

Learning For All: HWDSB Program Strategy

Tiered Intervention/Definitions



Tier 3

A FEW STUDENTS

Targeted Interventions

1-5%

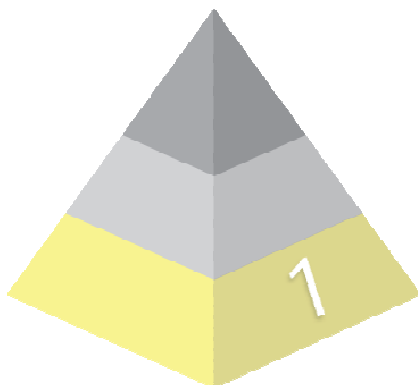


Tier 2

SOME STUDENTS

Selected Interventions

5-15%



Tier 1

ALL STUDENTS

*Universal Programming
Schools/Class-wide Learning*

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Tiered Intervention/Definitions

Vocational education or **vocational education and training** prepares trainees for jobs that are based on manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic yet credit-bearing, and totally related to a specific trade, occupation, or vocation. It is sometimes referred to as *technical education* as the trainee directly develops expertise in a particular group of techniques or technology.

See HWDSB Program Strategy: pg. 6

In HWDSB, and in high schools across Ontario, Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSMs) let students focus on a career path that matches their skills and interests while meeting the requirements of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) by completing a set of courses in the student's selected field, earning valuable industry certifications (such as First Aid) and gaining important skills on the job with employers. In this way, some SHSMs offer what would be formerly referred to as vocational education.

See HWDSB Program Strategy: pgs. 10-13

Inclusive education is education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009). There is research to indicate that parents of children with special needs report their children to be "in better general health, progress very well/well at school, interact very well/well with their peers, and more frequently look forward to going to school in higher inclusive educational settings than in mid-range or lower inclusion settings" (Timmons and Wagner: *Inclusive Education Knowledge Exchange Initiative*, 2009, pg. ii).

In some school districts and jurisdictions, inclusive education is interpreted as taking place in a **full inclusion** setting, where students with special needs are always educated alongside other students in regular classes. Full inclusion is the integration of all students, even those that require the most substantial educational and behavioral supports and services to be successful in regular classes and the elimination of special, or self-contained, classes. This is not the model followed in HWDSB, where we offer a spectrum of services including regular class support, withdrawal support, partial integration, self-contained special classes, and a special day school program.

In 2006, the Ontario Ministry of Education issued a report entitled *Special Education Transformation*. The report presented the results of discussions of a working group composed of teachers, principals, ministry officials, students with special needs, advocacy groups including parents, and members of faculties of education. This report stated that "The first consideration regarding placement would continue to be the regular classroom. A range of options would continue to be available for students whose needs could not be met within the regular classroom. These placements would be duration-specific, intervention-focused and subject to regular reviews." (Bennett and Wynne: *Special Education Transformation*, 2006, p. 8).

In HWDSB, the Program Strategy identifies a tiered approach to programming. Tier 1 involves instruction for all students, Tier 2 involves specific, and often short-term instruction and intervention for some students (approx. 5-15%), and Tier 3 involves targeted instruction and programming for a few students (approx. 1-5%). In this way, we offer a range of options designed to support students and based on their individual strengths. Such specialized Tier 2 and 3 programs can and should be offered within a regular secondary setting.

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Transitions and **transition planning** is an important process for all students, but in particular for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students who require additional supports before, during, and after this process. Students with special needs transitioning from elementary to secondary school have several additional components to their transition, including meetings with the appropriate secondary special education staff in attendance with parents, other support staff, and community services, if applicable. As part of the Program Strategy, staff are currently working on an enhanced transition process for Tier 2 and 3 students, involving specific processes occurring at Grade 7, 8, 9, and 10. Students also can transition from Tier to Tier, and from program to program, based on their individual progress, their readiness, their interests, and their chosen pathway.

Integration is a term often used to for students with special education or other needs when the students are included and educated in regular classes for nearly all of the day, or at least for more than half of the day. Whenever possible, the students receive any additional help or special instruction in the general classroom, and the student is a full member of the class.

See HWDSB Program Strategy: Student Support Programs – pages 14-17.

For some students, **partial integration** is more appropriate, where more specialized services are provided outside a regular classroom, in smaller, more intensive instructional sessions in a resource room or other classroom. This specialized instruction could focus on literacy, numeracy, English as a second language, social-communication, or other needs as identified for a group of individuals. Students have this more intensive instruction as a targeted part of their schedule, along with other courses as individually selected and appropriate for them.

See HWDSB Program Strategy: Comprehensive Support Programs – pg. 18-19.

Some students with exceptional needs require programs that involve learning more basic skills (such as life skills, functional math and literacy skills, etc.) as part of a pathway that may not lead to a secondary diploma but can and should lead to the world of work. These classes are referred to as **self-contained** classes where the students spend the majority of their day, with more individualized programs focusing on specific skill areas. Students are also included in some general education classes (according to their personal interests and capabilities) in either a credit or non-credit capacity, as appropriate. The focus of this type of program is the solidification of basic skills in the first few years with the focus shifting to transition to co-op placements and/or work experiences as the students approach graduation.

See HWDSB Program Strategy: Graduated Support Programs – pg. 22-23.

A small number of students require targeted, personalized support in a variety of areas. These students have significant needs (ex., communication and/or social functioning difficulties; physical/medical limitations) that are best met in a **self-contained** setting for the majority of their time. Some students can also be included in some general education classes in a non-credit capacity for socialization, as appropriate. Collaboration with parents and other community partners is necessary in order to plan appropriate transitions to supports in the community as the students enter adulthood.

See Program Strategy: Specific & Extensive Support Program pg. 24-27