

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: September 30, 2019
Time: 7:00 pm
Location: Catholic Education Centre - Board Room
802 Drury Lane
Burlington, Ontario

Members Present	B. Agnew (Chair)	H. Karabela
	D. Bardon	J. Lim
	R. Barreiro	A. Louca-Ricci
	T. Beattie	M. Lourenco
	M. Duarte	R. Quesnel
	D. Hotopeleanu (Vice Chair)	D. Rabenda

Staff Present

C. Cipriano, Superintendent of Special Education Services
P. Daly, Director of Education
A. Jones, Manager, Educational Assistants
D. Kollee, Chief, Chief of Speech Language Pathologist
W. Reid-Purcell, Special Education Coordinator
A. Swinden, Manager, Strategic Communications

Members Excused

M. Arteaga
P. Moran
C. Parreira
Y. Taylor
T. Veale

Members Absent

M. Arnold
N. Guzzo

Recording Secretary(s) A. Hughes

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order.

1.1 Commissioning of SEAC

The meeting opened at 7:02 p.m. with a prayer led by the Chair and C. Cipriano.

1.2 Approval of Agenda

Moved by: M. Duarte

Seconded by: D. Rabenda

RESOLVED, that the agenda be accepted as received.

CARRIED

1.3 Welcome Back

The Chair welcomed SEAC members back after the summer break.

2. Presentations

2.1 Autism Ontario

B. Agnew introduced L. Boyd, Service Navigator Central Team Lead for Autism Ontario - Halton, Waterloo, Wellington region. L. Boyd provided information on Autism Ontario's new roles and the new Ontario Autism Program (OAP). The presentation is attached.

3. Actions to be taken

3.1 Minutes of the June 17, 2019 SEAC Meeting

Moved by: D. Bardon

Seconded by: M. Duarte

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the June 17, 2019 SEAC Meeting be approved as presented.

The Chair called for a vote and the motion **CARRIED**.

4. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

5. Business Arising from Previous Meetings

C. Cipriano informed members that an electronic copy of the Roots of Empathy flyer would be shared as discussed with members. ABA postcards were distributed.

6. Action and Information Items

6.1 SEAC Communications Plan (B. Agnew/A. Louca-Ricci)

B. Agnew informed members that the first SEAC Communications Sub Committee meeting was held prior to tonight's meeting. A. Louca-Ricci provided an update on recommendations from the sub committee. A SEAC Twitter account will be created. A SEAC event with a speaker and road show to go to the School Parent Councils was proposed.

B. Agnew suggested putting a communication plan for SEAC Events on the next agenda.

6.2 Student Use of Service Animals in Schools Policy

C. Cipriano provided an overview of Policy No. II-52 Student Use of Service Animals in Schools which was recently passed by the Board of Trustees. The policy is a result of the Ministry of Education drafting a PPM requiring all school boards to create a policy on service animals in schools. The Student Use of Service Animals in Schools Procedure will be shared at the Board of Trustees October 8th policy meeting.

6.3 Clustered Classes and Accelerated Learning Opportunities Board Report

C. Cipriano shared a Board Staff Report on Clustered Classes and Accelerated Learning Opportunities. This report was a collaboration of Program Services (Special Education, Student Success, Curriculum), Research Development Services, Business and Planning Services and Academic Services. The report was in response to a motion passed at the June 18th, 2019 Regular Board meeting, requesting that "Senior Staff examine the feasibility of clustered classes and/or accelerated learning opportunities in secondary schools that currently have the Advanced Placement (AP) Programme and prepare a staff report to the Board in September 2019". Members discussed various details of the staff report.

7. Communications to SEAC

7.1 Superintendent's Report

C. Cipriano provided updates on:

New SERTs: attended our first new SERT Catholic Learning Community meeting on September 17th. Topics included the IEP Engine, SEA and Alternative Programming students.

Stay, Play Talk Training: took place on September 25th. Additional classrooms are participating this term with SLP/CDA support. HCDSB is piloting an experienced Stay, Play, Talk educator mentoring/coaching for other staff to deliver the program to help increase the number of classrooms we can support. Digital resources will also be available to schools for Stay, Play, Talk kits.

NEW IEP Writer: is live and staff development is ongoing. New training is beginning for Essential Skills Class teachers to support their use of technology in the classrooms. Training for Structured Teaching Classes and Life Skills teachers will continue in order to support the use of technology as a teaching tool in these classrooms.

Mental Health Strategy Committee Meeting: took place on September 17th. Representations included community members, elementary and secondary administrators, various HCDSB staff, parents and students. The mental health strategy will be presented to the Board of Trustees at the October 15th Board meeting. HCDSB is in year three of the three-year mental health strategy plan and currently developing the new three-year plan.

Psychological Assessments: were conducted over the summer. Wait time has been reduced from just over 1 year to just under a 10 month wait time for a Psychological Assessments.

Mary Mother of God Parish in Oakville: will be having Sensory Friendly Masses beginning on November 10th. The Masses will take place once a month, on the second Sunday at 3:00 pm. The Mass will include lower lights, softer music, shorter and more literal homilies, low gluten hosts, small host portions and the freedom to move around as necessary. Flyers were distributed and will be sent electronically.

Professional Development: sessions have been run for SERTs, Special Education Department Heads, New SERTs, Empower Reading teachers, and Essential Skills Class teachers. The launch of Professional Development for Structured Teaching, Community Living Classes, and Life Skills SETs as well as Gifted SETs, will occur over the next couple of weeks.

Program Services Department Meeting: the first meeting took place on September 13, 2019, the topic was Trauma Sensitive classrooms.

HCDSB Special Olympics Elementary Cross-Country Meets: have been planned on the following days, according to municipality: Tuesday October 8th (Oakville schools), Wednesday October 9th (North Halton schools), Thursday October 10th (Burlington schools). The event runs from approximately 9:45 am to 2:00 pm at Kelso Conservation Area.

C. Cipriano will be attending the Learning Disabilities Association of Halton-Hamilton Corporate Breakfast on October 1st in Hamilton. This is the first annual breakfast to benefit children, youth and adults living with learning disabilities and ADHD/ADD.

P. Daly provided an update on CUPE's legal job action and explained that CUPE for our Board includes Educational Assistants, Early Childhood Educators, Custodians, Library Technicians, Information Technology Staff and School Office Secretaries. It was noted that our Board is different from our co-terminus Board

whose Educational Assistants are not in CUPE. There is a live tap that is updated on the HCDSB website. Communication updates will be provided via the website, emails and social media.

7.2 Trustee Reports

M. Duarte reported that trustees have attended two Board meetings this school year. Highlights from the meetings are:

- Delegations on French Programming
- A Staff Report on French Programming will be presented at an upcoming meeting
- The 2018-2019 parent satisfaction survey report was presented; the full report is available online
- Policies approved include Student Use of Service Animals in Schools, Optional French Programming

7.3 Association Reports

Learning Disabilities Association of Halton-Hamilton (T. Beattie)

T. Beattie provided information on the first Learning Disabilities Association of Halton-Hamilton (LDAHH) Corporate breakfast on October 1st and noted it was to celebrate the expansion of the chapter and the associations new name. Information was also provided on LDAHH's lecture series: Decoding the Psychoeducational Assessment and Parent Advocacy Workshops. Registration can be done on the website.

October is LD awareness month. Posters have been shared electronically with the Board and to our families. Details are outlined in the attached LDAHH association report.

8. Next Agenda: Meeting Monday, October 28, 2019

9. Adjournment

9.1 Resolution re Absentees (Chair)

Moved by: M. Duarte

Seconded by: M. Lourenco

RESOLVED, that M. Arteaga, P. Moran, C. Parreira, Y. Taylor, T. Veale be excused. **CARRIED**

9.2 Adjournment and Closing Prayer (Chair)

Moved by: D. Rabenda

Seconded by: M. Duarte

RESOLVED, that the meeting adjourn. **CARRIED**

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m. with a prayer led by the Vice Chair.

Service Navigation and the OAP

Autism Ontario's new roles,
and the new Ontario Autism Program



Who is Autism Ontario?

Autism Ontario is the province's leading source of information and referral on autism and one of the largest collective voices representing the autism community.

We are made up of knowledgeable parents, professionals, and autistic self-advocates who can speak to the key issues that impact those with autism, and their families.



Our Mission

To ensure that each individual with ASD is provided the means to achieve quality of life as a respected member of society.



Autism Ontario supports autistic children, youth, adults, and their families by advocating on their behalf, providing valuable programs and services, and creating acceptance and opportunities across Ontario.



THE NEW ONTARIO AUTISM PROGRAM (OAP)



Childhood Budgets

- Provide families of autistic children and youth with direct funding to spend on eligible services of their choice
 - Behavioural services, such as assessments and consultations
 - Speech language pathology
 - Occupational therapy
 - Physiotherapy
 - Family/caregiver capacity building and training
 - Respite services
 - Technology aids
 - Travel



Childhood Budgets

- Available for all children with a diagnosis of autism up to age 18
- Children under the age of six are eligible for up to \$20,000 annually
- Children and youth aged six and older are eligible for up to \$5,000 annually
- Families on the waitlist on April 1, 2019 can expect to receive their first Childhood Budget within the next 18 months



How Does It Work?

- Children must be registered in the OAP to be eligible for a Childhood Budget.
- Children already registered for the OAP and on the waitlist will be contacted when their Childhood Budget is available.



- Eligible families on the waitlist will receive a letter from the Ministry when it is time for them to apply for a Childhood Budget.
 - Letter will contain a unique reference number that will allow families to apply for the Budget online or over the phone
- After receiving their childhood budget, families can spend it on eligible services.



Unsure if you're on the list and registered for
OAP after April 1, 2019?

Call the Central Intake and Registration Team
(CIRT).

1-888-444-4530

If you registered with OAP before April 1,
2019, please call the Single Point of Access
Service Provider in your Region



Why Autism Ontario?

- A 46-year history of representing thousands of families and people with ASD across Ontario
- Local Support
 - Autism Ontario represents thousands of families across the province through our Chapters.
 - Chapters are under the leadership of committed and skilled volunteers who provide expertise and guidance to the organization and their communities.



Why Autism Ontario?

- Online Resources and Support
 - Learning Portal: home to all our great online resources
 - Provincial webinars that explore the latest research in easy-to-understand terms
 - Educational videos to share in classrooms and with employers
 - Education and advocacy toolkits to help inform about rights and responsibilities
 - Tip sheets that explore a wide variety of ASD topics



Why Autism Ontario?

- Social Learning Opportunities
 - Community events designed to offer opportunities for children and youth with ASD to connect with one another through a variety of family-friendly activities
- Training and Outreach
 - ASD related training to first responders, transit professionals and attractions aiming to make space more ASD friendly
- Autism Awareness and Acceptance Campaigns
 - Raise the Flag Campaign puts us in municipal offices and classrooms all over Ontario



THE AUTISM ONTARIO SERVICE NAVIGATION PROGRAM



What We Do

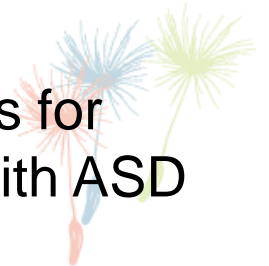
Provide support to families interested in accessing the OAP, currently registered in the program and waiting for a Childhood Budget, or families currently receiving services



What We Do

Support is offered through workshops, training sessions, and individual direct support to:

- Help families understand the new Ontario Autism Program and the services available to purchase with their Childhood Budgets
- Find qualified providers
- Support families in navigating autism services, including helping them find local services and supports in their communities
- Work in collaboration with families to set meaningful goals
- Provide access to parent resources and webinars
- Provide opportunities for families to connect with each other at events, including through peer-to-peer mentoring and social learning opportunities for children and youth with ASD



What We Don't Do

The Service Navigation Program does not:

- Provide families with service planning, case management, clinical support, behavioural services, or one-on-one parent coaching
- Partake in registration, intake, waitlist management, funding distribution, or reconciliation for the OAP



How it Works

Getting involved is easy!

Family visits **autismontario.com** and fills out an Intake form for Service Navigation



An Autism Ontario Service Navigator in their region is assigned to them and will reach out to schedule a phone call or face-to-face meeting



Autism Ontario's Service Navigator will help provide orientation to the new Ontario Autism Program including introducing them to the Childhood Budget process and helping them to make informed choices



Autism Ontario's Service Navigator will help families determine and prioritize their child's needs and goals



Autism Ontario's Service Navigator will connect families to local services and supports in their area



QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU!



Student Use of Service Animals in Schools	
Adopted: June 18, 2019	Last Reviewed/Revised:
Next Scheduled Review: 2022-2023	
Associated Policies & Procedures:	

Purpose

This policy recognizes that students with diverse learning needs may require, at times, services and accommodations to their program to allow them to access education. In addition to accommodations and services that can be utilized through human resources, technology, behaviour plans and strategies, students may at times require the need of a service animal to support their medical, behaviour or academic needs. This policy outlines the expectations and process for schools to adhere to when considering admittance and integration of a service animal into the school environment for the benefit of a student.

Application and Scope

This policy applies to all individuals of the Board who may be involved in the integration of a service animal into schools, including parents/guardians, principals, teachers and Board personnel who may have duties and/or responsibilities under this policy.

References

[Education Act](#)

[Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(2001\)](#)

[Blind Person's Rights Act](#)

[Special Education in Ontario, Kindergarten to Grade 12 – Policy and Resource Guide, 2017](#)

[Policy/Program Memorandum \(PPM\) 163, School Board Policies on Service Animals](#)

Definitions

Service Animal – means a certified animal that provides supports relating to a student's disability or medical related need(s) to assist that student in meaningfully accessing education.

Certified – means both the animal and handler have had training from a recognized Canadian training institution and the animal is registered as such in Canada.

Handler – The student with the disability or medical related need(s) for whom the certified service animal is performing services and who is managing and is responsible for the certified service animal's performance of those services. It is the expectation of the Board that the student utilizing a certified service animal will be the service animal's Handler.

Principles

- All students with exceptionalities, disabilities or medical related need(s) shall receive appropriate special education programs and services and have regular opportunities with their peers, to enjoy the life of the school, and to participate in local community activities.
- To access education, students may at times require accommodations, modifications and/or services to allow for this access, including service animals.
- Building on student independence must be the underlying consideration when considering appropriate accommodations, modifications and services.
- Schools recognize that student independence increases when accommodations, modifications and services are least intrusive.
- Any determination on appropriate accommodations, modifications and services must be made on a case by case basis, based on the individual needs of each student.
- Parents and School/Board Staff should work collaboratively when requests are made for the consideration of Service Animals to support students in schools.
- Procedures and Practices in the determination of whether to approve requests for Service Animals must be consistent and transparent to allow for meaningful consideration of requests for service animals to accompany students in school.
- School staff should consider the collection and review of data, when available, to help determine the appropriateness of utilizing service animals for students.
- The health, safety and any other appropriate concerns of other students and staff shall be considered when considering the approval for a service animal for students.
- Clear, timely and appropriate communication must be provided to school communities when service animals are approved to accompany students in schools.
- The Board must work collaboratively with Halton Student Transportation Systems (HSTS) when reviewing and considering students with service animals and how they can access board transportation.
- Requests for the use of a service animal should be approved when school/board staff have determined that it is the best accommodation to support the student's demonstrated disability or medical related needs.

Requirements

- The Board must develop an Administrative Procedure supporting the directive and principles outlined in this policy and PPM 163 - School Board Policies on Service Animals, and ensure comprehensive communication of the procedures to appropriate stakeholders.
- The Board must develop a process for data collection and to collect data regularly to help inform the policy and make amendments as appropriate.
- The Board must communicate to Principals and appropriate staff the expectations and directives in both the Policy and Administrative Procedure.
- Parents considering the use of a service animal for their child will be directed by school staff to this policy and accompanying administrative procedure for direction.

APPROVED: Regular Meeting of the Board

AUTHORIZED BY: _____
 Chair of the Board



Regular Board Meeting

Staff Report

Clustered Classes and Accelerated Learning Opportunities	Item 9.1
September 17, 2019	

Alignment to Strategic Plan

This report is linked to our strategic priority of **Achieving: Meeting the needs of all learners.**

Purpose

Over the past several years, The Board of Trustees have received and reviewed several delegations and Staff Reports with respect to Gifted students and what experiences and opportunities exist for secondary gifted learners. At the June 18th, 2019 Regular Board meeting, a motion was passed by the Board of Trustees requesting that “*Senior Staff examine the feasibility of clustered classes and/or accelerated learning opportunities in secondary schools that currently have the Advanced Placement (AP) Programme and prepare a staff report to the Board in September 2019*”. This report is collaboration of Program Services (Special Education, Student Success, and Curriculum), Research Development Services, Business and Planning Services and Academic Services.

Background Information and Comments

Advanced Placement (AP) Classes

Advanced Placement (AP) courses offer University level content to students at the Grade 12 level in selected subjects. The student is free to select which of the subjects available at the high school they wish to study at the pre-AP and AP level. Students in AP and Pre-AP study topics in greater depth, enhancing their intellectual development. AP provides students with an opportunity for learning that goes beyond facts and figures with rich course material, classroom discussion and demanding assignments to help children develop the knowledge and the critical thinking skills expected of university bound students. In grade 12 students may elect to write the college board AP exam which is scheduled during the first two weeks of May each year, which, based on the mark achieved, may give the student advanced standing in a university program. Any student in the board may choose to write the college board AP exam, regardless of their enrollment in Grade 12 AP or whether they attend an AP Secondary School.



Pre -Advanced Placement (AP) Classes

Pre-AP is an advanced series of courses for students to help begin preparing for university and is designated to be a rigorous preparation for AP courses in Grade 12. The courses are intended to be challenging. Students are not required to enroll or complete Pre-AP courses in order to enroll in an AP course in Grade 12 or write the AP Exam.

Advanced Placement (AP) at HCDSB

Advanced Placement (AP) and Pre-AP classes are offered at two (2) of our Secondary Schools – Assumption Catholic Secondary School and Bishop P.F. Reding Catholic Secondary School, while Pre-AP classes are offered at Holy Trinity Catholic Secondary School with the goal of Advanced Placement (AP) classes beginning at Holy Trinity Catholic Secondary School for the 2020/2021 School year.

With respect to Gifted students at these schools and enrollment in the AP classes, very few gifted students register in the Pre-AP or AP courses at Assumption and Bishop Reding Catholic Secondary Schools. Typically, the number of Gifted Students enrolled in AP courses are in the range of zero (0) to four (4) students registered in a specific course. This profile is based on the various courses offered at each site in the last two (2) years.

With regard to writing of the AP College Bound exam, every year, several Grade 12 regular stream students that attend non AP Schools in both HCDSB and HDSB initiate and make arrangements on their own to write the AP College Board Final Examinations at one of our AP sites. These students request and arrange to take the various exams at our two (2) accredited secondary schools. The school's AP Coordinator will order the exam materials, provide information regarding the date and time, and collect the exam fees that are paid by the student.

While the option to write the AP college exam is available to all students of the board, in the past two (2) years, no HCDSB gifted student who attends any of our other non-AP School has requested to do so despite the option for any student in the board to write the exam, regardless of their home school.

Clustered Classes

The term clustered class is a description, which speaks to an individual Board's decision to leverage expertise of staff in particular school sites to provide interested, gifted, and/or high achieving students with specific learning opportunities, such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Special High Skills Major (SHSM) or STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).

Although many school districts use the terms “gifted classes” and “clustered classes” interchangeably, they represent very distinct types of learning opportunities and have very different legal requirements in terms of staffing and student enrollment. Clustered classes are not placements, as defined by the Ministry of Education and cannot therefore be considered Special



Education classes for those identified as Gifted. The term clustered class is not a Ministry of Education definition for a particular type of program or class.

The Ministry identifies five (5) placements in the range of placements, which move along a continuum of least restrictive to most restrictive. Within the five (5) placements, two (2) are recognized as Special Education Classes. They are A *Special Education Class with Partial Integration* and a *Special Education Class Full-Time* and are defined below.

Special Education Class with Partial Integration: The student is placed by the Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) in a special education class where the student-teacher ratio conforms to the standards in O. Reg 298, section 31, for at least 50 percent of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.

Special Education Class Full time: The student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class, where the student-teacher ratio conforms to the standards in O. Reg. 298, section 31, for the entire school day.

According to regulation 298 Operation of Schools- General, under Appointment of Teachers, s 19 (4) and s. 19 (6) “an agreement under subsection (3) respecting the assignment or appointment of a teacher to teach a division or to teach a subject for which he or she does not hold a qualification... shall not be made so as to permit a teacher... to be appointed to, teach or be placed in charge of a special education program or class.”

For a school district to remain compliant with the regulation, the establishment of a “gifted class” for “gifted students” would require either a *Special Education Class with Partial Integration* or a *Special Education Class Full-time*. In either case, the class size would have to conform to the standards and the teacher would have to have the necessary qualifications (Special Education and Subject expertise), as defined by the Education Act. The creation of “Clustered Classes” would not necessitate the same requirements with respect to teacher qualifications or class sizes, however, it would also not be considered a special education class.

Considering the Halton Catholic DSB has an enrollment of secondary gifted students of less than 300, creating one of the 2 placements as defined above, could only be sustained within one centralized location, to allow students a robust level of secondary course options. Each student attending would have to be identified gifted and be IPRCd into the class. All subject teachers would have to be special education teachers, as defined by regulation 298.

With respect to clustered classes; should the board decide to create an additional clustered class at secondary sites where Advanced Placement (AP) classes are already in existence, there would be a duplication of enriched classes, drawing on the same high achieving students. In addition, there would be inequity among Halton Catholic DSB’s secondary schools with some schools having both AP and other types of clustered classes.



Accelerated Learning

There is no official description of “Accelerated Learning” in Secondary Schools in the Education Statutes and Regulations of Ontario. While Accelerated learning can generally refer to moving through courses and/or material more quickly – examples include skipping courses/grades, and completing courses online, for the purposes of this report, we will refer to “Accelerated Learning” in Secondary Schools as students who achieve more than eight (8) credits per grade, per school year.

All day school students attending any of our Secondary Schools are eligible to earn eight (8) credits during the regular school day over the course of a single school calendar year. This number includes any day school e-Learning courses taken through the Board or other Boards via the e-Learning Consortium. The Ministry of Education is currently developing new regulations and programming for e-Learning in Ontario slated to take effect in September 2020. There are no details available at this time about those new regulations and/or programming nor whether these e-credits could be taken in addition to the 8 regular in-school credits a student can take in a school year.

All students attending any of our Secondary Schools may earn additional credits either in a regular classroom environment or on-line at Night School and/or during Summer School. Students are also eligible to receive credit for prior learning via the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process. These opportunities allow for a student to achieve more than 8 credits in a school year.

Review of the Research and Literature on Clustered and Accelerated Classes in Secondary Schools by HCDSB Research and Development Services

Contents:

- 1) Satisfaction with AP and IB programming at the HCDSB: Students and parents
- 2) Interest in Accelerated programming at the HCDSB: Parents only
- 3) Interest in attending “regional type classes”: Students and parents
- 4) Cluster-Grouping Classrooms: Overview of literature

The data for items 1, 2 and 3 are based on results from two surveys administered at the HCDSB, described below. Though data were also collected from parents with children in elementary school, the data presented here reflect the views for secondary students and parents only. Information for item 4 is based on a literature review performed by RADS staff.



Gifted Student Survey – February 2018

Between January 16th and February 9th, 2018, all secondary gifted-identified HCDSB students were invited to participate in an online survey. This survey was developed to capture the perceptions, opinions, and satisfaction levels of gifted-identified students in three programs: regular academic stream, Advanced Placement (AP), and International Baccalaureate (IB). In total, 195 of the 241 gifted-identified students completed the survey (81% response rate). The respondents were distributed evenly among programs: 56% of respondents were enrolled in the regular academic stream, 31% in the AP program, and 13% in IB.

Gifted Parent Survey – May 2019

At the Regular Board Meeting held on November 20, 2018, the Board of Trustees approved a motion to conduct a survey of parents with students identified as Gifted. The online survey, developed by Research & Development Services and Special Education Services, was sent to eligible parents to complete between Wednesday April 24th and Wednesday May 8th, 2019. A total of 484 survey links were sent out, and 227 completed survey responses were received (47% response rate). Relevant survey results are summarized below.

Satisfaction with AP and IB programming at the HCDSB: Students and parents

STUDENTS

Students, regardless of their stream, were mostly satisfied with their courses including selection, pace, schedule, instruction and material/content. Overall, rates of dissatisfaction ranged between 10-15% for all students, regardless of stream. Satisfaction with courses overall were 71.7%, 74% and 76.2% for AP, IB and Academic, respectively. Two key exceptions were that IB students expressed a great deal of dissatisfaction with the course selection (64%) and AP students expressed dissatisfaction with the schedule of their courses (22%).

The consistency in satisfaction ratings across these different program options likely reflects how well these programs meet the different personality, motivation, and priorities of our students, which is consistent with the literature. There is no universally accepted definition for gifted, meaning data to date almost certainly involves a heterogeneous group of learners with different abilities, priorities, social functioning, motivation and learning paths (Gagné, 2007; Thomas, 2018).

PARENTS

75% of all respondents indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with their child's courses overall, in their respective programs. Broken down by program, satisfaction with courses was rated as 80%, 68% and 28% for students in academic, AP and IB streams, respectively.



Though courses not being challenging enough was identified as an issue for parents of children in the academic stream, courses being too challenging was a concern for AP stream parents, and lack of selection was the primary concern of parents with students in the IB program. This suggests, similar to the student data, that these streams offer a variety of benefits and challenges, to meet the needs of all learners.

1) Interest in Accelerated programming at the HCDSB: Parents only

Accelerated learning (AL) generally refers to moving through courses and/or material more quickly – examples include skipping courses/grades, and completing courses online. At the HCDSB, the AP program represents the main type of AL currently available to our students. Please note: Only parents of gifted students were asked this question.

Results: 31% of respondents indicated they would want their child to be enrolled in an AL program if it were available; 35% were unsure and 34% indicated they were not interested in AL for their child. Parents who indicated that they would choose or might consider choosing accelerated programming expressed three main concerns: (1) more programming options; (2) current programming not meeting their child's needs; (3) their child's social functioning.

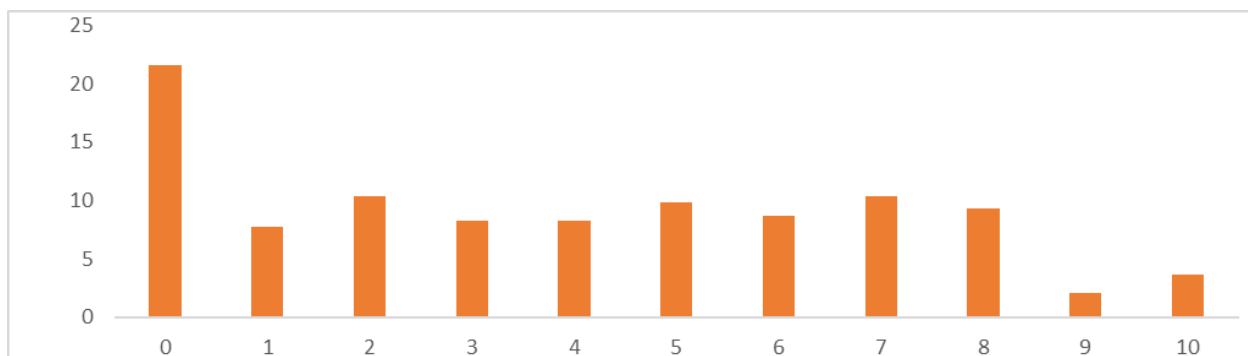
2) Interest in attending “regional type classes”: Students and parents

STUDENTS

Students were asked how likely they would be to enrol in a Gifted program that groups them with their high-ability peers, if it meant they would have to travel to another school (on a moveable scale of 1 – 10); see Figure 1 below. Responses suggested that 56% would be unlikely to move (0-4), while 34% would be likely to move (6-10) and 10% were neutral (5). Almost 22% indicated a definitive “no” (0), while only 3.6% indicated a definitive “yes” (10).

Figure 1: Likelihood of enrolling in a gifted program requiring extensive travel

Percent of respondents



**Sliding scale 0 (Not at all likely) to 10 (Very likely)**

For students both likely and unlikely to want specialized programming, social factors were the top reasons cited – respondents wanted to stay with their peers. Students who indicated they were more likely to move schools indicated a preference to stay with their like-ability peers, while those who indicated a preference to stay in their home school indicated a desire to stay with their mixed-ability peers. In fact, more than 50% of respondents indicated they wanted to stay with their peers/friends, regardless of stream.

Regarding specialized programs (e.g. courses for gifted students), less than 20% of students in the academic stream indicated they would prefer this, compared to 22-28% in AP and 32-36% in IB streams. This suggests that the vast majority of students (64-83%) did not want to be in programs specifically designed for gifted students. Of note, less than 4% (n=7) expressed concern that they did not have access to program information before they entered high school and that this may have influenced their decision.

PARENTS

Ninety-one parents responded to the question of whether they would consider clustered programming for their child in secondary school, defined as gifted students placed with their high academic achievement peers in a classroom that would provide differentiated learning opportunities. The survey indicated that this option would likely be offered at select schools, and could necessitate transportation to schools outside of their child's neighbourhood. With the above description provided, only 30% of parents would choose clustered programming; 46% stated maybe, and 24% stated they would not.

Together, these results suggest that grouping gifted children exclusively with their like-ability peers, especially if it means going to a school outside of their neighbourhood, is not a preferred option for gifted students or their parents.

3) Cluster-Grouping Classrooms: Overview of literature

At the HCDSB, we have used the term “clustered” to describe classes that would group gifted children together, and which could require students to attend a school that is outside of their boundary. In the literature, this model is usually referred to as “self-contained” classrooms while “cluster-grouping” is commonly used to describe a strategy where 3-10 high ability, high achieving, or gifted students are placed in a regular classroom with a teacher who has either received training or has a desire to differentiate curriculum and instruction for these ‘target’ students (Brulles & Winebrenner, 2011; Matthews et al., 2013). This cluster-grouping model is generally viewed as less disruptive than fully segregated, self-contained classrooms. To adopt a cluster-grouping approach to teaching, there should be a clear need for differentiated curriculum; the label of ‘gifted’ is not sufficient to implement cluster-grouping classrooms (Biddick, 2009) and the curriculum should be customized to the learners’ needs (Rogers, 2007). This model provides the ability to socialize with like-ability peers, while maintaining connections with non-gifted classmates (Brulles & Winebrenner, 2011; Teno, 2000) and



avoiding the stigma attached to specialized classes (Biddick, 2009). Cluster grouping provides gifted students the opportunity to select more challenging activities and produce more in-depth, quality products because they are working with like-ability peers in the classroom environment (Teno, 2000; Brulles et al., 2012). This model expands upon the current IEP model at the HCDSB, by grouping high achieving students in the same classroom and providing customized learning opportunities above and beyond the regular curriculum.

Research on student outcomes, both gifted and non-gifted, also strongly supports the critical importance of positive peer and teacher-student relationships. Our students have told us that social functioning is important to them, particularly in high school, as 50% of respondents in our 2018 Student Survey indicated peer relationships as a motivating factor in choosing their courses/programs. Gifted students who feel disengaged from students and staff and/or who feel like they don't belong are more likely to drop out of high school (Hansen & Johnston Toso, 2007; Zabloski, 2010). In fact, The Search Institute®, a well-respected advocacy group for children and youth, states that *“After decades of forming hypotheses, conducting surveys, crafting and rewriting definitions, analyzing data, and writing journal articles, {we} have arrived at a surprisingly simple conclusion: nothing—**nothing**—has more impact in the life of a child than positive relationships.”* (<https://www.search-institute.org/new-research-report/>). This conclusion is based on research involving more than 5 million youth (Scales & Pekel, 2018), and is consistent with data in adults that poor social functioning can adversely affect well-being (Hawkley & Capitanio, 2015).

A focus on diversity of options, individualized support, grouping children by achievement and promoting positive relationships are fiscally responsible and effective strategies, allowing students to attend their neighbourhood school and choose the path that best meets their individual needs and goals. Overall, the literature is consistent with our survey results, and the conclusions in this report, that in a board where we offer a variety of options and support for high-ability learners, self-contained classrooms (e.g. regional secondary gifted class) are neither necessary nor sufficient to meet the diverse needs of our gifted learners.



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TRANSPORTATION

With the introduction of clustered classes and accelerated learning as a Board offered program, there will be additional transportation costs that will be incurred to accommodate the student body.

The below summary provides two (2) scenarios that were reviewed by senior staff in collaboration with the Halton Student Transportation Services consortium to determine the additional transportation costs associated to this initiative pending the preferred delivery method.

To determine the costs associated to transportation, HSTS used the existing number of Elementary Self-Contained Gifted Students by grade as of September 2019, which are currently enrolled at the Board. HSTS has also assumed a similar geographic displacement for the proposed clustered program. The data is listed in Table 1 below:

Table 1: September 2019 – Self-Contained Gifted Students by Grade

AREA	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Total
Oakville	22	21	15	9	67
Burlington	3	5	7	8	23
Halton Hills		3	2	1	6
Milton	5	13	5	9	32
Grand Total	30	42	29	27	128

Scenario 1: Programs located at existing AP Schools

The following assumptions were made in developing this scenario:

- 1) Locate program at schools with an existing Advanced-Placement program, and mimic similar service areas, which are defined as follows:
 - a. Bussing for all Grade 9-12 Gifted students from Milton and Halton Hills directed to Bishop P.F. Reding Catholic Secondary School;
 - b. Bussing for all Grade 9-12 Gifted students from Oakville directed to Holy Trinity Catholic Secondary School; and,
 - c. Bussing for all Grade 9-12 Gifted students from Burlington directed to Assumption Catholic Secondary School.

Based on the above, the following sections provide a breakdown of the transportation needs by the designated AP School geographic service area.

Town of Oakville – Holy Trinity CSS Location

Currently there are 67 students enrolled in Gifted Classes in Grades 5-8.

- 1) 33 students are in Holy Trinity Catholics Secondary School boundary
- 2) 16 students are in St Thomas Aquinas Catholics Secondary School boundary
- 3) 18 students are in St Ignatius of Loyola Catholics Secondary School boundary



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Yellow bus requirements would be:

- 1) 1 big bus; and,
- 2) 1 mini bus.

Note: that there are sharing opportunities with White Oaks High School through run sharing/student transfers.

City of Burlington – Assumption CSS Location

Currently there are 23 students enrolled in Gifted Classes Grades 5-8.

- 1) 6 students are in Assumption Catholics Secondary School boundary (AP school)
- 2) 14 students in Notre Dame Catholics Secondary School boundary
- 3) 3 students in Corpus Christi Catholics Secondary School boundary.

Yellow bus requirements would be:

- 1) 0 big bus; and,
- 2) 2 mini buses.

Note: there are sharing opportunities with Nelson High School through run sharing/student transfers.

Halton North (Milton and Halton Hills) – Bishop P.F. Reding CSS Location

Currently there are 38 students enrolled in Gifted Classes Grades 5-8.

- 1) 14 students are in Bishop Reding Catholics Secondary School boundary (AP school)
- 2) 18 students are in Jean Vanier Catholics Secondary School boundary
- 3) 6 students are in Christ the King Catholics Secondary School boundary

Yellow bus requirements would be:

- 1) 1 big bus; and,
- 2) 1-2 mini buses (Acton and Georgetown).

Note: there are sharing opportunities with Craig Kielburger High School for students from Acton and Georgetown through run sharing/student transfers.

Scenario 1 Costs

Based on the above defined needs by AP School areas, HSTS attributed the additional costs that would be required to service these students. Note that a price has been provided if these students were all provided bussing, as well as an alternative approach if Transit Passes were provided (B) instead (note Halton Hills does not have municipal transit and would need to be bussed).

In summary, additional bussing costs (A) would equate to \$317,257 per year with the addition of two (2) big busses and four (4) mini-buses. If transit (B) is pursued, there would be an annual cost of \$109,492 for the program.

Table 2: Transportation Costs for Scenario 1

AREA	School Bus	Bussing Cost (A)	Transit	Transit/Bus Cost (B)
Oakville	1 big bus, 1 mini bus	\$104,288	24 passes @ \$82.40/month	\$23,731
Burlington	2 mini buses	\$101,225	17 passes @ \$75.00/month	\$15,300



AREA	School Bus	Bussing Cost (A)	Transit	Transit/Bus Cost (B)
Milton	1 big bus	\$54,243	18 passes @ \$60.00/month	\$12,960
Halton Hills	1 mini bus	\$57,501	Not Available	\$57,501
TOTAL	2 big/4 mini buses	\$317,257		\$109,492

Scenario 2: Program located within a central location of the Board

The following assumptions were made in developing this scenario:

- 1) Locate program at a central school within the Region, which also has the necessary room to accommodate students without the need to introduce a significant number of portable classrooms.

Given the above, Corpus Christie Catholic Secondary School was selected as the preferred candidate to house the program for its location and available pupil spaces. Presently as of September 2019, there are 1,097 students, resulting in a utilization of 93%.

Service Parameters & Transportation requirements:

The following service parameters were used to define the routes and determine bussing needs for the 126 students that would be eligible for transportation under this scenario (note these align with HSTS and Board policies and procedures):

- 1) Runs not to exceed 60 minutes
- 2) Distance to stop not to exceed 600 metres
- 3) Bell times at Corpus Christi remain (8:15 – 2:20)

Based on the parameter, HSTS developed routes for students based on their geographic location. Table 3 below provides the vehicles that will be required to accommodate the service, as well as other pertinent information on the route.

Table 3: Transportation Costs for Scenario 1

Yellow Bus	Vehicle Type	Max Travel Time	Average Travel Time	Average Distance to Stop
Oakville	3 big buses	60 minutes	35 minutes	240 metres
Burlington	1 big bus	56 minutes	27 minutes	310 metres
Milton	2 big buses	58 minutes	37 minutes	340 metres
Halton Hills	2 mini buses	59 minutes	44 minutes	150 metres

Scenario 2 Costs

Similar to Scenario 1, there is only an opportunity to rely on transit passes for the City of Burlington given the amount of time required to travel for students, resulting in much fewer transportation savings.

In summary, additional bussing costs (A) would equate to \$438,000 per year with the addition of six (6) big busses and two (2) mini-buses. If transit (B) is pursued, there would be an annual transportation cost of \$402,517 for the program.

**Table 4: Transportation Costs for Scenario 1**

AREA	School Bus	Bussing Cost (A)	Transit	Transit/Bus Cost (B)
Oakville	3 big buses	\$161,028	Not available	\$161,028
Burlington	1 big bus	\$53,483	20 passes @ \$75.00/month	\$18,000
Milton	2 big buses	\$108,486	Not available	\$108,486
Halton Hills	2 mini buses	\$115,003	Not available	\$115,003
TOTAL	6 big/2 mini buses	\$438,000		\$402,517

Conclusion

In reviewing the student and parent surveys, along with Ontario regulations regarding identification and placements, the following are the Board staff's recommendations for consideration:

- That the Board not pursue a regional secondary gifted class, as our student and parent surveys tell us that the majority of students have a wide range of priorities for the secondary school years, ranging from more programming options to more integration and social skills, and prefer to remain in their home schools, wherever possible. Furthermore, the limited number of gifted secondary students who may consider choosing this option, would result in a small cohort of students, limiting the number of optional classes they could enroll in.
- That each individual student, along with his/her parents be encouraged to make individual decisions, from a range of options that best meet their individual preferences, addressing areas of both strength and need
- That the Board not pursue creating clustered classes at sites where AP already exists, as AP is a clustered class by its definition, and as indicated, would draw on the same high achieving and gifted students, thereby cannibalizing existing programs.
- That secondary school Guidance and Special Education Departments work together to ensure gifted students are placed in the same classes wherever possible, to allow for maximum opportunities for participation and collaboration between like-ability peers
- That all gifted and other high achieving students consider exploring the unique and individual, optional classes/programs that are available at each of our secondary schools, such as AP, IB, French Immersion, SHSM, and STEM classes
- Students and their parents should consider Reach Ahead type credits such as night and summer school, and e-learning, to advance credit accumulation, which allows for a greater breadth of course selection and pace
- That Board staff provide greater professional development opportunities for secondary staff to support gifted learners and other high achieving students
- That the Board consider expanding optional classes/programs, such as AP, SHSM, IB, etc., into regions where they don't currently exist, such as North Halton, specifically Georgetown. This would address issues of equity across the Board



Report Prepared by:

Camillo Cipriano
Superintendent of Education, Special Education Services

Colin McGillicuddy
Superintendent of Education, Student Success

Anna Prkacin
Superintendent of Education, Curriculum Services

Toni Pinelli
Superintendent of Education, School Services

Laura Keating
Chief Officer, Research and Development Services

Fred Thibeault
Senior Manager, Planning and Assessment Services

Wendy Reid-Purcell
Special Education Coordinator, Special Education Services

Melissa Carnelos
Curriculum Coordinator (Acting), Curriculum Services

Report Submitted by:

Camillo Cipriano
Superintendent of Education, Special Education Services

Report Approved by:

Pat Daly
Director of Education and Secretary of the Board

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Association Report

Association:	Learning Disabilities Association of Halton-Hamilton
Representative:	Tammy Beattie
Meeting Date:	September 30, 2019
Upcoming Events or Conferences	<p>Corporate Breakfast Tuesday October 1, 2019 at 7:00am - 9:30am Lincoln Alexander Centre – Hamilton, Ontario Keynote Speaker: Rick Green This is to celebrate the expansion of our Learning Disabilities chapter to cover Halton and Hamilton, a general population of 1.5 million, of whom approximately 125,000 will have learning disabilities. Tickets are \$30, \$25 for non-profit</p> <p>Lecture Series: Decoding the Psychoeducational Assessment Thursday, November 28. 6:30 pm Presented by: Tara Carman, ADHD Coach, Owner and Director of the Artemis Assessment and Treatment Centre</p> <p>Parent Advocacy Workshops: An Introduction to Advocacy and I.E.Ps 2019-2020 Workshop Dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 24, 2019 • November 25, 2019 • January 22, 2020 • May 4, 2020 All workshops run from 7:00 – 9:00 pm</p> <p>Workshops and Lecture Series \$30, \$25 for members</p>
Website links/Brochure /Flyer attachments:	https://ldahalton.ca/breakfast/ https://ldahalton.ca/solutions-learning-lecture-series/
New Initiatives:	
Other Information:	