

The mandate of these programs is to return students to their home boards at the end of one year (2 semesters). Service agreements will be signed by all parties shortly following admissions, and transition planning will be initiated during the first semester of the program.

Program interventions include

- ✓ Individualized instruction in academic and social skills;
- ✓ Frequent use of computers;
- ✓ Low stimulus, structured environments;
- ✓ Physical activities that promote pro-social and team values;
- ✓ Support and counseling programs that focus on understanding, accepting and coping with ADHD and learning disabilities;

- ✓ Cognitive behaviour modifications and cognitive behaviour therapy;
- ✓ Ongoing psychiatric assessment and monitoring by a specialist in this area;
- ✓ Effective medication control;
- ✓ Parent education and support groups that focus on understanding and managing behaviour; and
- ✓ A partnership with the home, the school board and the provincial demonstration school to facilitate the return of the student to an appropriate school placement, including teacher training in understanding and accommodating the needs of the ADHD student in the school setting.

The Trillium School also operates Learning for Emotional and Academic Development (LEAD), a special program for students with severe learning disabilities who require an additional level of social/emotional support. The LEAD program provides a milieu designed to support these students, thereby increasing their ability to benefit from the specialized teaching and learning environment that the Demonstration Schools provide.

Further information about the academic, residential, LEAD, and LD/ADHD programs is available from the Ministry of Education through the website:
www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/trillium/index.html

An in-service teacher education program is provided at each Demonstration School. This 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.

Transportation

HWDSB provides transportation to and from Provincial Demonstration schools upon approval from a Superintendent of Student Achievement. Transportation to and from E.C. Drury or W.R. MacDonald occurs daily from a pupil's residence to either E.C. Drury or W.R. MacDonald respectively. With respect to Trillium Demonstration School, transportation occurs from a pupil's residence Monday morning of the school week and return to a pupil's residence on Friday afternoon of the same school week.

School for the Deaf and Deaf-Blind

W. Ross Macdonald School
350 Brant Avenue
Brantford ON N3T 3J9
Phone: (519) 759-0730

Schools for the Deaf

Ernest C. Drury School
255 Ontario Street South
Milton ON L9T 2M5
Phone: (905) 878-2851
TTY: (905) 878-7195

Robarts School
1090 Highbury Avenue
P.O. Box 7360, Station E
London ON N5Y 4V9
Phone & TTY: (519) 453-4400

Sir James Whitney School
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville ON K8P 1B2
Phone & TTY: (613) 967-2823

Francophone School for the Deaf and for those with Learning Disabilities

Centre Jules-Léger

281 rue Lanark

Ottawa ON K1Z 6R8

Phone (613) 761-9300

TTY: (613) 761-9302 & 761-9304

Demonstration Schools for English-speaking students with ADHD and Severe Learning Disabilities

Sagonaska School

350 Dundas Street West

Belleville ON K8P 1B2

Phone: (613) 967-2830

Trillium School

347 Ontario Street South

Milton ON L9T 3X9

Phone: (905) 878-8428

Amethyst School

1090 Highbury Avenue

London ON N5Y 4V9

Phone: (519) 453-4408

Each provincial Demonstration School has an enrolment of forty students. The language of instruction at the Amethyst, Sagonaska, and Trillium schools is English; at Centre Jules-Léger, instruction is in French.

Criteria For Applying For Placement in a Provincial Demonstration School

The following criteria are used for applying for placement:

Admissions

- ✓ Prospective students must demonstrate the ability to benefit from the methods and techniques of the school. All appropriate and available programs and services available in the board have been utilized but the student is still experiencing significant academic delays;
- ✓ Admission to a Provincial School is determined by an admission committee and the appropriate superintendent.

General Criteria:

- ✓ Students applying to the secondary program must be under the age of 21 on the first day of the school year for which the application is made;
- ✓ Students applying for the junior kindergarten programs (offered only by Schools for the Deaf) must be 4 years of age by December 31st of the school year for which the application is made.

Process:

- ✓ Families interested in enrolling their child(ren) in a Provincial School must contact their local school board;
- ✓ In most cases, an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meeting will be arranged;
- ✓ Completed applications for a Provincial School should be submitted to the School Admission Committee;
- ✓ Process details may vary depending on the Provincial School for which admission is sought;
- ✓ A school's special education consultant has been involved in the decision-making process to apply to a provincial or demonstration school;
- ✓ The school has discussed the possible application with the Board's Principal of Special Education Services.

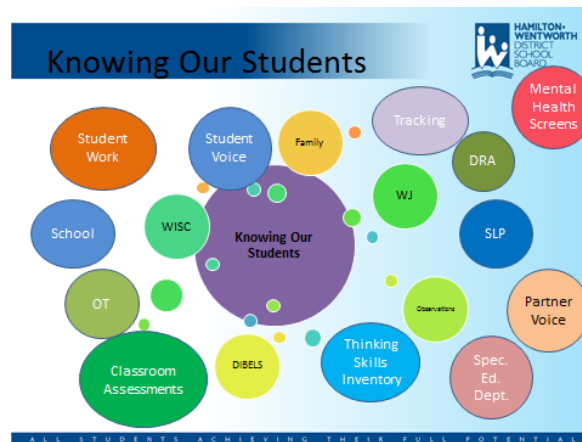
The Admission Committee and/or the Educational Consultant may request additional information regarding community support services required by the student, such as services from the Ministry of Health (MOH) or LHIN (formerly CCAC).

Residence:

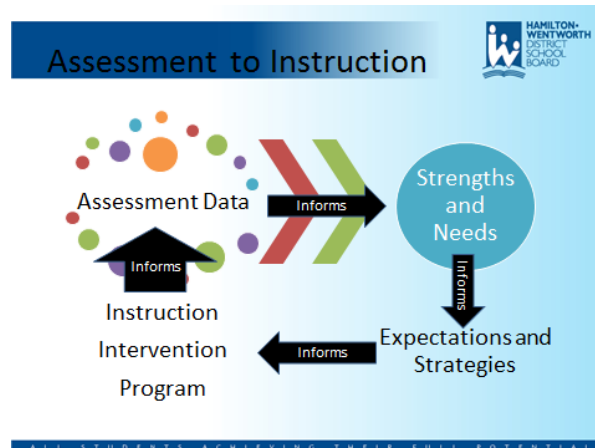
- ✓ Students will be considered for admission to residence if they live beyond reasonable commuting distance from the school;
- ✓ Students with additional needs may not be eligible for the residence program;
- ✓ Students must meet all school eligibility requirements.

Note: student placement in a Provincial School is reviewed annually. The home school is responsible for compiling the application package. The Principal of Special Education Services is responsible for submitting the application package to the provincial or demonstration school and acts as Board contact with the provincial or demonstration school.

15. Educational and Other Assessments



The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board considers assessment as an integral part of the instructional process. Classroom teachers and learning resource teachers (LRTs) regularly use educational assessments to determine student achievement and student progress. Psychoeducational consultants and speech-language pathologists conduct specialized assessments to determine learning needs.



Teachers use a variety of assessment tools as an ongoing part of the instructional process. These include observation, journaling, running records, ongoing review, curriculum-based assessments, and standardized achievement tests. The Development Reading Assessment (DRA) assessment is one of the assessment tools used to evaluate the reading skills of students at the elementary level.

Results of the teacher’s assessments may be kept in the Ontario Student Record or the teacher’s classroom files. Parental/guardian consent is not obtained for regular, ongoing curricular assessments that are part of the instructional process. Parents/guardians are informed through the regular reporting and interview process of their child’s progress.

EQAO assessments are conducted during grade 3 (reading, writing and mathematics), grade 6 (reading, writing and mathematics), grade 9 (mathematics) and grade 10 (literacy) by classroom teachers and LRTs as part of the instructional process.

Informed parental/guardian consent is required for all assessments that are undertaken by professionals that are not employed as teaching staff (e.g. speech/language pathologists, psychoeducational consultants and social workers). Consent is obtained and filed with the report in the student’s Ontario Student Record (OSR). Information regarding students or student data is shared with outside agencies only through signed, informed parental/guardian consent.

Communication Services

Assessments in the area of speech and language are conducted to evaluate and develop programs for students with communication difficulties.

The Board’s Speech-Language Pathologists are registered members of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario provide assessments. Speech-Language Pathologists are governed by various pieces of legislation including Regulated Health Professions Act, Education Act, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Personal Health Information Protection Act.

Criteria for acceptance as outlined in the document, Standards of Referral, are:

- ✓ Evidence of oral language errors that are not developmental;
- ✓ Difficulties consolidating skills necessary for literacy;
- ✓ Previous involvement with pre-school services, if errors persist; and
- ✓ Voice and fluency problems.

Parental/guardian consent is required for all referrals. Once an assessment has been completed parents/guardians are provided with the opportunity to have the results shared with them orally, by telephone or face-to-face contact. A copy of the report is provided to parents/guardians. The results of the assessment are provided to school staff and other appropriate professional staff involved with the student for the purposes of programming appropriately for student.

Managing the waitlist for services is a multi-pronged approach. The SLPs use a multi-tiered approach to services. SLPs engage in dialogue with educators and reading specialists to support their understanding of oral language and early literacy development. This universal approach informs educator instruction and in fact some children would not need to be assessed by a SLP because of the instructional practices of the educators. If there is a need for the SLP to assess a child, we only assess those areas that have been identified by the educator or parent as lagging behind other children. This reduced unnecessary time spent on assessment. As well, report writing is streamlined to share assessment findings and instructional practices that educators would find authentic and meaningful to their practice.

Intensive Support Services (ISS)

Speech and language assessments with a particular emphasis on social communication and the communicative function(s) of behaviour are conducted by ISS SLPs to further understand students' strengths and set communication goals. They are also used to procure appropriate learning and communication supports for students, to make appropriate referrals and placement recommendations and to inform ongoing programming.

ISS Speech-Language Pathologists are registered members of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario to provide assessments. Speech-Language Pathologists are governed by various pieces of legislation including Regulated Health Professions Act, Education Act, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Personal Health Information Protection Act.

Parental/guardian consent is required for all referrals. Once an assessment has been completed, parents/guardians are provided with the opportunity to have the results shared with them orally, by telephone or face-to-face contact. A copy of the report is provided to parents/guardians and the school. Together with parents and school staff, discussion about the results of the Communication Assessment can serve as an important step forward in understanding strengths and support the ongoing conversation about how the student's team can best support their communication development and learning.

Psychological Services

Psychological assessments are conducted to evaluate and to address the cognitive, learning, social-emotional and/or behavioral needs of children and adolescents. The process to obtain a psychological assessment requires consultation at the school level first with school personnel, parents and other stakeholders. Schools are familiar with referral criteria. Strategies and programming recommendations may be offered by the psychoeducational consultant at the time of this consultation without the need for a referral at that time.

The components of the assessment process may include the administration of standardized measures of cognitive, academic, memory, visual-motor, phonological processing, executive functioning and adaptive functioning. A review of the Ontario Student Record is completed.

Additionally, questionnaires, classroom observations, and interviews are secured as required. Psychological assessments have become more comprehensive over the past decade and thus more time consuming. There are currently best practice protocols for the differential diagnosis of a learning disability and an intellectual disability; two diagnoses provided across Psychological Services.

The components of the assessment process may include the administration of standardized measures of cognitive, academic, memory, visual-motor, phonological processing, executive functioning and adaptive functioning. A review of the Ontario Student Record is completed. Additionally, questionnaires, classroom observations, and interviews are secured, as required. Psychological assessments have become more comprehensive over the past decade and thus more time consuming. There are currently best practice protocols for the differential diagnosis of a learning disability and intellectual disability.

Psychological information garnered from an assessment is provided to inform classroom programming. Psychological information also informs and supports various Board initiatives such as the gifted identification process, several identification categories of the IPRC process, candidacy into the Centre for Success classes, candidacy into the Speech and Language programs, and the Special Education Amount (SEA) claim process.

Psychological assessments are provided by registered members of the College of Psychologists of Ontario (Psychologists or Psychological Associates) or Psychoeducational Consultants working under the direct supervision of a member of the College of Psychologists. Psychological staff is governed by various pieces of legislation including the Education Act, the Personal Health Information Privacy Act (PHIPA), the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and the practice and ethical standards issued by the College of Psychologists of Ontario.

The process to obtain informed consent from parents/guardians for psychological involvement with their child or adolescent includes obtaining a dated signature on a formal consent form. Parents/guardians receive a brochure outlining need to know information with a psychoeducational consultant's phone number for any follow up questions.

The results of the psychological assessment are typically communicated to parents/guardians at an arranged meeting, which includes school personnel, and as appropriate, colleagues from Specialized Services. Parents/guardians receive a copy of the assessment report.

Psychological Services has put in place various measures to manage the wait list of students referred across the Board. Our educator partners and psychology staff strive to maintain a reasonable number of referrals. Our goal is to see students within a year of the date of referral. Waiting times vary across the department with a window of under six months to over a year.

Social Work Services

Social Work Services provides support across all three tiers of intervention. School-wide and system-wide support is available through participation in the development and implementation of the District Mental Health Strategy as well as through system social work assignments for Indigenous communities, students identifying as part of the LGBTQ community, students with complex communication and/or multiple neurodevelopmental needs and with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum and students involved with Tier 2 Board supports Character Networks and System Alternative Education including Supervised Alternative Education. In addition, school social

workers work closely with schools to support programming and professional development that assist students with their social and emotional wellbeing as well as enhancing academic achievement.

Social Work Services also provides targeted interventions for groups of students in a specific area as well as individualized assessment, consultation and direct intervention. These types of direct service require parental/guardian consent unless the student has reached the age of 16. Students between the ages of 12 and 16 may consent to individual counselling without parental consent if deemed to be in the best interest of the student not to inform the parent at that time. Prior approval must be granted by the Manager of Social Work Services in such extenuating circumstances.

Social workers may administer a variety of assessment tools to assist them in better understanding the student's needs, such as the Revised Anxiety and Depression Screen (RCADS), the Screen for Childhood Anxiety Related Disorders (SCARED), Spence Children's Anxiety Scale and the Kearny School Refusal Assessment Scale. School social workers can provide direct intervention as well as facilitate referrals to outside community agencies.

16. Medical / Health Supports

Public Health Services and Boards of Education Hamilton Liaison Committee

Public Health and the Hamilton school boards meet every two months during the school year to share information and initiatives in order to better coordinate services.

This committee continues to provide an effective mechanism to increase community coordination of services for children and youth.

Topics have included nutrition, health and fitness, immunization, substance use and abuse, mental health and well-being, and hearing/vision services.

Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings

The School Health Support (SHSS) Program of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) is responsible for providing health supports for students in the school setting. The Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) is responsible for ensuring the provision of health support services in children's residential care and treatment facilities.

In the spring of 2017, the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) incorporated former work of the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC), as part of the implementation of the Patient's First Act 2016. In order to access the services for nutrition counseling, nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy or speech services, the school, in consultation with the parent/guardian, is required to complete an application form. This form is sent to the LHIN where a case-coordinator is assigned.

An assessment is conducted by a health care professional at the student's school. Results are shared with parents/guardians and school staff. A written report is provided which is included in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR). If the assessor determines that the student requires continued support, a plan of consultation services is developed. A review of the student's progress and needs is conducted annually.

Where a student requires specialized medical care, a LHIN case co-ordinator will assess the level of medical care required. Some students may require the services of a full time nurse in order to attend school. Others may require nursing part-time (e.g., a student with diabetes requiring an injection during the school day). Nursing staff may also provide health teaching to school staff specific to the care of an individual student.

Board staff are responsible for the administration of oral medication where such medication has been prescribed for use during school hours. For physically disabled pupils, Educational Assistants with the Board provide such services as lifting and positioning, assistance with mobility, feeding and toileting, and general maintenance exercises. Speech-language pathologists with the Board provide language and literacy and correction programs.

HWDSB Medical/Health Support Policy

In May 2018 Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board approved the revised Medical/Health Support Policy.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ✓ demonstrate the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board’s commitment to ensuring the provision of plans, programs, and/or services that will enable students with health/medical needs to attend school;
- ✓ share the responsibility for providing such plans, programs, and/or services with families and community agencies/partners; and
- ✓ ensure that key principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity are reflected and valued in our learning and working environment.

The guiding principles of the policy are as follows:

- ✓ All health support services must be administered in a manner that respects, to the degree possible in the circumstances, the student’s right to privacy, dignity, and cultural sensitivity.
- ✓ All procedures related to medical/health supports for individual students will include consultation processes with families and, where required, appropriate service providers.
- ✓ Students with special medical/health needs will be maintained in their home school settings whenever possible; however, when this is not possible, students will be supported in appropriate facilities within the system to address their individual needs.
- ✓ Procedures related to medical/health needs of individual students will address physician or health professional prescribed plans of care and relevant legislation and policies.
- ✓ Medical/health services may be requested in accordance with the Ministry of Education [Policy/Program Memorandum 81: Provision of Health Support Services in School Settings](#).
- ✓ The designation of roles and responsibilities for medical/health support services in school settings does not preclude, in emergency situations, the provision of assistance by school board personnel.
- ✓ Staff who provide health supports to students shall have full coverage under the Board’s liability policies.
- ✓ Services and supports as described in the directives contained within this policy shall be rendered by authorized personnel only (i.e., Board staff who have received pertinent information and training). Students and volunteers are not considered authorized personnel.

The following directives were established under the policy:

- ✓ Administration of Oral Prescription Medication;
- ✓ Diabetes Management and Education;

- ✓ Blood Borne Pathogens;
- ✓ Anaphylaxis;
- ✓ Pediculosis;
- ✓ Use of Service Dogs in Schools;
- ✓ Catheterization and Suctioning, Lifting, Positioning, and Physical Management; and
- ✓ Use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs).

If it is determined, in future, that other directives need to be developed depending on system needs and as additional issues arise, they would also be located under this policy.

Services provided by both School Health Support Services and the Board are as follows:

Support Service	Administered By:	Provided By:	Training / Direction
sterile, intermittent catheterization manual expression of bladder stoma care postural drainage deep suctioning tube feeding	Health Professional	Ministry of Health	Ministry of Health
clean, intermittent catheterization shallow surface suctioning	Educational Assistant	School Board	School Board and Ministry of Health
lifting and positioning assistance with mobility feeding toileting	Educational Assistant	School Board	School Board and Ministry of Health
physio/occupational therapy: - consultative model	Qualified Therapist	Ministry of Health	Ministry of Health
physio/occupational therapy: - general maintenance exercises	Educational Assistant	School Board	Ministry of Health
nutrition counseling	Health Professional	Ministry of Health	Ministry of Health
speech therapy	HNHB – LHIN (formerly Community Care Access Centre - CCAC) Speech- Language Pathologist	Ministry of Health	Ministry of Health
speech assessment and referrals for services	Board Speech- Language Pathologist	School Board	School Board
speech remediation	Communicative Disorders Assistant	School Board	School Board

17. Accessibility

The purpose of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA)* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province. To this end, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to:

- ✓ providing services to our students that are free of barriers and biases; and
- ✓ ensuring that the key principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity are reflected and valued in our learning and working environment;
- ✓ continually improving the access to school board facilities, programs, and services for students with disabilities.

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board continues to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities through the following processes:

- ✓ **Architectural**
 - The Board continues to move forward on its vision of School Revitalization by building new schools with accessibility features.
 - As a feature of the Boards' School Revitalization Program all newly constructed schools incorporate Barrier Free Design.
- ✓ **Physical**
 - Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board continues to access the Ministry of Education Special Equipment Amount (SEA) funding, which assists with the costs of equipment essential to support students with special education needs.
 - Each year the Board allocates an amount from the annual School Renewal Grant (SRG), provided by the Ministry of Education, to address school accessibility issues (ie: washroom upgrades, auditorium upgrades), or to meet the emerging needs of a specific handicap (accessibility upgrades – ramps, visible fire alarms, acoustic treatments).
 - A Student Facilities Accommodation Request Form and process were introduced to the system to assist in responding to student specific accessibility requests.
 - A plan to ensure Evacuation Equipment (chairs) is available in all HWDSB facilities is under development.
- ✓ **Information / Communication**
 - The Board's website will continue to be monitored to ensure accessibility to staff, students, and the community, including accessibility to JAWS, which is a web-page screen reader.
 - The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Special Education Plan is available on the Board website.
- ✓ **Attitudinal**
 - Schools are provided with websites and information about the International Day of Disabled Persons, and encouraged to have their staff and students participate in activities associated with the day. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day is recognized each September, as is Autism Awareness Day in April, to create awareness and understanding that will contribute to an accepting environment.

- The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Equity Policy states Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board’s commitment to the principles of equity through inclusive programs, curriculum, services, and operations, in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Education Act.
- Learning for All Beliefs are incorporated into professional learning opportunities with staff and education on “person first” language is occurring.
- ✓ **Technology**
 - Assistive technology plays an increasing role in the provision of differentiated instruction. Additional staffing resources have been allocated to the Special Equipment Amount (SEA) Team to increase the accessibility of Assistive Technology to students and reduce wait times.
 - The Centre for Success Program has been expanded to include grade 7 students.
 - Through Transforming Learning Everywhere (TLE) – Specialized Services initiative, students in system classes and the staff supporting them, have been provided with technology and personalized learning opportunities.
 - Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board continues to access the Ministry of Education Special Equipment Amount (SEA) funding to provide students with accommodations to access the Ontario curriculum and/or a board-determined alternative program and/or course. This equipment includes such items as soundfield systems, FM systems, computer hardware, computer software that provides access to curriculum, Brailers, and other communication aids.
- ✓ **Systemic**
 - As policies/procedures are developed and/or revised, they will be examined to reflect the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board directions with regard to accessibility.
 - System staff in leadership roles are engaging in Deep Diversity Training.

18. Consultation Process

HWDSB defines consultation within its organizational context as the process of seeking opinions from and asking the advice of the public through the effective sharing of information and perspective. At its heart, consultation is about interactive two-way communication and dialogue. The process is an opportunity for the Board to inform the public about key issues and their implications, and to be better understood, and for the public to have meaningful and substantive opportunities to influence Board decisions.

The full HWDSB Consultation Policy can be viewed at

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Public-Consultation.pdf>

19. Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee

In accordance with Education Act Regulation 464/97, every district school board shall establish a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board SEAC has established the following parameters:

MISSION STATEMENT

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to working in partnership with the staff and resources of the Board to assure quality educational services for all students.

SEAC advocates for students with special needs by:

- ✓ assisting students to receive the best programs that meet their social, physical, emotional and educational needs;
- ✓ advising the Board about best practices; and
- ✓ working to ensure that all students are welcomed and included within their schools.

Name:

The name of the committee shall be Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mandate:

The mandate of the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Board is to make recommendations to the Board regarding matters related to the establishment, development, and delivery of special education programs and services.

Composition:

The Special Education Advisory Committee shall consist of:

- ✓ one representative from no more than twelve local associations. Local association is defined as an association or organization of parents/guardians that operates locally within the area of jurisdiction of a board and that is affiliated with an association or organization that is not an association or organization of professional educators but that is incorporated and operates throughout Ontario to further the interest and well-being of one or more groups of exceptional children or adults;
- ✓ one alternate for each representative to sit at the table;
- ✓ two trustees appointed by the Board; and
- ✓ up to eight additional members. Additional members are defined as members who represent an organization which furthers the interests and well-being of one or more groups of exceptional children or adults and who are neither representative of a local association or members of the Board or another committee of the Board.

The composition of the SEAC membership shall reflect the range of exceptionalities within Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.

SEAC Membership:

Autism Ontario (H-W Chapter)
CNIB Hamilton and Niagara

Community Living Hamilton
Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton
Hamilton FASD Parent & Caregiver Support Group
Lynwood Charlton Centre
McMaster Children’s Hospital Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation Portfolio
The Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton
VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children
P.A.L.S. – Parent Advocacy Learning and Support Network

Qualifications:

A member of SEAC must be a Canadian citizen, 18 years of age or older, a resident within the area of jurisdiction of the Board and a public school board elector. A person is not qualified to be a member of SEAC if he/she is employed by the Board.

Terms of Office:

The members of the Committee shall hold office during the period of time for which the Board of Trustees holds office. The Board may fill vacancies for the remainder of the term of the vacancy. Until the vacancy is filled, the alternate shall act in the member’s place.

Responsibilities of Committee Members:

Each member is expected to:

- ✓ respond to the needs of all exceptional students under the jurisdiction of the Board;
- ✓ respect the right to privacy of individual exceptional pupils by avoiding discussion of individual cases;
- ✓ acquire and maintain a working knowledge of the special education programs and services provided by the Board;
- ✓ present to the Committee the interests, concerns, and suggestions of the association which he/she represents, regarding the programs or services of the Board;
- ✓ suggest items of concern for inclusion on the agenda;
- ✓ suggest appropriate educational topics for discussion;
- ✓ make motions for debate and decision;
- ✓ keep the local association which he/she represents informed of the proceedings of the Committee;
- ✓ be available as an informed and knowledgeable resource to the parents/guardians of exceptional children. This could include providing information on the special education programs, services, and procedures of the Board, including, in particular, the Identification, Placement and Review (IPRC) procedures and appeals;
- ✓ be available as an informed and knowledgeable resource for the schools and the community;
- ✓ attend meetings on a regular basis, or to inform the alternate and the SEAC chair or SEAC secretary when he/she cannot attend the meeting. When so informed, it is the responsibility of the alternate to attend the meeting and act in the member’s place.

CODE OF ETHICS

- ✓ A member shall promote a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- ✓ A member shall treat all other member and guests with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
- ✓ A member shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the committee, and of all persons in attendance at the meetings.

- ✓ A member shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Advisory Committee as identified by the Education Act of Ontario, and by the Board of Education in the Terms of Reference.
- ✓ A member shall become familiar with the Board of Education policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- ✓ A member shall acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the committee.
- ✓ A member shall use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
- ✓ A member shall promote high standards of ethical practice at all times.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Meeting Dates and Times:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board SEAC committee meets on the last Wednesday of each month between September and June unless otherwise decided by the Committee. The meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. and end at 9:15 p.m. Extensions may be made by a majority vote.

Quorum:

A quorum is defined as the majority of the members of the Committee.

Rules of Order:

The appropriate rules of the Board shall govern the order and conduct of the meetings of the Committee.

Election of the Chair/Vice-Chair:

At the first meeting of the Committee following the Board's initial meeting, the members shall elect one of their members as chair and one of their members as vice-chair for a one-year term. The vice-chair shall act as the chair in the chair's absence.

Voting:

Every member present at a meeting, or his/her alternate when attending the meeting in place of the member, shall have one vote. The chair may vote with the membership. In the case of a tie vote, the motion shall be lost.

DUTIES OF THE BOARD

- ✓ the Board shall make available to SEAC personnel and facilities necessary for the proper functioning of the committee;
- ✓ the Board shall provide the members of SEAC and their alternates with timely information and orientation regarding:
 - The role of SEAC and the Board in relation to special education and
 - Ministry and Board policies and Board decisions relating to special education;
- ✓ prior to making a decision on a recommendation made by SEAC, the Board shall provide an opportunity for SEAC to be heard by the Board or any other committee of the Board to which the recommendation is referred;
- ✓ SEAC shall have the opportunity to participate in the Board's annual review of the Special Education Plan;
- ✓ SEAC shall be provided with the opportunity to participate in the annual budget process as it relates to special education; and
- ✓ SEAC shall be provided with the opportunity to review the financial statements of the Board that relate to special education.

THE MEETING AGENDA

The agenda is the responsibility of the Chair, with assistance as necessary from the Superintendent with responsibility for Special Education. All members have the right to suggest items for the

agenda. The agenda should be prepared well in advance of the meeting; copies should be in the hands of the members before the meeting begins.

Agendas should include:

- ✓ items of current importance, relevant information, and topics for study or discussion dealing with special education, including the annual review of the Special Education Plan, as mandated by the Ministry of Education;
- ✓ reports from trustee members concerning current or projected Board activities and, in particular, information concerning proposed changes, which might affect special education, programs and services;
- ✓ reports from members representing the local associations, including association concerns and suggestions, in addition to information about conferences and meetings;
- ✓ reports from administrators providing new or updated information on special education matters;
- ✓ discussion of priority items established by the Committee on an annual basis; and
- ✓ any other matters of importance to the members relating to the mandate of the Committee.

Meeting Attendance by SEAC Members:

SEAC members are expected to attend all meetings. It is the SEAC member's responsibility to contact the alternate to attend the meeting in his/her place. It is the responsibility of a SEAC member to inform the Minute Room that he/she will be absent and that an alternate will attend (if possible). As much notice as possible should be given to the Minute Room. A representative will lose his/her seat as a member of SEAC if he/she is absent from three consecutive regular meetings without authorization by resolution.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN (as per Education Act Regulation 306)

Each school board must submit an annual review of its special education plan, which provides information about delivery of programs and services to the exceptional students residing within the Board. The Ministry of Education sets the parameters of the annual review. Every board shall ensure that the board reviews the Special Education Plan of the Board annually and that the review is completed prior to July 31st in each year. Every board shall ensure that its Special Education Plan provides for the enrolment and placement of each person under the age of twenty-one years who is qualified to be a resident pupil of the Board and who resides or is lodged within the area or jurisdiction of the Board.

DOCUMENTS

Ministry of Education Documents

Documents of which the Committee members should be aware are as follows:

- ✓ the Education Act and Revised Regulations, and in particular
 - Regulation 181/98 (Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils),
 - Regulation 306 (Special Education Programs and Services), and
 - Regulation 464/97 (Special Education Advisory Committees);
- ✓ Ministry Memoranda (available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/ppms.html>); and
- ✓ Additional Ministry resource information (available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/speced.html>).

Board of Education Documents

- ✓ Special Education Plan;
- ✓ Annual Accessibility Plan; and

other documents and information which may be available through the supervisory officers, principals, managers, or consultants of the Board.

20. Working Together: A Guide to Special Education and Student Services

Education is a responsibility shared by parents/guardians, school staff, and the students themselves. Regular, ongoing communication, initiated by families or staff, is a valued part of the team approach. Students, parents/guardians, and educators all play important roles in the planning and implementation of a student's special education program.

Specialized Services information for parents/guardians is available on the HWDSB website at <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementary/supports/special-ed/resources/>

There are several versions of the guide (including an interactive version) located on that site. It is hoped that the information summarized there and on the connecting pages is helpful to families. After browsing through the web site, should further information about programs, services and supports in special education or student services be required, parents/guardians are directed to contact their local school or call 905-527-5092 x 2625 to have their call directed to the appropriate staff/department.

The Parents' Guide for Special Education/Students Services was revised in collaboration with the HWDSB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) in 2008-09, and was entitled: *Working Together: A Guide to Special Education and Student Services*. SEAC began a review of this document in April 2012. An undated version was completed and distributed in 2012-13. A Ministry of Education Parent Reaching Out grant was obtained in order to print the handbook in the following languages:

- ✓ Arabic;
- ✓ Chinese;
- ✓ English
- ✓ French;
- ✓ Spanish; and
- ✓ Urdu.

Print copies of the guide are available to schools by contacting the Specialized Services department. All versions are also available on the above listed website.