

## **THE PROFILE OF THE PARKVIEW STUDENT OF TODAY IS THE PROFILE OF THE NEW SYSTEM SCHOOL STUDENT OF PROMISE**

Parkview students are diverse. They come from all areas of Hamilton with various backgrounds and assorted prior classroom settings. Parkview students are *exceptional* as this term defines pupils whose behavioural, communication, intellectual, physical, or multiple exceptionalities are such that they are considered to need placement in special education programs. At Parkview, 275 students comprise 275 levels of ability and 275 unique learning styles.

### **Classroom Backgrounds**

The majority of Parkview students come from *self-contained* classrooms. These are environments defined by structure and routine, greatly modified programming to meet individual student needs, continuity and consistency of teaching staff and teaching style, limited interpersonal interactions with peers, and life skills programming to assist with adaptive functioning needs. This type of environment was the primary support for their learning through their middle school years and earlier.

Consequently, the moment they enter secondary school they will face challenges new to them but not to most, for example: finding their name on homeroom lists, finding their homeroom class, reading and understanding a timetable, finding their classes, adapting to multiple teachers, teaching styles, classroom expectations, and classroom peers, navigating significantly reduced structure and routine, and even managing the “simple” demands of eating lunch: Where does one eat? This becomes a source of great anxiety for students who come from special classes. The cafeteria means standing in line with mostly older strangers, ordering food confidently, paying the correct amount, finding a “safe” seat, and coping with the bustle of an unstructured lunchroom environment. Finding an alternative usually means eating in isolation. To mitigate such difficulties, a smooth transition for new Grade 9 students coming from Elementary special classes is imperative. Students need to experience success from the moment they enter the doors of Secondary School.

## **Transition to Parkview / New System School**

All students are to be provided the same transition planning and supports:

- Initial individual profiles are formulated while students are still in grade 8 through I.P.R.C.s and Springtime academic assessment by staff to ensure effective program planning for grade 9
- School tours and the opportunity for grade 8 students to experience a “day in the life” of a student of promise
- Summer “Step” program and pre-September orientation day to familiarize students and their parents/guardians with grade 9 curriculum, timetables, teachers, classrooms, and school layout
- Attachment to a “Caring Adult,” who provides the student with a familiar staff member whose knowledge of the student’s needs can provide social, emotional, and behavioural support as needed
- E.A.s and other support staff involvement in at least 3 of 4 grade nine classes
- Purposeful timetabling
- Year-long core courses, providing continuity, consistency, and mastery of expectations
- Relationships are developed, early in the year, with Community Agencies with whom students may be involved, to ensure a Team approach in assisting with students’ unique needs
- Ongoing review and support from Guidance, Resource, Nya:Weh program, classroom teachers, caring adults and community agencies to assist students in all areas of need to ensure transition to secondary setting remains successful
- Encouragement of collaboration among students, parents, teachers, and other school staff

The smaller proposed System School environment will allow for greater personal engagement between transitioning students and all staff members.

## **Exceptionalities**

Parkview student exceptionalities comprise most HWDSB-identified exceptionalities. Forty-four percent of Parkview students have a Mild Intellectual Disability (M.I.D.), which is the most common exceptionality identified in Elementary Comprehensive Intellectual Disability Special Class students. Thirty-five percent have a Communication Learning Disability. Five percent have either dual exceptionalities or exceptionalities such as Autism (ASD), Speech Impairment, etc. Eighteen percent of Parkview students are non-exceptional (N.E.), which means that they have never been formally identified as having an exceptionality within the HWDSB. Many of these students are in process of having their exceptionalities identified, or have been identified in other Education Districts, but their identification has not accompanied their transfer here.

## **Cognitive Difficulties**

Although 82% of our students have been formally identified with exceptionality, so great are the learning needs of all our students that 100% of our population have I.E.P.s and have been “placed” into Secondary School, rather than “promoted.” In terms of overall cognitive functioning, 76% of Parkview students are below the 8<sup>th</sup> percentile and 97% are below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile. The typical Parkview student will have considerable difficulty in 4 cognitive areas:

### *Verbal Comprehension:*

The student will have great difficulty grasping lecture-style instruction, listening to long passages and being asked to answer questions, following multi-step oral instructions, and coping with much talking.

### *Working Memory:*

The student will have great difficulty remembering oral information (e.g., multi-step instruction, maintaining attention and concentration), multi-tasking (will need step-by-step written/pictorial instruction; will need to be assigned one task at a time), solving multi-step problems in Mathematics, decoding and reading comprehension.

### *Processing Speed:*

The student will have considerable difficulty processing verbal information (e.g., if asked a question, then the student might take a longer than usual time to formulate an oral response; might appear to be daydreaming or unengaged), copying information quickly and accurately, completing tasks in an allotted time, keeping up and contributing to class discussions, and coping with excessive ambient noise.

### *Perceptual Reasoning:*

The student will have considerable difficulty understanding visual information (e.g., grasping information on blackboard or smart board, etc.), doing math (patterning, visual sequencing, long division, etc.), optimizing executive function (e.g., will not understand social cues or appropriate interactions), comprehending maps, grids, graphs, etc., coping if much learning is presented through seatwork, and grasping abstract verbal or visual concepts (i.e., instruction needs to be concrete and related to real-life experiences).

## **The Facts**

With respect to new Parkview students' basic skills, considerable deficits obtain in basic literacy, reading comprehension, and mathematics. Coming out of Elementary School, their average *Reading Comprehension* grade equivalency is Grade 3.1; further, 83% of our students enter Secondary School below the 8th percentile for their age group. Coming out of Elementary School, their average *Computational Skills* grade equivalency is Grade 3.3; further, 87% of our students enter Secondary School below the 8th percentile for their age group.

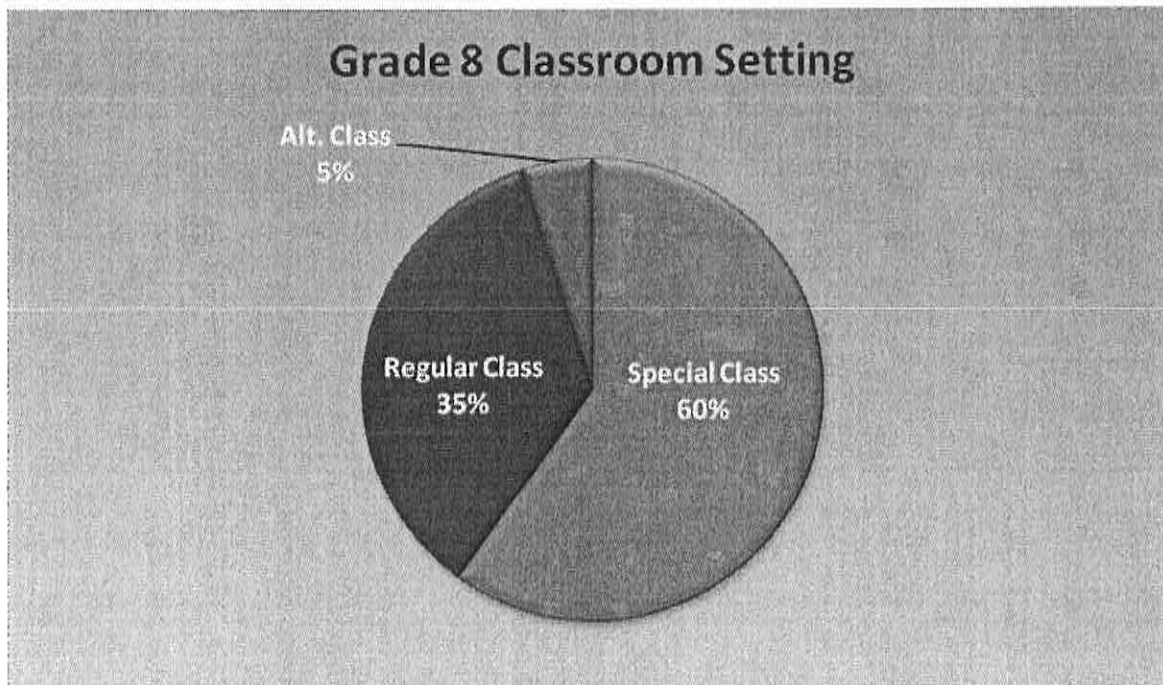
## **Other Contributing Factors**

Beyond the many cognitive deficits and diverse learning styles they possess, Parkview students also have to cope with numerous other factors:<sup>1</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> 44% of grade 9 and 10 students have either diagnosed ADHD or clinically severe attention issues
  - 8% of grade 9 and 10 students have formally diagnosed conditions such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Anxiety Disorder, Oppositional Defiance Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, etc.

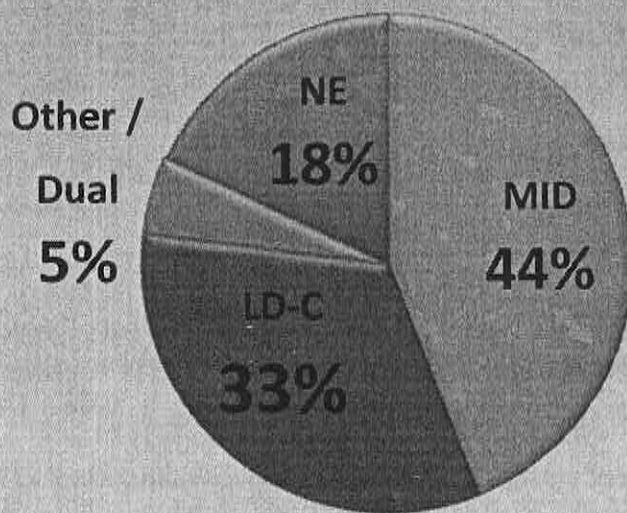
- **Social and Generalized Anxiety Disorders**
- **Self-Esteem issues**
- **Puerile coping and reasoning skills**
- **Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)**
- **Tourette Syndrome**
- **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**
- **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**
- **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)**
- **Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD)**
- **Intermittent Explosive Disorder / Disruptive Behaviour Disorder / Conduct Disorder**

After taking into account these diverse facets of current Parkview students, it is important to keep in mind that “[e]very student deserves to be fully involved in their Secondary School experience” - John Malloy (director of Education HWDSB). The proposed new System School for Students of Promise will proffer full involvement in ways precluded within large composite schools.

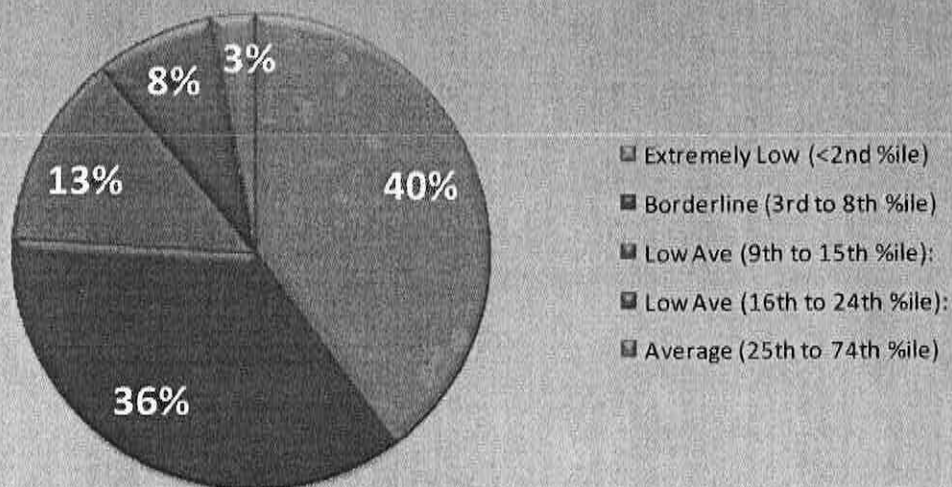




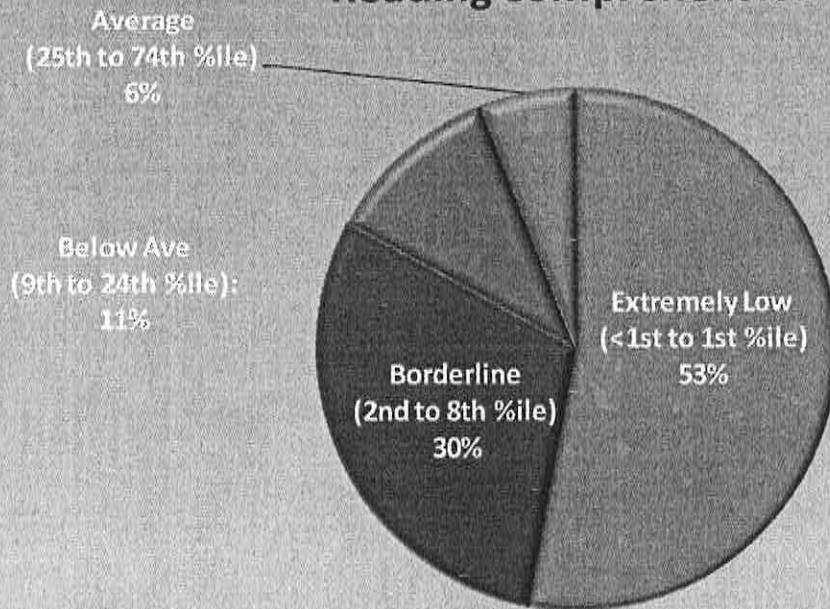
## Parkview Exceptionalities



## Overall Cognitive Functioning of Grade 9 10 Parkview Students



## Reading Comprehension



## Numerical Operations

