



MEMORANDUM

Memo No. 18-129

TO: Trustees
Student Trustees

FROM: Jennifer Adams, Director of Education
Peter Symmonds, Superintendent of Learning Support Services

DATE: 26 October 2018

RE: **Response to Notice of Motion re: Tiered Interventions for Elementary Students with Giftedness**

A number of questions relating to tiered intervention, elementary gifted programming and resource allocation were raised at the 16 October 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting. The Committee passed a motion, but asked staff to provide clarification prior to the motion being considered at the Board meeting of 30 October 2018. A summary of the specific questions and answers is detailed below. Over the past two weeks, staff has reflected on the concerns and questions raised by the community and trustees. Staff is very concerned about a motion which privileges one exceptionality over all others. However, staff also recognizes the concerns raised and believe there are three things that could be done to address these issues:

1. Primary Gifted Specialized Program Classes

The Primary Gifted Specialized Program Class is currently located at one site - Roch Carrier Elementary School. Roch Carrier is a K-6 school which currently offers a Primary Gifted Program Class and a Gifted Program Junior Class. As the number of students in the primary program has declined, there has been confusion about how to operationalize the program with a small number of students in grades one and two. Operational changes could be implemented to reduce the confusion and frustration and ensure access to grade one and two students should this level of support be required. Going forward, staff will clarify that the program at Roch Carrier includes:

- Gifted Specialized Program Classes for students in grades 1-6 (Primary/Junior)

This ensures the program offering for students at all grade levels (1-6); the actual number of classes and class configurations will be determined by the students enrolled in the program. For example, one year the primary program could be one class of students in grades 1-3 and one class of students in grades 4-6;

another year it could be three classes (1/2; 3/4; 5/6); another year it could be one class of grades 1-4 and one class of grades 5/6. This approach ensures the program availability but allows for operational flexibility based on students enrolled in each grade. The program criteria would remain the same.

2. Improved messaging within the District

In the course of the discussions on this topic, it has become clear that there is a need for improved messaging to staff throughout the District. This includes more clarification about the use of tiered interventions; the process for placement of students in a specialized program class; and our commitment to the Gifted program. The feedback received indicates that the decline in enrolment in the elementary gifted program classes may in part be affected by a lack of clarity by staff about the availability of gifted specialized program class offerings, specifically for students in grades one and two, and the viability of these classes. As a system we need to ensure that all staff are aware of the full range of supports for gifted students and that our schools are equipped to support gifted learners in the regular classroom and in specialized program classes.

3. Improved messaging to parents

The need for improved messaging to parents is twofold; there is a need for improved messaging about tiered intervention and programming for gifted students generally so that all parents are aware of the supports and resources available for gifted learners. In addition, the need for improved communication with parents of students who are being supported through tiered intervention and/or specialized class placement. This is an area that will require some work centrally and work at the school level to ensure parents are getting timely feedback.

The motion approved at Committee presents three concerns; it treats one exceptionality differently from all others; the language in the first clause is unclear in terms of how the program access is to be managed; and it directs a broad based policy review which may not be warranted and will require considerable time which could otherwise be spent on improving program delivery.

Staff does not recommend treating one exceptionality differently than others. The tiered approach to intervention, universal design for learning, and differentiated instruction are evidence-based approaches to supporting all learners, including those with giftedness. Staff believe that Tier 3 supports and the specialized program class model should be available to serve students requiring the highest level of support and whose needs cannot be met in the regular classrooms with accommodations and modifications.

The first clause of the motion incorporates language which is based on an older version of the criteria sheet and is not current practice. It seeks to suspend the use of tiered intervention, suggests that students be granted access to the program based on “wanting access” plus criteria, but also maintains the need for an IPRC. Staff is concerned that this is unclear and creates expectations in the community that cannot be

achieved operationally. Additionally, psychology staff in Learning Support Services has expressed concern that the implementation of the motion as currently worded may put them in conflict with the professional obligations of their college.

The motion also directs a review of the Board's Special Education Policy. The undertaking of a comprehensive policy review has significant workload implications and pedagogically, tiered interventions are a recognized standard of practice. Staff is of the opinion that the concerns raised about tiered intervention, learning supports and program access for gifted students can be addressed through the strategies noted above. The undertaking of a comprehensive policy review may actually impede progress.

Summary of Detailed Questions Raised by Committee and Parents

The following information is provided to the Board in response to the questions raised:

1. What can be done to correct the mixed messaging parents are receiving regarding tiered interventions?

In the course of the Gifted discussion, it has become clear that there is confusion about tiered intervention and a need for additional communication and clarification within the District and with the parent community. This includes more information about the tiered approach to intervention, information about access to specialized program classes, and there is also a need to address the delays some families are experiencing in ensuring suitable supports are in place for their children. For families receiving supports, there is a need for consistent communication with parents that clearly articulate both the interventions in place and their child's performance as a result of those interventions.

Clarification regarding messaging is noted as an action item above.

In addition, enhancements to the parent portal of the District website will also allow parents direct access to resource information that will help to explain the kinds of supports that might be expected to support their child in the regular classroom (see Question #8).

2. Why would we treat the gifted exceptionalities differently from other exceptionalities and what are the resource implications?

Staff does not recommend treating one exceptionalities differently than others. The tiered approach to intervention, universal design for learning, and differentiated instruction are evidence-based approaches to supporting all learners, including those with giftedness. Staff believe that Tier 3 supports and the specialized program class model should be available to serve students requiring the highest level of support and whose needs cannot be met in the regular classrooms with accommodations and modifications.

In terms of resource implications, the most significant implication is for transportation costs. Caution should be exercised in interpreting these estimates due to the variability

of the assumptions on which they are made (e.g., number of students requiring transportation, length of trips, etc.). The estimates for transportation implications are presented in Appendix A. Based on the assumption of approximately 700 students placed in specialized program classes for giftedness, the District would have to reallocate approximately \$800,000 from other programs to accommodate an increased expenditure for transportation.

In addition, OSTA has determined that 80% of elementary gifted students are transported on small vehicles - vans and cars. Due to the current driver shortage, OSTA has indicated that they would not have the capacity to accommodate a significant increase in the number of elementary students requiring small vehicle transportation.

3. What is the total number of elementary gifted specialized program classes and how has that number changed over time?

There are currently 20 specialized program classes (2018-2019) for students with giftedness in grades 1 to 8. This represents a reduction of 10 classes since 2013-2014. Additional information is provided in Appendix B.

4. How many students in grades 1-4 meet the cognitive criteria for giftedness?

Currently, 52 students are identified with giftedness through the IPRC process between grades 1 and 4 across the District. It should be noted that not all of these students would meet the profoundly gifted (99.6th percentile) criteria for placement into a specialized program class.

5. What is the total number of elementary students identified with giftedness and where are they being served?

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Identified Gifted	1,096	1,070	985	850	675
Specialized Program Class	692	677	633	543	416
Regular Program	404	393	352	307	259

6. What are the regulatory requirements for Identification, Placement, and Review Committees and is the motion in compliance with the legislation?

Identification, Placement and Review Committees (IPRC) are set out through Ontario Regulation 181/98. The role of the IPRC is to:

- determine whether the student is, or is not, exceptional;
- identify a specific exceptionality, or exceptionalities, if applicable;
- identify the areas of strength and areas of need of the student;
- recommend an appropriate placement in a program designed to meet the identified needs of the student; or
- serve as an annual review for students with special education needs

The regulation stipulates that the committee must consider all information it considers relevant (e.g., education assessment, with consent a psychological assessment or medical information, parent input, etc.). This would also include an indication of how the child is performing in the regular classroom to assist in determining strengths and needs and whether a specialized program class would better meet the needs of the student. This information is also reviewed by the school's multi-disciplinary team when considering a referral to a specialized program class.

It is the opinion of staff that in the absence of an understanding of the supports implemented in the regular class placement, it is inappropriate to determine a student's strengths and needs. Moreover, it would be impossible to determine without these details, if a regular class placement would or can meet their needs or if the student's needs could better be met in a specialized class placement.

7. What is the criteria for admission into the gifted specialized program class?

The criteria for the gifted specialized program class is attached in Appendix C.

8. Why was the criteria for admission into the gifted specialized program class changed?

Criteria for all specialized program class placements are reviewed and amended annually. Report No. 15-029 *Specialized Programs Criteria Sheet Update (Revised)* provides some background information. Please note that the criteria sheets in that report have subsequently been amended and updated to reflect best practice and current understanding of supports for students. Prior to 2014, the criteria sheets for each exceptionality had been reviewed separately and, as a result, the criteria sheets varied considerably with several inconsistencies across the exceptionalities. In addition, significant changes to the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), the release of Learning for All (2013), and updates to the assessment materials (i.e., release of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-V) further necessitated changes to the criteria sheets.

9. Where can parents find information regarding supports for gifted students?

The resource “Special Education Service Delivery Model in the OCDSB: A Guide for Parents Of Students With Giftedness” can be found at:

<https://ocdsb.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=55478&pageId=213809>

Further, with the addition of the OCDSB Guide for Supporting Gifted Students in the Regular Classroom and the OCDSB Interest Guide, parents and educators would have additional resources to enhance their understanding of and ability to meet the needs of all learners, including those with giftedness.

10. Staff comment regarding the request to produce an annual report, beginning no later than the end of May 2019, detailing the number of applications and the number of children receiving placements in all congregated programs at both the elementary and secondary level. The report shall also include the details on any waitlist for all congregated programs, by Geographic Zone.

It would be exceptionally challenging to present accurate data prior to the end of the school year. Offers for placements occur on an ongoing basis and often right to the end of June each year. The most accurate snapshot of data regarding the outcomes of the spring referral and placement process would be the following October.

The special education policy and elementary program framework, which speaks to the use of tiered intervention has been included as Appendix D and E, respectively.

Please contact Peter Symmonds, Superintendent of Learning Support Services at 613-596-8211 ext. 8254 if you should have any questions.

Attach.

cc Senior Staff
Manager Board Services
Corporate Records

Elementary Gifted Specialized Program Class Transportation

Estimated Transportation Costs based on Enrolment	
2013-2014	\$1,911,000 plus HST
2017-2018	\$1,136,000 plus HST

Transportation mode*	
Small vehicle	80%
Presto pass	13% (intermediate only)
walking	7%

*reflective of 2018-2019 requirements

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Number of Gifted Specialized Program Classes (Elementary)	30	30	30	30*	23
Enrolment	692	677	633	543	416

*In 2016-2017, an additional overlay specialized program class for gifted was approved to minimize disruptions as Cedarview M.S. shifted from a grades 6 to 8 model to a grades 7-8 model.

Criteria for Specialized Gifted Program

The Specialized Gifted Program is for a student who has been identified as gifted and whose needs may be better met in a specialized setting. Evidence from targeted Tier 1, 2 and 3 school-based interventions suggest that the student would benefit from a congregated intensive specialized program. The program is in English only for grades 1 through 4. French immersion gifted or English gifted (with core French) is available from grades 5 through 12.

Evidence is required that interventions at Tier 1, 2 and 3 have been applied over time based on the learning needs of the student. Based on evidence from these interventions, it is expected that the student will benefit from a specialized gifted program at this time.

Designation:	Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Secondary
Class Size:	Grades 1-3; up to 20 students Grades 4-8; up to 25 students
Resources:	One teacher with special education qualifications

Referral Criteria:

Cognitive Profile (all grade levels):

- when composite scores differ by 23 standard score points or more, a determination will be made as to whether the specialized gifted program will provide the best support to the student, based on all information provided

Primary (grades 1-4):

- assessed on the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT-7 for 2017-2018 school year or previous CCAT as applicable) with scores at the 99th percentile on two of the three scales and at least the 90th percentile on the third scale, followed by consultation with psychologist or psychological associate; **OR**
- identified as having a gifted profile in current psychological report based on individual assessment results from the WPPSI-IV, WISC-V or Stanford-Binet yielding a Full Scale (FSIQ) score or General Ability Index (GAI) score at least at the 99.6th percentile

Junior/Intermediate (grades 5-8):

- CCAT-7 (for 2017-2018, or previous version accepted prior to 2015-2016) with scores at the 98th percentile in two of the three scales and at least 90th percentile on the third; **OR**
- WISC-V or Stanford-Binet FSIQ and/or GAI score at least at the 98th percentile

Secondary (grades 9-12):

- student coming from OCDSB specialized gifted class in grade 8 (no further assessment required)

Academic Profile

- individual achievement assessment results in the domains of reading comprehension and math problem solving (e.g., WIAT-III preferred) to determine learning profile

Social/Behavioural Profile

- may demonstrate a range of emotional, social and/or behavioural responses (e.g., disengagement, frustration, low self-esteem, anxiety, withdrawal, inattention, distractibility) and/or a learning style that precludes effective learning in the community school

Required Documentation

- psychological report or CCAT;
- all psychological assessments must be completed within the last 2 years and 11 months or verification from an OCDSB school psychologist or psychological associate that an assessment completed more than 2 years and 11 months ago continues to be valid;
- educational assessment within the last 12 months (reading and math problem solving composites are sufficient, include writing sample demonstrating the student written expression skills);
- evidence is required that interventions at Tier 1, 2, and 3 have not resulted in student having acquired prosocial developmentally appropriate skills and/or have not resulted in progress over time;
- Learning Support Services referral form detailing interventions at Tier 1, 2 and 3 to address the challenges and rationale as to why student needs cannot be addressed in the community school

Additional Documentation (if available)

- current report card or preschool report;
- current IEP;
- additional assessment reports (most recent medical, speech-language, IBI occupational/physiotherapy, social work);
- list of community agencies involved with student (e.g., Crossroads Home Program, etc.);
- Parent questionnaire;
- anecdotal report (list behavioural, academic and social challenges; include a list of interventions);

The student's progress will be monitored regularly and reviewed through the annual IPRC process to ensure appropriate placement to support student learning needs.



POLICY P.096.SES

TITLE: SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Date issued: August 1998

Revised: 28 May 2013

Authorization: 28 May 2013

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To provide for the education of students with special education needs.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

In this Policy:

- 2.1 **Accommodation** means a system of special teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and/or individualized equipment that help a student learn and demonstrate learning.
- 2.2 **Assessment** means the process of gathering, from a variety of sources, information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving curriculum expectations in a subject or course.
- 2.3 **Differentiated Instruction** means an approach to instruction designed to maximize growth by considering the needs of each student at his or her current stage of development and offering that student a learning experience which responds to his or her individual needs.
- 2.4 **District** means the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.
- 2.5 **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** means a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student based on a thorough assessment of the student's strengths and needs and shall be used as both a document and as an accountability tool.
- 2.6 **Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)** means the committee set up by the school board to consider the exceptionalities of students referred to them.

- 2.7 **Modification** means changes made to age-appropriate grade-level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs.
- 2.8 **Student with Special Needs** means a student who requires special education services, including any student who has been formally identified as exceptional by the IPRC process as well as students who may not have been formally identified but who may require services including, but not limited to, modified programs or accommodations.

3.0 POLICY

3.1 Policy Statement

The District believes every student is able to learn and to benefit from learning, and upholds the right of each student with special needs to an instructional program appropriate to that student's needs which enables him or her to achieve to the best of his or her ability. The term students with special needs includes all students who are receiving special education programs and services, whether or not they have been identified as exceptional.

3.2 Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles shall govern the education of students with special needs:

- a) promoting early identification and intervention;
- b) ensuring a focus on the whole child;
- c) providing a range of services for the student, subject to available resources;
- d) ensuring every reasonable attempt is made to support participation by the student in school activities;
- e) emphasizing the value and importance of communication and consultation with the parents/guardians of children with special needs;
- f) recognizing the necessity for the provision of support for staff to develop the necessary skills and teaching strategies to work with students with special needs; and
- g) ensuring the accommodation of students with special needs to the point of undue hardship for the District.

3.3 Key Learning Supports

The special education policy shall be achieved through the delivery of a variety of learning supports including, but not limited to:

- a) a range of appropriate assessments accompanied by timely tiered interventions and professional strategies;
- b) a continuum of placement options;
- c) equitable application of the specialized class location model using geographically defined catchment areas and designated schools to ensure fair access to specialized programs;
- d) appropriate student/teacher ratios as governed by the *Education Act*;
- e) Individual Education Plans (IEPs) subject to regular review and outcome-based evaluation;
- f) a clearly communicated IPRC process, with consistent procedures;
- g) integration opportunities within the student's school;
- h) multi-disciplinary professional supports for students with special education needs;
- i) timely access as required to appropriate equipment and materials; and
- j) timely access to information for parents about programs and services.

3.4 Enrolment and Placement

As required under the *Education Act*, the District will provide a Special Education Program for the enrolment and placement of each student with special needs.

3.5 Special Education Report

As required under the *Education Act*, the Special Education report of the OCDSB shall be reviewed annually by SEAC and the Board and shall be made readily accessible on the District website.

4.0 **SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES**

4.1 Programs and Support Services for Students with Special Needs

- a) The District shall ensure that the Ministry of Education Curriculum Guidelines are the basis for Special Education Programs. The special needs of each student can be accommodated by using a

variety of teaching methods , support personnel, resources, equipment and special materials.

4.2 Service Delivery

- a) The Special Education service delivery of the District is based on a continuum of placement options ranging from non-specialized classes with special education resource support to specialized classes and schools where needs dictate. Specialized class locations shall be based on geographically defined catchment areas and designated schools. Special Education Programs and Services and school catchment areas will be reviewed regularly in consultation with various stakeholders.
- b) The special needs of each student should be met by accommodations, modifications, and/or alternative expectations, including, but not limited to, a variety of teaching methods, and/or special equipment including, but not limited to, adaptive technology, and appropriately trained specialized personnel.

4.3 Identification, Assessment, Accommodation

- a) Students who may have special needs will be identified and assessed regularly and as appropriate. Assessments shall be undertaken in consultation with parents/guardians, after initial written consent has been received.
- b) Accommodations and modifications for the purposes of academic assessment/evaluation should be considered in accordance with District and Ministry policy relevant to assessment, evaluation, and reporting of student achievement (P.083.CUR and PR.584.CUR) to account for the requirements for assessments administered at beyond the District level (EQAO, PISA etc.).
- c) The principal is responsible for ensuring that an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed, implemented and updated in alignment with OCDSB reporting periods where:
 - i) a student has been formally identified as exceptional by an IPRC
 - ii) a student has not been formally identified but requires an ongoing special education program and/or services, including modified or alternative learning expectations and/or accommodations,
- d) The IEP shall be developed in partnership with parents/guardians and shall include SMART goals (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely).

- e) The IEP involves the following five phases:
 - i) Gather information about the student;
 - ii) Set the direction for the student;
 - iii) Develop the IEP as it relates to the student's special education program and services;
 - iv) Implement the IEP; and
 - v) Review and update the IEP.

- f) Students with special needs may be referred to an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) set up by the District. The principal may, on written notice to a parent of a student, and shall, at the written request of a parent, refer a student to the District IPRC.

- g) Once the decision of the IPRC is received, the principal and superintendent of shall make every effort to work with the parent/guardian to resolve any concerns about the decision. In the event of a disagreement about the IPRC decision, the process for appeal outlined in P.117.SES Special Education Appeal Board Policy shall be followed.

- h) Students identified as exceptional must be provided with appropriate special programs and/or services designed to build on their strengths and meet their needs.

- i) The District shall ensure a process for appropriate access to special education programs. The process will be transparent, consistent, and equitable, and subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA).

- j) The District shall ensure regular opportunities are provided for the training and development of staff to support students with special needs. This may include training in the areas of instructional practice, accommodations, academic, socio-emotional and cultural sensitivity.

4.4 Communication

The District is committed to communicating clearly and regularly with parents/guardians of students with special needs and will do so on matters including:

- a) the full range of services available;
- b) the IPRC process, including the appeals process;
- c) implementation practice and progress of IEPs; and

- d) Ministry guidelines for the delivery of Special Education Programs.

4.5 Performance Measures

- a) The Board is committed to developing and maintaining special education programs and services that are based on best practice models, including evidence based data, ongoing assessment and measurement of objectives. These will be reviewed on a cyclical basis, to ensure that they remain effective and are current with evidence-based research findings.
- b) The District will continue to develop and will maintain Quality Program Indicators to help guide the implementation of special education programs and services in a consistent manner.

4.6 Transportation

- a) The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, through its agent for transportation services, the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority, (OSTA) accepts responsibility for appropriate home-to-school transportation for exceptional students who meet the criteria set out in OCDSB Student Transportation Policy P.068.TRA.
- b) Under the authority of *The Education Act*, the Board, through its agent for transportation services, the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority, agrees to provide transportation for Ottawa-Carleton District School Board students attending Provincial and Demonstration Schools.

5.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The Education Act, Ontario

R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298/Reg. 306

Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils, O.R. 181/98

Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools

OCDSB *Special Education Plan*

The Individual Education Plan (IEP): A Resource Guide

Board Policy P.083.CUR: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting of Student Achievement

Board Policy P.058.HS: Occupational Health and Safety

Board Policy P.068.TRA: Student Transportation

Board Policy P.032.SCO: Safe Schools

Board Policy P.125.SCO: Board Code of Conduct

Board Policy P.117.SES: SEAB

Board Procedure PR.556.TRA: Student Transportation



POLICY P.139.CUR

TITLE: CHANGES TO PROGRAMS AND PROGRAM DELIVERY STRUCTURES AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Date issued: 31 January 2017

Last revised:

Authorization: Board: (31 January 2017)

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To ensure that programs and program delivery structures at OCDSB elementary schools are clearly documented and managed in such a way as to provide programs to meet the needs of students across the district at large, within the context of the *Elementary School Program Framework*.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Specialized programs** means enhanced programs which are offered to students based on identified criteria of need.
- 2.2 **Equity of access** to programming means the practical considerations of program delivery such as location, site capacity, etc.
- 2.3 **Equity of opportunity** means the philosophical ideal of fairness for all as reflected in educational programs and services that are designed for all students.
- 2.4 **Program delivery structure change** means a significant alteration in the way program is delivered which impacts on the enrolment of other schools.

3.0 POLICY

- 3.1 The Board supports offering equity of access and opportunity to programs in the District for all of its students.
- 3.2 The Board's model for elementary school program delivery is the designated community school model which seeks to provide programming options for elementary school students in their designated school, as close as possible to their home community.
- 3.3 Every elementary school will have a defined geographic attendance boundary that the school serves. The geographic boundaries may differ by program.

- 3.4 Changes of program and program delivery structures may be initiated either at the school level by the principal or centrally by a superintendent. When changes are initiated that could impact special education programs or program delivery structures, the superintendent responsible for special education shall be consulted. Consultation regarding implementation at a particular school will occur with the school council and the student council.
- 3.5 The Board shall approve the introduction of, changes to, and/or elimination of:
- a) Elementary program delivery structures (i.e. English, Alternative, Middle French Immersion, Early French Immersion) at a single school or more broadly;
 - b) Specialized program delivery structure models that have district wide impact (English as a second language, specialized special education programs); and/or
 - c) any changes that can reasonably be expected to have a significant effect on school enrolment.
- 3.6 Admission to specialized programs may be based on admission criteria, which shall be common to all sites offering the same program, as approved by the Superintendent of Instruction and/or the appropriate central Superintendent.
- 3.7 Transportation to elementary schools is provided as per Ottawa Student Transportation Authority transportation policy.
- 3.8 The Director of Education is authorized to issue such procedures as may be necessary to implement this policy.

4.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A: Elementary School Program Framework, 31 January 2017

5.0 REFERENCES

The Education Act, Ontario, 2000

Board Policy P.077.PLG: Designated Schools/Student Transfers

Board Procedure PR.568.PLG: Designated Schools/Student Transfers - Elementary

Board Procedure PR.569.PLG: Designated Schools/Student Transfers - Secondary

Board Procedure PR.629.CUR: Changes to Programs and Program Delivery Structures at Secondary Schools

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

The Elementary School Program Framework provides the framework for schools and program delivery models to ensure optimal learning environments for students in elementary programs.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Elementary School Program Framework provides a structural model for elementary programming in the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.
- 1.2. The OCDSB will offer a range of programs to meet the needs of students across the District. All elementary programs include instruction in English and French as a Second Language.
- 1.3. This framework will guide decision making on issues related to elementary programming, including the number of programs offered at each elementary site, and placement of specialized programs. Decisions using the framework will reflect the best educational research practices and align with current Ministry of Education curriculum policy documents.

2.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The District's model for elementary school program delivery is a designated community school model which seeks to provide programming options for elementary school students in their designated school as close as possible to their home community.
- 2.2 The Elementary School Program Framework:
 - a. Seeks to ensure the provision of optimal learning environments for all elementary students and support student success through a range of program offerings;
 - b. ensures equitable access to programs for students throughout the school District;
 - c. recognizes the importance of minimizing transitions for students during their school years; and
 - d. recognizes that program viability and sustainability are important factors in establishing and/or modifying elementary school programs to ensure that elementary students have access to quality program offerings delivered in a fiscally responsible manner.
- 2.3 The Board acknowledges a number of core characteristics (goal-oriented, innovative/creative, collaborative, globally aware, and resilient) and skills (ethical decision-makers, digitally fluent, academically diverse, effective communicators, and critical thinkers) as critical components of all student learning.
- 2.4 The Board recognizes the impact of socio-economics on student learning and well-being and the importance of differentiated resources in ensuring equitable outcomes for students in the District."

3.0 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

3.1 School Configuration Models

The elementary school configuration model will be either kindergarten-grade 6 (K-6) or kindergarten-grade 8 (K-8) in alignment with a secondary school configuration model of grades 7-12 or grades 9-12 school organizations. The school configuration model will be implemented over time as the district considers accommodation reviews.

3.2 Number of Programs in Schools

The District offers elementary programs in:

- Single Track Sites (1 program only; e.g., English with Core French);
- Dual Track Sites (2 programs; e.g., English with Core French and Middle French Immersion);
- Triple Track Sites (3 programs; English with Core French, Middle French Immersion, and Early French Immersion).

The District recognizes the preference for multi-track schools wherever practical in reducing transitions and supporting the community school model. It is important that enrolment ensure adequate flexibility for student placement and allow for teacher collaboration.

3.3 School Size

The optimal number of students in any elementary school may vary depending on the number and nature of District and specialized programs located in that school, the location of the school or offerings dependent on the needs of the school's student population. The District is committed to providing a range of program options within local communities for all students.

3.4 Factors in Determining School Size and Number of Program

The District is committed to providing rich learning environments with healthy and sustainable programs. There are many factors that impact decision-making related to school size and the number of programs offered at a school. These factors include, but are not limited to: community school model considerations, equity, transportation, student transitions, District boundaries, population changes, enrolment; enrolment capacity; utilization rate; size of school building; number of programs currently offered; location of the school; the impact of program offerings on other schools and programs; program demand; community interest; and resource allocation.

3.5 Full-Day Kindergarten

The District offers a two-year, full-day, bilingual kindergarten program provided by a team consisting of teachers and early childhood educators. Students in kindergarten receive instruction in both English and French (50/50). The program focuses on play-based inquiry and includes four key components or frames: belonging and contributing; self-regulation and well-being; demonstrating literacy and mathematics behaviours; and, problem solving and innovating.

3.6 Elementary Program Options

The District has a rich offering of programs. Beginning in grade one, students have access to four English language elementary programs incorporating French as a Second Language:

- a. English Program with Core French (Grades 1-8)
Students in the elementary English Program receive instruction in the English language in all subject areas as well as instruction in French through Core French (40 minutes daily).
- b. Early French Immersion (Grades 1-8)
Students in the Early French Immersion Program receive instruction in both English and French. In grade 1, students receive 80 percent of instruction in French. In grades 2-6, students receive 60 percent of instruction in French. In grades 7-8, students receive 50 percent of instruction in French.
- c. Middle French Immersion (Grades 4-8)
Students in the Middle French Immersion Program receive instruction in both French and English. In grades 4-6, students receive 66 percent of instruction in French and in grades 7-8, students receive 50 percent of instruction in French.
- d. Alternative Program with Core French (Grades 1-8)
Students in the Alternative Program receive instruction in English in all subject areas as well as instruction in French through Core French (40 minutes daily). The program is founded on the following tenets: cooperative and non-competitive environments; innovative and differentiated approaches to teaching and learning; differentiated assessment and evaluation; child-centred and directed approaches to learning; multi-age groupings; integrated curriculum; and, extensive family and community involvement.

The Alternative program is offered in a number of designated, single track sites across the District and students access the program based on their geographic boundary.

3.7 Special Education Programs

The District offers a continuum of support through a tiered intervention model ranging from the regular classroom with special education resource support to specialized classes and schools. Students are offered placements according to established criteria. Specialized class locations are based on a geographic model. More detail about special education delivery is outlined in P.096.SES.

3.8 Specialized Programs English as a Second Language/ English Literacy Development

Specialized services and supports are provided to students identified as English as a Second Language (ESL) using the Steps to Language Proficiency (STEP) assessment. Students identified as English Language Learners and as having limited prior schooling may receive supports and interventions in a regular classroom or in an English Literacy Development (ELD) congregated class in the intermediate division.



POLICY P.096.SES

TITLE: SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Date issued: August 1998

Revised: 28 May 2013

Authorization: 28 May 2013

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To provide for the education of students with special education needs.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

In this Policy:

- 2.1 **Accommodation** means a system of special teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and/or individualized equipment that help a student learn and demonstrate learning.
- 2.2 **Assessment** means the process of gathering, from a variety of sources, information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving curriculum expectations in a subject or course.
- 2.3 **Differentiated Instruction** means an approach to instruction designed to maximize growth by considering the needs of each student at his or her current stage of development and offering that student a learning experience which responds to his or her individual needs.
- 2.4 **District** means the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.
- 2.5 **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** means a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student based on a thorough assessment of the student's strengths and needs and shall be used as both a document and as an accountability tool.
- 2.6 **Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)** means the committee set up by the school board to consider the exceptionalities of students referred to them.

- 2.7 **Modification** means changes made to age-appropriate grade-level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs.
- 2.8 **Student with Special Needs** means a student who requires special education services, including any student who has been formally identified as exceptional by the IPRC process as well as students who may not have been formally identified but who may require services including, but not limited to, modified programs or accommodations.

3.0 POLICY

3.1 Policy Statement

The District believes every student is able to learn and to benefit from learning, and upholds the right of each student with special needs to an instructional program appropriate to that student's needs which enables him or her to achieve to the best of his or her ability. The term students with special needs includes all students who are receiving special education programs and services, whether or not they have been identified as exceptional.

3.2 Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles shall govern the education of students with special needs:

- a) promoting early identification and intervention;
- b) ensuring a focus on the whole child;
- c) providing a range of services for the student, subject to available resources;
- d) ensuring every reasonable attempt is made to support participation by the student in school activities;
- e) emphasizing the value and importance of communication and consultation with the parents/guardians of children with special needs;
- f) recognizing the necessity for the provision of support for staff to develop the necessary skills and teaching strategies to work with students with special needs; and
- g) ensuring the accommodation of students with special needs to the point of undue hardship for the District.

3.3 Key Learning Supports

The special education policy shall be achieved through the delivery of a variety of learning supports including, but not limited to:

- a) a range of appropriate assessments accompanied by timely tiered interventions and professional strategies;
- b) a continuum of placement options;
- c) equitable application of the specialized class location model using geographically defined catchment areas and designated schools to ensure fair access to specialized programs;
- d) appropriate student/teacher ratios as governed by the *Education Act*;
- e) Individual Education Plans (IEPs) subject to regular review and outcome-based evaluation;
- f) a clearly communicated IPRC process, with consistent procedures;
- g) integration opportunities within the student's school;
- h) multi-disciplinary professional supports for students with special education needs;
- i) timely access as required to appropriate equipment and materials; and
- j) timely access to information for parents about programs and services.

3.4 Enrolment and Placement

As required under the *Education Act*, the District will provide a Special Education Program for the enrolment and placement of each student with special needs.

3.5 Special Education Report

As required under the *Education Act*, the Special Education report of the OCDSB shall be reviewed annually by SEAC and the Board and shall be made readily accessible on the District website.

4.0 **SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES**

4.1 Programs and Support Services for Students with Special Needs

- a) The District shall ensure that the Ministry of Education Curriculum Guidelines are the basis for Special Education Programs. The special needs of each student can be accommodated by using a

variety of teaching methods , support personnel, resources, equipment and special materials.

4.2 Service Delivery

- a) The Special Education service delivery of the District is based on a continuum of placement options ranging from non-specialized classes with special education resource support to specialized classes and schools where needs dictate. Specialized class locations shall be based on geographically defined catchment areas and designated schools. Special Education Programs and Services and school catchment areas will be reviewed regularly in consultation with various stakeholders.
- b) The special needs of each student should be met by accommodations, modifications, and/or alternative expectations, including, but not limited to, a variety of teaching methods, and/or special equipment including, but not limited to, adaptive technology, and appropriately trained specialized personnel.

4.3 Identification, Assessment, Accommodation

- a) Students who may have special needs will be identified and assessed regularly and as appropriate. Assessments shall be undertaken in consultation with parents/guardians, after initial written consent has been received.
- b) Accommodations and modifications for the purposes of academic assessment/evaluation should be considered in accordance with District and Ministry policy relevant to assessment, evaluation, and reporting of student achievement (P.083.CUR and PR.584.CUR) to account for the requirements for assessments administered at beyond the District level (EQAO, PISA etc.).
- c) The principal is responsible for ensuring that an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed, implemented and updated in alignment with OCDSB reporting periods where:
 - i) a student has been formally identified as exceptional by an IPRC
 - ii) a student has not been formally identified but requires an ongoing special education program and/or services, including modified or alternative learning expectations and/or accommodations,
- d) The IEP shall be developed in partnership with parents/guardians and shall include SMART goals (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely).

- e) The IEP involves the following five phases:
 - i) Gather information about the student;
 - ii) Set the direction for the student;
 - iii) Develop the IEP as it relates to the student's special education program and services;
 - iv) Implement the IEP; and
 - v) Review and update the IEP.

- f) Students with special needs may be referred to an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) set up by the District. The principal may, on written notice to a parent of a student, and shall, at the written request of a parent, refer a student to the District IPRC.

- g) Once the decision of the IPRC is received, the principal and superintendent of shall make every effort to work with the parent/guardian to resolve any concerns about the decision. In the event of a disagreement about the IPRC decision, the process for appeal outlined in P.117.SES Special Education Appeal Board Policy shall be followed.

- h) Students identified as exceptional must be provided with appropriate special programs and/or services designed to build on their strengths and meet their needs.

- i) The District shall ensure a process for appropriate access to special education programs. The process will be transparent, consistent, and equitable, and subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA).

- j) The District shall ensure regular opportunities are provided for the training and development of staff to support students with special needs. This may include training in the areas of instructional practice, accommodations, academic, socio-emotional and cultural sensitivity.

4.4 Communication

The District is committed to communicating clearly and regularly with parents/guardians of students with special needs and will do so on matters including:

- a) the full range of services available;
- b) the IPRC process, including the appeals process;
- c) implementation practice and progress of IEPs; and

- d) Ministry guidelines for the delivery of Special Education Programs.

4.5 Performance Measures

- a) The Board is committed to developing and maintaining special education programs and services that are based on best practice models, including evidence based data, ongoing assessment and measurement of objectives. These will be reviewed on a cyclical basis, to ensure that they remain effective and are current with evidence-based research findings.
- b) The District will continue to develop and will maintain Quality Program Indicators to help guide the implementation of special education programs and services in a consistent manner.

4.6 Transportation

- a) The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, through its agent for transportation services, the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority, (OSTA) accepts responsibility for appropriate home-to-school transportation for exceptional students who meet the criteria set out in OCDSB Student Transportation Policy P.068.TRA.
- b) Under the authority of *The Education Act*, the Board, through its agent for transportation services, the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority, agrees to provide transportation for Ottawa-Carleton District School Board students attending Provincial and Demonstration Schools.

5.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The Education Act, Ontario

R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298/Reg. 306

Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils, O.R. 181/98

Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools

OCDSB *Special Education Plan*

The Individual Education Plan (IEP): A Resource Guide

Board Policy P.083.CUR: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting of Student Achievement

Board Policy P.058.HS: Occupational Health and Safety

Board Policy P.068.TRA: Student Transportation

Board Policy P.032.SCO: Safe Schools

Board Policy P.125.SCO: Board Code of Conduct

Board Policy P.117.SES: SEAB

Board Procedure PR.556.TRA: Student Transportation



POLICY P.139.CUR

TITLE: CHANGES TO PROGRAMS AND PROGRAM DELIVERY STRUCTURES AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Date issued: 31 January 2017

Last revised:

Authorization: Board: (31 January 2017)

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To ensure that programs and program delivery structures at OCDSB elementary schools are clearly documented and managed in such a way as to provide programs to meet the needs of students across the district at large, within the context of the *Elementary School Program Framework*.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Specialized programs** means enhanced programs which are offered to students based on identified criteria of need.
- 2.2 **Equity of access** to programming means the practical considerations of program delivery such as location, site capacity, etc.
- 2.3 **Equity of opportunity** means the philosophical ideal of fairness for all as reflected in educational programs and services that are designed for all students.
- 2.4 **Program delivery structure change** means a significant alteration in the way program is delivered which impacts on the enrolment of other schools.

3.0 POLICY

- 3.1 The Board supports offering equity of access and opportunity to programs in the District for all of its students.
- 3.2 The Board's model for elementary school program delivery is the designated community school model which seeks to provide programming options for elementary school students in their designated school, as close as possible to their home community.
- 3.3 Every elementary school will have a defined geographic attendance boundary that the school serves. The geographic boundaries may differ by program.

- 3.4 Changes of program and program delivery structures may be initiated either at the school level by the principal or centrally by a superintendent. When changes are initiated that could impact special education programs or program delivery structures, the superintendent responsible for special education shall be consulted. Consultation regarding implementation at a particular school will occur with the school council and the student council.
- 3.5 The Board shall approve the introduction of, changes to, and/or elimination of:
- a) Elementary program delivery structures (i.e. English, Alternative, Middle French Immersion, Early French Immersion) at a single school or more broadly;
 - b) Specialized program delivery structure models that have district wide impact (English as a second language, specialized special education programs); and/or
 - c) any changes that can reasonably be expected to have a significant effect on school enrolment.
- 3.6 Admission to specialized programs may be based on admission criteria, which shall be common to all sites offering the same program, as approved by the Superintendent of Instruction and/or the appropriate central Superintendent.
- 3.7 Transportation to elementary schools is provided as per Ottawa Student Transportation Authority transportation policy.
- 3.8 The Director of Education is authorized to issue such procedures as may be necessary to implement this policy.

4.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A: Elementary School Program Framework, 31 January 2017

5.0 REFERENCES

The Education Act, Ontario, 2000

Board Policy P.077.PLG: Designated Schools/Student Transfers

Board Procedure PR.568.PLG: Designated Schools/Student Transfers - Elementary

Board Procedure PR.569.PLG: Designated Schools/Student Transfers - Secondary

Board Procedure PR.629.CUR: Changes to Programs and Program Delivery Structures at Secondary Schools

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

The Elementary School Program Framework provides the framework for schools and program delivery models to ensure optimal learning environments for students in elementary programs.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Elementary School Program Framework provides a structural model for elementary programming in the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.
- 1.2. The OCDSB will offer a range of programs to meet the needs of students across the District. All elementary programs include instruction in English and French as a Second Language.
- 1.3. This framework will guide decision making on issues related to elementary programming, including the number of programs offered at each elementary site, and placement of specialized programs. Decisions using the framework will reflect the best educational research practices and align with current Ministry of Education curriculum policy documents.

2.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The District's model for elementary school program delivery is a designated community school model which seeks to provide programming options for elementary school students in their designated school as close as possible to their home community.
- 2.2 The Elementary School Program Framework:
 - a. Seeks to ensure the provision of optimal learning environments for all elementary students and support student success through a range of program offerings;
 - b. ensures equitable access to programs for students throughout the school District;
 - c. recognizes the importance of minimizing transitions for students during their school years; and
 - d. recognizes that program viability and sustainability are important factors in establishing and/or modifying elementary school programs to ensure that elementary students have access to quality program offerings delivered in a fiscally responsible manner.
- 2.3 The Board acknowledges a number of core characteristics (goal-oriented, innovative/creative, collaborative, globally aware, and resilient) and skills (ethical decision-makers, digitally fluent, academically diverse, effective communicators, and critical thinkers) as critical components of all student learning.
- 2.4 The Board recognizes the impact of socio-economics on student learning and well-being and the importance of differentiated resources in ensuring equitable outcomes for students in the District."

3.0 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

3.1 School Configuration Models

The elementary school configuration model will be either kindergarten-grade 6 (K-6) or kindergarten-grade 8 (K-8) in alignment with a secondary school configuration model of grades 7-12 or grades 9-12 school organizations. The school configuration model will be implemented over time as the district considers accommodation reviews.

3.2 Number of Programs in Schools

The District offers elementary programs in:

- Single Track Sites (1 program only; e.g., English with Core French);
- Dual Track Sites (2 programs; e.g., English with Core French and Middle French Immersion);
- Triple Track Sites (3 programs; English with Core French, Middle French Immersion, and Early French Immersion).

The District recognizes the preference for multi-track schools wherever practical in reducing transitions and supporting the community school model. It is important that enrolment ensure adequate flexibility for student placement and allow for teacher collaboration.

3.3 School Size

The optimal number of students in any elementary school may vary depending on the number and nature of District and specialized programs located in that school, the location of the school or offerings dependent on the needs of the school's student population. The District is committed to providing a range of program options within local communities for all students.

3.4 Factors in Determining School Size and Number of Program

The District is committed to providing rich learning environments with healthy and sustainable programs. There are many factors that impact decision-making related to school size and the number of programs offered at a school. These factors include, but are not limited to: community school model considerations, equity, transportation, student transitions, District boundaries, population changes, enrolment; enrolment capacity; utilization rate; size of school building; number of programs currently offered; location of the school; the impact of program offerings on other schools and programs; program demand; community interest; and resource allocation.

3.5 Full-Day Kindergarten

The District offers a two-year, full-day, bilingual kindergarten program provided by a team consisting of teachers and early childhood educators. Students in kindergarten receive instruction in both English and French (50/50). The program focuses on play-based inquiry and includes four key components or frames: belonging and contributing; self-regulation and well-being; demonstrating literacy and mathematics behaviours; and, problem solving and innovating.

3.6 Elementary Program Options

The District has a rich offering of programs. Beginning in grade one, students have access to four English language elementary programs incorporating French as a Second Language:

- a. English Program with Core French (Grades 1-8)
Students in the elementary English Program receive instruction in the English language in all subject areas as well as instruction in French through Core French (40 minutes daily).
- b. Early French Immersion (Grades 1-8)
Students in the Early French Immersion Program receive instruction in both English and French. In grade 1, students receive 80 percent of instruction in French. In grades 2-6, students receive 60 percent of instruction in French. In grades 7-8, students receive 50 percent of instruction in French.
- c. Middle French Immersion (Grades 4-8)
Students in the Middle French Immersion Program receive instruction in both French and English. In grades 4-6, students receive 66 percent of instruction in French and in grades 7-8, students receive 50 percent of instruction in French.
- d. Alternative Program with Core French (Grades 1-8)
Students in the Alternative Program receive instruction in English in all subject areas as well as instruction in French through Core French (40 minutes daily). The program is founded on the following tenets: cooperative and non-competitive environments; innovative and differentiated approaches to teaching and learning; differentiated assessment and evaluation; child-centred and directed approaches to learning; multi-age groupings; integrated curriculum; and, extensive family and community involvement.

The Alternative program is offered in a number of designated, single track sites across the District and students access the program based on their geographic boundary.

3.7 Special Education Programs

The District offers a continuum of support through a tiered intervention model ranging from the regular classroom with special education resource support to specialized classes and schools. Students are offered placements according to established criteria. Specialized class locations are based on a geographic model. More detail about special education delivery is outlined in P.096.SES.

3.8 Specialized Programs English as a Second Language/ English Literacy Development

Specialized services and supports are provided to students identified as English as a Second Language (ESL) using the Steps to Language Proficiency (STEP) assessment. Students identified as English Language Learners and as having limited prior schooling may receive supports and interventions in a regular classroom or in an English Literacy Development (ELD) congregated class in the intermediate division.