



HCDSB SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN 2025-2026



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Introduction and Overview

The Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB) recognizes that all people are created equal, in the image of God, each with inimitable characteristics deserving of dignity (Genesis: 1:27). In accordance with the Church's teachings, it is the policy of HCDSB to provide in all its operations an educational environment which supports and fosters diversity, equity and inclusion within its Catholic community. ([Equity and Inclusive Education Policy No. II- 45](#)).

The Halton Catholic District School Board's Special Education Annual Plan is intended to provide both an overview of Special Education Programs and Services in the Board, as well as accompanying details that support our work throughout the system to ensure that every student has meaningful access to the education and supports, they require for success. This plan is meant to provide information about Special Education Services and to accurately summarize and highlight key system initiatives, projects, and processes that support students with special education needs and their families. The plan has been developed in compliance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Education Act and Regulations made under the Act, and other relevant legislation.

Contained within this plan are provincial and Ministry of Education (MEDU) expectations, which include the Identification Placement Review Committee (IPRC), placement options, transition planning, and information about the Individual Education Plan (IEP). There is also information about approaches and philosophies specific to HCDSB, such as inclusion and student independence. Specific details about equipment, transportation in Halton, assessment processes, and coordination with community partners are also included. Specific programs, projects, and strategies such as, ABA for All, and the Mental Health Strategy, to name a few, are also highlighted within this document. Governed by the Education Act and further defined by Policy/Program Memoranda (PPM) concerning special education, we have a philosophy of inclusion which provides transparency in our development of processes and procedures, and our projects and initiatives illustrate how inclusion has been actualized. Our faith and commitment to each student with special education needs is what guides our daily work and informs our ongoing work on behalf of the students and families we serve.

The various special education academic staff and clinical departments collaboratively contribute to this document. Academic contributions are made by Special Education Coordinator and Consultants, and our Blind Low Vision and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Itinerants. Our Social Work, Psychology, Speech and Language Pathologists, Mental Health, and Behaviour Analyst departments make clinical contributions. The Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) also plays a key role in contributing to this document by providing feedback throughout the year on presentations and discussions at SEAC, as well as through time set aside at SEAC meetings to discuss elements of the Special Education Plan. The insight provided by SEAC is an important part of the development of the Special Education Plan, as members of SEAC represent local organizations and the community at large. They bring an important lens to both the content and clarity of the plan.

This plan should always be considered as it is intended, as an overview of provincial mandates and expectations, processes, projects and initiatives that are current in the special education department. We encourage feedback from our valued stakeholders and community associations represented in SEAC to evolve a plan that best suits the needs of the students in our care.



Multi Year Strategic Plan



Model for Special Education

As a model learning community that is distinctly Catholic, all HCDSB students are supported to **Achieve, Believe, Belong and Become** in accordance with the core principles of our Catholic Social Teachings that create equitable outcomes for all.

The HCDSB has long promoted the inclusion of students with special education needs in regular classrooms in the student's neighbourhood school, where possible. This approach is motivated by an interest in maintaining students in the communities in which they reside, by promoting a sense of belonging in the school, in the worship community of the parish, and in the neighbourhood.

The regular classroom in a student's community school is the first placement option considered for all students according to the MEDU for the Province of Ontario [Regulation 181/98 S. 17 (1-2)]. Special Education Staff work within a Tiered Model of Intervention to build capacity and provide school-based staff strategies to support student success and well-being. The Special Education and Student Mental Health Services Tiered Model of Intervention continues to be the key strategy of our evidenced-based service delivery model, with equity, engagement, and evidence found at all tiers.



TIER 1: FOUNDATIONAL – GOOD FOR ALL

Tier 1 is the everyday work that school staff implement to create foundations for safe, inclusive, and welcoming learning environments that support student achievement and well-being in our Catholic schools. School staff collaborate with families and other board personnel and/or external providers (where appropriate), to create a positive school climate focusing on promotion and prevention

TIER 2: RESPONSIVE – NECESSARY FOR SOME

Tier 2 focuses on prevention and early intervention responses. In every class and school, there will be some students that require additional support. School staff, such as the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) or Child and Youth Counsellor (CYC), reinforce skills and work to remove barriers to learning through a variety of approaches, including individual and/or group intervention, based on student needs. Through a school-based referral process, differentiated support may be provided by board personnel (e.g. Behaviour Analysts, Psychoeducational Consultants, Speech Language Pathologists) or external agencies.

TIER 3: INTENSIVE – ESSENTIAL FOR FEW

Tier 3 services support students requiring more intensive assessment and intervention services. At Tier 3, multiple disciplines are often involved with one (1) student. Support is individualized and provided through board personnel and in collaboration with school staff, such as Social Workers (SW), and/or external agencies. School and board personnel may assist students and families to access appropriate external agencies for support; some of which may require a school-based referral process.

A copy of the Tiered Model can be found in Appendix B.

Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process

Part D of the MEDU's publication *Special Education in Ontario: Kindergarten to Grade 12 - Policy and Resource Guide 2017* specifically addresses the IPRC process, which is in line with the process at HCDSB. This can be found on the MEDU's website [by clicking here](#). This link may also be of assistance: [The identification and placement of exceptional students | Special education in Ontario Kindergarten to Grade 12 – Policy and resource guide | ontario.ca](#)

The Halton Catholic District School Board's IPRC process aligns with the MEDU's expectations as outlined in Regulation 181/98 of the Education Act. All placements consider relevant student information along with school and parental/guardian feedback, with the best interests of the student at the center of all decision making. The HCDSB endeavours to offer options that meet the needs of exceptional students while keeping their academic, social-emotional, mental health, physical, and spiritual needs at the heart of our decision-making.

What is an IPRC?

An IPRC (Identification, Placement, and Review Committee) is a committee established by every school board in Ontario. It is composed of a minimum of three people: i) The committee "Chair" who must hold the position of school Principal or an assigned designate, or alternatively, a supervisory officer; ii) The other two members are either special education resource teachers or regular teachers appointed by the Chair. This committee makes the formal decision about whether a student is exceptional and whether they require a special education program. Parents/Guardians (and students who are 16 years of age or older) are not only invited but also encouraged to participate in IPRC meetings. The Parent/Guardian may either agree with and consent to the student's identification and placement, request further discussion, or disagree with the IPRC's decision and initiate an appeal process.



What is the role of the IPRC?

First, the IPRC decides whether a student should be identified as exceptional. This decision involves a comprehensive review of various factors, including assessments, observations from teachers, parents/guardians, among others. Second, if the student is exceptional, the committee must identify the area(s) of exceptionality, according to the definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education. Third, the IPRC considers the strengths and needs of the student to determine the appropriate special education “placement”. A placement defines where the special education program will be delivered and the reason for the placement if other than a regular class. After the initial IPRC meeting, parents/guardians receive invitations from the school to annually review the student’s identification and placement, recognizing that the student’s needs may evolve over time.

How is an IPRC meeting requested?

An IPRC meeting at HCDSB can be initiated in two ways: i) The Principal may initiate an IPRC meeting if it is believed that a student may benefit from a special education program. In this case, the principal sends written notice to the parent/guardian, referring the student to an IPRC. or ii). If a parent/guardian believes their student would benefit from a special education program, they also can request an IPRC by sending the principal a letter requesting the meeting. Upon receipt, the principal will request an IPRC meeting on their behalf. Within 15 days of receiving the request or giving notice, the Principal, will provide a copy of this [Parent Guide](#) and a written statement of approximately when the IPRC will meet. Typically, IPRC meetings are conducted at the school where the student attends.

What information will I receive before the IPRC meeting?

At least 10 days before the scheduled meeting, the parent/guardian will receive a letter inviting them to the IPRC meeting and specify the time and location of the meeting. The parent/guardian will also receive a written copy of any information about their student that the Chair of the IPRC has received. This may include assessments, reports, or a summary of information. Through the letter the parent/guardian will also be invited to confirm their attendance at the meeting

What if I am unable to attend the scheduled meeting?

If the parent/guardian is unable to attend the scheduled meeting, they can contact the school principal to arrange an alternate date or time. Alternatively, if the parent/guardian chooses not to attend, the principal will send the written IPRC Statement of Decision after the meeting which will inform the parent/guardian of the outcome of the IPRC. The parent/guardian will be asked to sign and return the Statement of Decision to the school Principal

What happens at an IPRC meeting?

After the Chair introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting, the IPRC will review all available information, including any results of assessments, and any other information submitted or that the student submits if they are 16 years of age or older.

With parent/guardian consent (if the student is less than 16 years of age), and if the IPRC feels it would be beneficial, the committee may request to interview the student. During this process, the parent/guardian will be encouraged to ask questions and participate in the discussion. Following this, the committee will make its decision about whether the student is an exceptional student and in what category. Sometimes the IPRC will recommend that further assessments be carried out before a decision is made. If the student is identified as exceptional, the committee will also determine the appropriate “placement” for the student’s education

How does the IPRC decide on placement?

The Ministry of Education remains committed to the principle of integrating exceptional students as the standard practice in Ontario. The Inclusion and Range of Placement Policy established by HCDSB indicates that the initial placement for all exceptionalities is the regular classroom, but that the appropriateness of the placement is determined through an examination of the student’s needs. *The placement chosen must be in the best interest of the student and must take into consideration the parent’s/guardian’s wishes.*

What happens after the IPRC has made all its decisions?

The recommendations of the IPR Committee will be documented in a written Statement of Decision. This Statement of Decision will inform the parent/guardian whether the student has been identified as exceptional, along with the specific category of exceptionality according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities as defined by the Ministry of Education.

Additionally, the recommended placement for the student will be outlined in the Statement of Decision. Also listed will be the students' strengths and needs, and the IPRC's recommendations about the programs and services the student may need, if any.

If the parent/guardian agrees with the IPRC decisions, they will be invited to sign their name on the Statement of Decision. The parents/guardians are not obligated to sign the consent at the IPRC meeting but can take additional time to consider the decision. The Statement of Decision may be taken home for further review and returned within 15 days. If after 15 days the statement is not signed, and no appeal has been made, the IPRC decision is upheld. If the parent/guardian signs consent to the Statement of Decision, and the student has been identified exceptional, the principal of the school where the Special Education Program is to be provided, will be notified to begin the process of developing an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for the student.

[Regulation 181/98](#), which governs the legislation supporting the identification and placement of exceptional pupils, requires Boards to review the identification and placement at least once in each school year, unless the parent/guardian gives written notice dispensing with the review, thus maintaining access to special education programs and services as determined by the most recent IPRC. Although IPRC meetings are typically convened annually, more than one IPRC can be held within a year provided that a minimum of three months has passed since the last IPRC meeting. This additional meeting can be initiated at the formal written request of the parent/guardian and/or upon the recommendation of the school. In collaboration with home and school, the HCDSB strives to ensure appropriate identification and placement for all students through fostering positive collaboration and communication between home and school.

If a parent/guardian wishes to appeal an IPRC decision or review, the request for an appeal must be filed with the secretary of the board within the following time limits:

- within thirty days of receiving the IPRC's statement of decision; or
- within fifteen days of receiving the IPRC's statement of decision arising out of a follow-up meeting with the IPRC.

When a parent files a notice of appeal, the IPRC placement being appealed is not implemented, pending the results of the appeal. However, there is nothing to prevent the parents and the school board from agreeing to the terms of a temporary placement pending the results of the appeal.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsections 26 \(2\) and \(3\)](#))

Note, the provision of educational programming may include the formal identification and placement of the student pursuant to [Regulation 181/98](#), preparation of an Individual Education Plan and ongoing consultation by and between professional staff. An Individual Education Plan (IEP), which describes the special education program and services required by a particular student, including any accommodations, modified expectations, and/or alternative expectations or programs, must be developed for each student who has been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC). An IEP *may* also be developed for any student who is receiving special education programs and/or related services but who has not been identified as exceptional by an IPRC. Not all students with special education needs meet specific criteria to fit into one of the five exceptionality categories defined by the Ministry of Education. Although these students would not require an IPRC, they are entitled equally to special education support and services as are students whose needs are known but a formal identification is not yet determined.

Below are the number of students identified and with non- identified IEPs for the school year 2023-2024:

School Year	Elementary		Secondary	
	Identified	Non-Identified	Identified	Non-Identified
2022-2023	2245	847	2210	544
2023-2024	2287	841	2207	657
2024-2025	2207	885	2156	837

Special Education Placements Provided by the Board

The Education Act provides a variety of placements for identified students which range from fully integrated regular class placement to fully specialized special education class placement with no integration. In recognition of the direction in both regulations, the Halton Catholic District School Board has developed [Policy II-29: Inclusion and Range of Placement – Options for Identified Exceptional Students](#).

In this policy, placement options offered in HCDSB are outlined. The placements range from classes within the student’s home school to specialized class placements. When a student’s needs cannot be met within the Board’s range of placements, the Education Act requires that “every board shall...provide or enter into an agreement with another board to provide in accordance with the regulations special education programs and special education services for its exceptional pupils.”

Available Placements at HCDSB

Option 1: Indirect Support: Elementary and Secondary

The student is placed in a regular class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialized consultative services from a qualified Special Education Resource Teacher



Option 2: Resource Support: Elementary and Secondary

The student is placed in the regular class for most or all day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified Special Education Resource Teacher. Students are integrated into the regular classroom in a purposeful manner, considering their need for professional and paraprofessional support.

When parents/guardians choose to have resource support as their student's placement, they understand that the responsibility for program planning and evaluation lies with the classroom teacher. The Special Education Resource Teachers provide support to the programs and services outlined in a student's IEP. Resource support may include modified program support in the classroom, direct intervention, and assistance by other staff.

Option 3: Withdrawal Assistance: Elementary and Secondary

The student is placed in a regular class and receives instruction outside of the classroom for up to 50 percent of the school day from a qualified Special Education Resource Teacher. Through withdrawal assistance students access more frequent, integrated and ongoing programming provided by specialized staff in their home schools.

Withdrawal programming may include enrichment, direct instruction in alternative curriculum as outlined in a student's IEP and/or intervention to address a student's identified need.

Options 4 & 5 – Special Education Classes with Partial Integration or Full time: Criteria for Entry into a Regional Special Education Specialized Class

- the student is registered and enrolled with the Halton Catholic District School Board
- the student has been identified as exceptional through an IPRC process, with committee members from HCDSB
- based upon parent/guardian consultation and the recommendation of the committee, a decision regarding the most beneficial placement in a specialized class is made. Consideration is based upon the student's strengths and needs, assessment data, and whether the student meets the criteria for identification
- the student is placed in a Special Education class for a minimum of 50 percent of the school day with Option 4
- the student is placed in a Special Education class for the entire school day with Option 5

Schools share information about the range of placement options prior to the IPRC. Parents/guardians and students have an opportunity to visit the host schools of the specialized classes to assist them in making placement determinations. These visits are scheduled before or after school to maintain student confidentiality and minimize program disruption. In the spring of each school year, information sessions are scheduled for each of our specialized classes including the Gifted Classes, the Essential Skills Classes, and the Structured Teaching Classes.

Community Living Class: Elementary

There is currently one special education classroom that serves elementary students identified as Multiple and/or Intellectual: Developmental Disability. The Community Living Class is for students with multiple exceptionalities. There are up to 10 students in this class. The admission criteria for this class are heavily weighted in favour of students who have complex needs, are not ambulatory, and require support for adaptive functioning needs (e.g., feeding and toileting), and in some cases, nursing care. Community Living Classes are for students from junior kindergarten to grade 8.

Structured Teaching Classes: Elementary

Sometimes, a student's profile indicates that a specialized class would best suit his or her needs. The Structured Teaching Class is a Community Class for students who are on an alternative academic program. The emphasis is on functional skill development in literacy and numeracy. In addition, the program encompasses refining students' daily living and employability skills, social skills, and communication skills. Elements of Structured Teaching methods are introduced to increase student independence and to prepare the students as they transition to secondary



school. Students participate in many events and activities offered in a regular school day. Structured Teaching Classes are for students in grades 5 to 8 with up to 10 students in the class.

Essential Skills Classes: Elementary

The Essential Skills Classes are specialized classes for students who are working on modified curriculum expectations that are at least 2 years below grade level in literacy and numeracy. Programming is focused on helping students who would benefit from a small class setting to address their specific learning needs. By implementing curriculum modifications, based on the individual student's IEP, the program helps students to acquire essential skills in literacy and numeracy, in an environment that supports the development of social skills and fosters learning skills. Students are usually integrated for a portion of the day to be with their same-age peers for subjects such as music, art, religion, gym, drama and dance. The HCDSB Essential Skills Classes serve students in grades 5 to 8 with up to 16 students in the class.

Life Skills Program: Secondary

The secondary Life Skills program is designed for students who are working on alternative (non-credit) curriculum with post-secondary goals of supported living and/or supported employment. Students may have a special education placement of 'Special Education: Full-Time', 'Special Education: Partial Integration'. Integration is based on special education placement as determined by IPRCs and in consultation with parents/guardians. Education goals focus on the improvement of employability or leisure skills. All students work on literacy and numeracy goals daily with a special education teacher. There are ***up to 15 students in each class on average.***

Specialized Classes for Gifted: Elementary

Specialized classes for students identified as Gifted provide opportunities for growth and friendship with students from regular classes as well as from likeability peers in a specialized class setting. Modifications of pace, depth and complexity will be provided according to the grade level Ontario curriculum. For a student to be considered eligible for gifted programming, their intellectual functioning must fall in the very superior range, at or above the 98th percentile as indicated on an appropriate full-scale psycho-educational assessment, or abbreviated cognitive ability screening as determined by the supervising psychologist or psychological associate. Students formally identified as Intellectual: Gifted in grades 5-8 are eligible to attend with up to 25 students in the class.

Clustering: Secondary

Secondary placements include options 1-3, as determined through an IPRC. Subsequently, clustering and accelerated learning opportunities are available to students who are identified as Gifted. Clustering is not a placement, as defined by the Ministry of Education, and cannot therefore be considered a Special Education class. Clustering refers to grouping Gifted students in a class otherwise heterogeneous in nature. HCDSB is committed to clustering students identified as Gifted, where possible, and timetabling allows, across course levels and subject areas, to allow for maximum opportunities for participation and collaboration between likeability peers. A decision about clustering a student in grade 9 will be made in collaboration with home and school at the transition meeting from grade 8 to grade 9. Continued collaboration between Guidance, the Special Education Department, and the family/student, will occur at all secondary schools, to determine if clustering is appropriate for that individual student. Parents/guardians will be made aware at the elementary gifted open house when considering placement options for newly identified students.

Individual Education Plans

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) developed by the Halton Catholic District School Board, comply with the Ministry of Education's standards for the development, implementation, monitoring, and review of IEPs. All members of the Halton Catholic District School Board continue to commit to on-going professional development and acquisition of new information and best practices regarding the development of individual education plans.



IEPs may be developed for any student whose profile and learning needs would benefit from individualized accommodations, modifications and/or alternative programming that is above and beyond differentiated instruction or universal design for learning provided by the classroom teacher.

IEP's can be non-identified or identified as a result of an IPRC. Both hold equal value in terms of supporting students in the classroom.

The Halton Catholic District School Board has a proactive and collaborative model which encourages extensive parent/guardian, student (mandatory if they are 16 years of age or older), school and central office staff involvement. Parent/guardian involvement is critical to the development of the IEP and input from community personnel, where appropriate, is sought.

Consultation with the student's parent/guardian and the student, school staff, support personnel and representatives of outside agencies or services are valuable sources of information and should be a continuous process throughout the development and implementation of a student's IEP.

Consultation with Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians provide a valuable perspective regarding their child's strengths, needs and interests as part of the development of the IEP. Open communication and cooperation between home and school ensures that all stakeholders involved have similar expectations with respect to the student's special education program and services. Principals are legally required to ensure that parents/guardians are consulted in the development of the IEP.

Parents/guardians receive communication from their school team in September inviting them to select their preferred method of consultation regarding the development of their student's IEP. Options that are offered to allow for parent/guardian consultation in the development of the IEP include: a meeting; a phone call; written or electronic correspondence or sending home a draft version of the IEP for review and input. Parents/guardians are invited to indicate their preference and return the letter to the school. The school team will then determine a plan of action to address the parents/guardians' selection.

Dispute Resolution

The Halton Catholic District School Board's IEP development process alleviates many differences of opinion at the outset since parents/guardians are encouraged to be fully engaged in the development of an IEP. A draft IEP is developed and sent home within 30 instructional days after the beginning of a new placement or a new school year, and during each reporting period, with additional input from parents/guardians. If revisions to an existing IEP are required, this procedure would be adhered to, and a parent/guardian meeting could follow to discuss the revised IEP. Parent/guardian suggestions are incorporated into the student's IEP whenever possible.

We believe that when parents/guardians are actively involved in the development of the IEP, the potential for disputes is significantly minimized. A collaborative model which involves meaningful and ongoing parent/guardian input is a necessary part of the development, implementation and maintenance of an effective and responsive IEP.

We continue to find that the sharing of information by all parties is also important to the development, implementation and maintenance of an effective and responsive IEP. In addition, equal access to information is necessary for dispute resolution to ensure that the needs of the student are best met. It is important, as part of the process, that both parties have access to information which directly affects the outcome of the IEP resolution process so that ultimately the needs of the student are best met.

Dispute resolution is a process by which parent/guardian(s) can engage with school and board staff if they disagree with contents of the IEP. The purpose of the dispute resolution process is to support the ongoing collaboration between parent/guardian(s) and staff. The following dispute resolution process will be implemented in the event of a dispute:



IEP Dispute Resolution

1. Parent/Guardian to Classroom Teacher and/or SERT (if unresolved)
2. Parent/Guardian to Principal (if unresolved)
3. Parent/Guardian to Special Education Consultant (if unresolved)
4. Parent/Guardian to Superintendent of Special Education and Student Mental Health Services (if unresolved)
5. Parent/Guardian to Director of Education

Ministry of Education staff would then be consulted if a situation cannot be resolved.

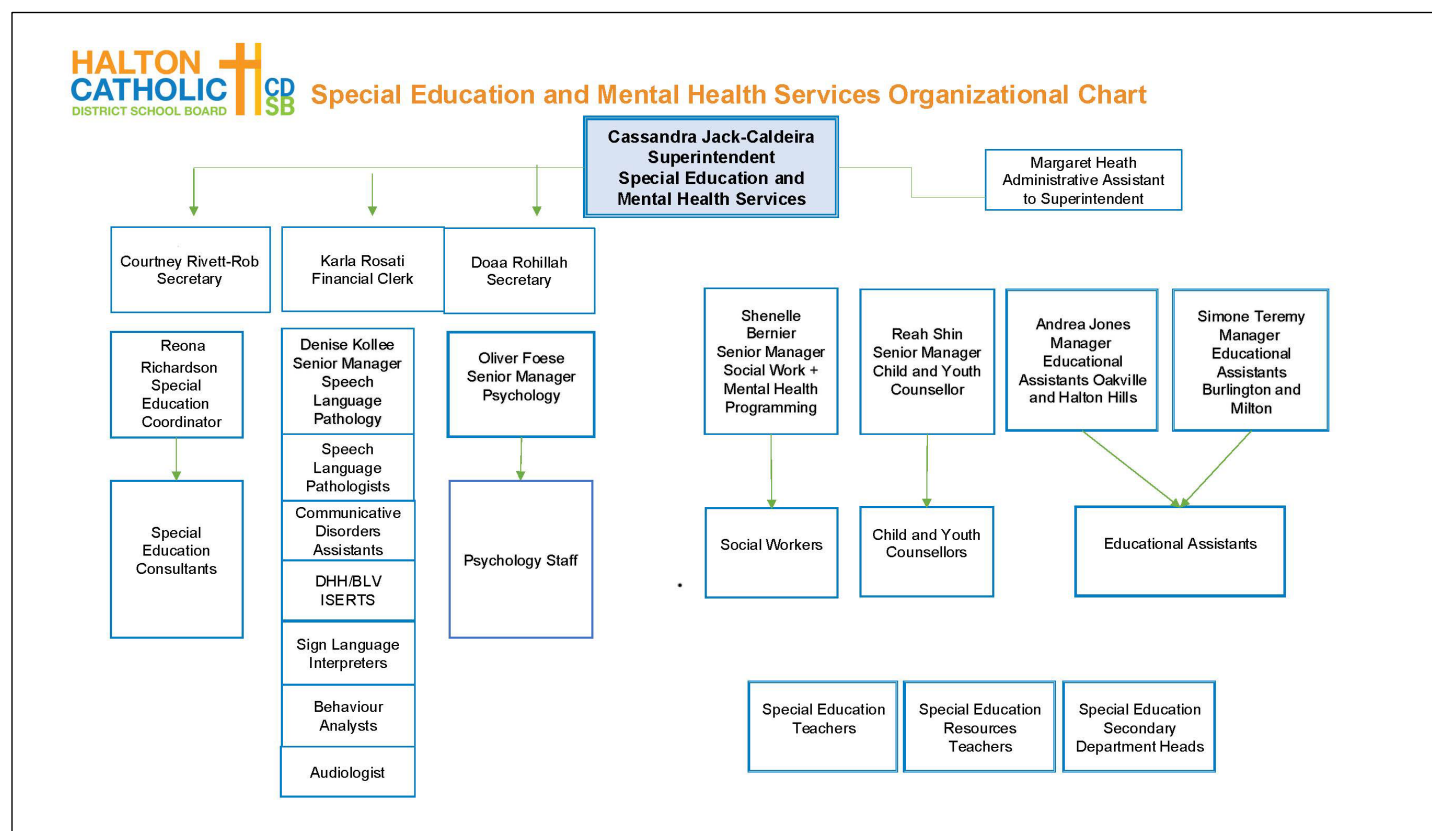
Special Education Staff

Special Education Staff		FTEs	Staff Qualifications
Teachers of exceptional students:			Ontario Teacher Certificate (OTC)
1.1	Teachers for resource-withdrawal programs	118.5	OTC, Special Education Part 1 (minimum)
1.2	Teachers Specialized classes–Elementary	18	OTC, Special Education Part 1 (minimum)
1.3	Teachers for Life Skills classes - Secondary	22	OTC, Special Education Part 1 (minimum)
2. Other special education teachers:			
2.1	Itinerant Teachers (DHH and BLV)	6	OTC, Teaching Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Part 1, Part 2 and/or Specialist) OTC, Mohawk or CNIB Transcribers Certificate with the Unified English Braille (UEB)
2.2	Coordinators	1	OTC, Special Education Specialist
2.3	Consultants	10	OTC, Master of Education degree and/or Special Education Specialists
2.4	Department Heads (Secondary)	10	OTC, Religious Education in Catholic Schools Part 1 and Completed Module 1 and 2 of the Board's current Leadership Program
3. Educational assistants in special education:			
3.1	EA Managers	2	Approved post-secondary qualifications and Certified Safe Management Trainers
3.2	Educational Assistants	505	Recognized College Certification or Equivalent and Certified in Safe Management
3.3	Itinerant Educational Assistants	12	Recognized College Certification or Equivalent and Certified Safe Management Trainers
4. Other professional resource staff:			
4.1	Senior Managers of Special Education	4	Registered with College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario, College of Audiologists & Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario, Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Services Workers
4.1	Psycho-Educational Consultants, Psychologists/Psychological Associates	10.6	Defined by College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario



4.2	Speech-Language Pathologists	11	Registered by College of Audiologists & Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
4.3	Communicative Disorders Assistants	5	CDA Ontario College Graduate Certificate
4.4	Audiologists	1	Services contracted and defined by College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
4.5	Child & Youth Counsellors	55	CYC Diploma
4.6	Social Workers	17	Registered with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Services Workers
4.7	Behaviour Analysts	6	Registered by College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario
5.	Paraprofessional resource staff:		
5.1	ASL interpreters (for deaf students)	3	Community College Certificate

The Halton Catholic District School Board Special Education and Student Mental Health Services continues to recognize the impact of building teacher and staff capacity in schools on student learning. The support structure of the HCDSB encourages the implementation of an instructional coaching model, a design intended to achieve effective teaching and learning in our schools.



Specialized Equipment

Beginning in 2024-25 school year, the Ministry of Education has changed the Specialized Equipment Amount (SEA) to Specialized Equipment Allocation (SEA). The SEA provides funding to school boards for the costs of specialized equipment essential to support students with special education needs.

Funding Model:

1. **Formula Component:** All boards will receive a base amount which increased from \$20,000 to \$200,000 and a per pupil amount which increased from \$39.461 to \$51.10. Funding can be used for any type of equipment, technology related or not, training, maintenance, and repairs related to equipment purchases, without enveloping, for individual students with special education needs. Fixed/capital items are ineligible.

2. **Claims-Based Component:** This funding is available for any single item (any equipment type technology related or not) costing \$5,000 or over before taxes for an individual student with special education needs).

When appropriate, (i.e. an approved prescription is received from a qualified practitioner), the Special Education Resource Teacher will request a Special Equipment Allocation (SEA) claim for purchases over \$200.00. The Ministry of Education funding and grant legislation states that funding can be used to purchase equipment for any student with a special need, where the equipment is required to support the students' access to the Ontario curriculum and/or alternate program.

Students do not need to be formally identified as an exceptional student, but their need for equipment must be recommended by a relevant qualified professional as outlined in the Ministry of Education SEA Guidelines.

The student's IEP will refer to the type and required use of Assistive Technology to ensure access to curriculum.

An assessment must be provided that includes a diagnosis or description of the condition the equipment is meant to address and a recommendation regarding the specific types of equipment the student requires.

Transportation for Students with Special Needs

All students identified with special education needs who are eligible for transportation may receive alternate transportation if they cannot be safely transported on regular school bus routes. The [*Halton Student Transportation Services \(HSTS\)*](#) has provided an online form for student transportation arrangements to be requested. To initiate alternate transportation, the home school staff enters an online *Special Transportation Request Form* to HSTS for submission to the Special Education Consultant to confirm eligibility. The Halton Catholic District School Board transports students who are admitted to government-approved facilities for care, treatment, custodial or correctional purposes, and who cannot attend a local school because of their primary need for the services provided by the facility. These programs are referred to as Care, Treatment, Custodial or Correctional Programs (CTCC), also commonly referred to as Section 23 programs. The Halton Catholic District School Board collaborates with the Provincial and Demonstration Schools to arrange transportation.

The criteria to determine whether students are transported individually or collectively are based exclusively on safety concerns, availability of vehicle space and equipment. A special transportation request may be made for students who have been identified and approved by the school board based on one or more of the following criteria:

- has a physical disability that prevents him/her/them from boarding a bus and walking to their seat
- attends a specialized program outside their school catchment area
- has been identified by the school boards' Special Education/Student Services Department as requiring special transportation

Special transportation requests are submitted and reviewed on an annual basis. Pick up and drop off locations are determined by HSTS based on program and/or student needs. In some cases, transportation requests may be reviewed and approved by the Superintendent of Special Education.

Parents/guardians can visit the HSTS website and enter their students' Ontario Education Number (OEN) to view the transportation arrangements for their student.

The [*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)*](#) mandates that school Boards develop individual accommodation plans for students who require special transportation. To be compliant with AODA, these plans are developed annually at the beginning of each school year and submitted on the Halton Student Transportation website.

Transition Planning

The HCDSB is committed to developing and supporting effective transition processes for all students with special education needs. School teams which may include the principal and/or vice principal, the Special Education Department Head (DH), the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT), the Early Childhood Educator, Behaviour Analyst, Speech Language Pathologists, and the Special Education Consultant, work collectively to support student transitions. HCDSB personnel work collaboratively with parents/guardians, students, school Board personnel and pertinent community agencies to develop and implement transition plans for all students: entering or exiting the HCDSB to or from home, community programs, or other schools; or transitioning from elementary schools to secondary schools both within and outside the HCDSB.

Transition processes may include a request to exchange information with external agencies, in which case written consent in the form of a signed "SE13b – Consent to Exchange Personal Student Information" is obtained. Observation visits and case conferences are also scheduled as appropriate. Parents/guardians are encouraged to consult the HCDSB Parent Guide for special education information.

[HCDSB Parent Guide](#). Students identified as exceptional by another board are not automatically recognized as such by HCDSB. Instead, when students enter the HCDSB, the school team follows HCDSB's identification process as outlined in the HCDSB Parent Guide.

Supporting the Transition to Kindergarten for Students with Diverse Needs

When registering their child for school, all parents/guardians are invited to complete the HCDSB Kindergarten Questionnaire, available online during the registration process. This form is for all students entering Junior Kindergarten. Parents/guardians of children with special education needs are also asked to complete the *Student Information Form (SE14)*. The information from both forms is shared with the school team and Special Education Consultant to help plan a smooth transition.

If a child is receiving support from a Halton Region Resource Consultant, families are encouraged to complete the *Transition to School from Halton Early Intervention Services Child Information Sheet*.

This is shared directly with HCDSB by the consultant, and staff ensure it reaches the appropriate school team. All families of incoming students with special education needs are invited to a Kindergarten Information Session, usually held each spring.

All parents/guardians of incoming students with special education needs will be invited to participate in a Kindergarten Information Session typically held in spring of each school year. The parent session may consist of:

- An overview of the special education delivery model
- information about support available through community agencies
- An introduction to Speech and Language Services within the Board
- A description of transition to school planning
- a presentation by a representative(s) from SEAC on their role and availability as support to parents/guardians
- an opportunity for questions to be shared

In the spring, the Special Education Consultant or school-based SERT will contact parents/guardians and may arrange to observe the child in their preschool or daycare setting. If the child is not enrolled in a program, a school visit may be arranged for observation. The home school's SERT attends the observation along with the Consultant or designate.

After the observation, a case conference may be scheduled with parents/guardians, daycare providers, and any professionals involved with the child (e.g., ErinoakKids therapists or Halton Region Resource Consultants).

Information is shared to support planning.

The meeting may include the principal, SERT, Consultant, classroom teacher (if known), Early Childhood Educator, and before/after school care providers, if applicable. Together with the family, a transition plan is created.

At this time, staff may also explain the IPRC process and provide a brief overview of the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

The Halton Catholic District School Board collaborates with ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Development/Halton Peel Preschool Speech and Language Program/OAP Entry to School to provide a seamless transition to school. Typically, Kindergarten transition plans include collaboration with pre-school nursery programs, pre-school programs for students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and the Pre-school Speech and Language Program. Halton Region Resource Consultants, private SLPs, and ROCK, are examples of other community support families who are typically involved with who can offer information that can assist with a student's transition to the school setting.

Supporting the Transition from Elementary to Secondary

In accordance with [Regulation 181/98](#) and [Policy Program Memorandum 156](#), a transition plan is developed for all students who are identified as Exceptional under the Education Act. Each *Individual Pathways Plan (IPP)* should be referenced to support the transition process throughout the school year and ongoing from year to year.

Planning for the transition to secondary school begins when a student enters the junior division. School teams and parents/guardians will begin to discuss secondary pathways as part of the administration and student participation in the Junior Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Assessment. Students who plan to work towards earning credits in secondary school are strongly encouraged to complete the EQAO Junior Assessment in grade 6.

Students with Special Needs who are working on Alternative Programs

Parents/Guardians of students who are working on completely alternative curriculum will be introduced to the family resource titled, [HCDSB Family Transition Guide](#). This resource provides a guide to the processes and partnerships involved in successful transition planning. It is intended to assist parents/guardians in delineating and working towards a particular "destination pathway" for their child on alternative curriculum. As family, school and community agencies work together to program for a student with special education needs, reference to this resource will be helpful in outlining five possible post-21 years of age destinations in the Halton community and the support level associated with each destination. Below is a summary of the pathways and the various support levels:

Post – Secondary Destination Pathway	Support Levels
Pathway 1: Support at Home	Approximate support ratio 1:1 or more - 1:5 Respite and community support provide 24/7 support. Respite/Community Participation Supports (Passport funding)
Pathway 2: Community Involvement	Varies depending on community involvement. Respite/Community Participation Supports (Passport funding)
Pathway 3: Day Programs Level One Day Programs Level Two	Approximate support ratio 1:5 - 1:8 Respite/Community Participation Supports (Passport funding) Approximate support ratio 1:8-1:16 Respite/Community Participation Supports (Passport funding)
Pathway 4: Employment	Community Participation Supports (Passport funding) Employment Supports
Pathway 5: College and Continuing Education Program	Community Participation Supports (Passport funding) Employment Supports

Please see the *HCDSB Family Transition Guide* for full descriptors of each of the Pathways.

Students with Special Education Needs who are accessing the Ontario Curriculum

Planning for the transition to secondary school continues throughout grade 7 and grade 8 as students are introduced to possible secondary pathways through the completion of the Individual Pathways Plan (IPP) using *My Blueprint*. The completion of Individual Pathways Plans (IPPs) is supported by the Student Success and Guidance Department from each HCDSB secondary school. Information is also provided to students about the various programs offered in our board. Students are invited to attend the different transition activities and information events held at their home school and those events at any school that may provide information about a special program of interest.

Starting as early as November in the grade 8 year and prior to the option sheet deadline, the elementary school team including the principal, classroom teacher, Special Education Resource Teacher, the Secondary Department Head and Parents/Guardians are invited to participate in Transition Plan meetings. At this time, the students' IPP, option sheet recommendations, accommodations and other questions and concerns are reviewed and addressed. In consultation with all parties, an individual transition plan is developed for each student with special

education needs. As required, other support staff may participate in the transition planning process and the implementation of the transition plan (e.g., CYC, Social Worker, Pathways/Guidance departments etc.).

Supporting the Post-Secondary Transition

As outlined above, transition planning for post-secondary transition may begin as early as grade 6 for students accessing completely alternative curriculum.

For students accessing the Ontario Curriculum, transition planning for post-secondary typically includes accessing information about post-secondary institutions, their course/program offerings, and their admission requirements. The Guidance Department, in conjunction with the Special Education Department can support students with special education needs who are investigating this information.

Supporting the Transition to/from a Regional Specialized Class within HCDSB

HCDSB develops a student-specific plan to facilitate the process to/from a specialized class. This plan is a consultative process that involves the staff and parent(s)/guardian(s). The process considers the student's exceptionality, their social-emotional well-being, and the child's strengths and needs.

When transitioning into a specialized class, parent(s)/guardian(s) are invited to attend an Information Session at the host school sites. In cases where grade 8 students are transitioning into Life Skills classrooms in secondary schools, transition visits are scheduled for the students to visit and tour the secondary school, meet the staff, and be presented with important school-related information.

When a student is transitioning out of a specialized class and returning to their homeschool classroom, a consultative process involving both staff from the specialized class, and the homeschool determines the need, and supports the transition plan. In addition to the transition meeting, a regional IPRC is convened whenever a student transitions to/from a placement in a specialized class. The transition meeting and IPRC may occur back-to-back to support parent's/guardian's schedules but are separate and distinct processes.

[Ministry of Education Policy Program Memorandum \(PPM 140\): Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis \(ABA\) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders \(ASD\)](#)

The purpose of this memorandum was to provide directions to school boards to support their use of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) as an effective instructional approach in the education of students with ASD. In the spring of 2018, the Ontario government announced changes to the Ontario Autism Program (OAP).

The principles of ABA are to be used in designing the transition support plans. School Board staff members are to collaborate with community-based professionals already working with a student when obtaining input on the transition plan design.

Planning for Transition of Students Arriving from Other Programs, Private Facilities or Home School Setting

For students entering HCDSB from other programs or private facilities, the appropriate staff work with the parents/guardians to meet with the sending institution or facility to discuss the student's needs. Services and support are arranged in accordance with individual requirements and the support of all pertinent school and board staff. For students with high needs entering the system from other districts, every attempt is made to gather information prior to admission to have support in place for the student. A delayed entry to school may be required to facilitate appropriate program support and services. An IPRC may be scheduled as a result of the assessment review.

Planning for Transition of Students to Care, Treatment, Custody and Correctional Programs

Information is shared regarding students attending programs offered by other school boards or by Care Treatment and Correctional Facilities through the case conference process. Parents/guardians sign a *'Release of Information'* form, and all information is released between parties. The Ontario Student Record (OSR) is sent to a CTCC/Section 23 program. The Special Education and Student Mental Health Services Team is responsible for ensuring the successful admission or transfer of students from one program to another.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Halton Catholic District School Board subscribes to the division of responsibilities and a description of roles for the partners in the education of exceptional students offered in the Education Act and Regulations and support documents.

The Ministry of Education has begun to define roles and responsibilities in elementary and secondary education in several key areas:

- legislative and policy framework
- funding
- school system management
- programs and curriculum

It is important that all involved in special education understand their roles and responsibilities, which are outlined below.

The Ministry of Education:

- sets out, through the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda, the legal obligations of school boards regarding the provision of special education programs and services
- prescribes the categories and definitions of exceptionality
- requires through the Education Act that school boards provide appropriate special education programs and services for their exceptional students
- establishes the funding for special education through the structure of the funding model
- requires school boards to report on their expenditures for special education through the budget process
- sets province-wide standards for curriculum and reporting of achievement
- requires through regulation that school boards maintain special education plans, review them annually, and submit amendments to the ministry
- requires through the Education Act and through regulation that school boards establish Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs)
- establishes a Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education to advise the Minister of Education on matters related to special education programs and services
- Provincial and Demonstration Schools operate for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, who are blind or have low vision, who are deafblind, or who have severe learning disabilities

The District School Board:

- establishes school board policy and practices that comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda
- monitors school compliance with the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda
- requires staff to comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda
- provides appropriately qualified staff for programs and services for the exceptional pupils of the board
- plan and reports on the expenditures for special education
- develops and maintains a special education plan that is amended from time to time to meet the current needs of the exceptional pupils of the board
- reviews the plan annually and submits amendments to the Minister of Education
- provides statistical reports to the Ministry of Education as required and as requested
- prepares a parent guide to provide parents/guardians with information about special education programs, services, and procedures
- establishes one or more Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRCs) to identify exceptional pupils and determine appropriate placements for them
- establishes a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- provides professional development to staff on special education
- adheres to all applicable legislation

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC):

- makes recommendations to the board with respect to any matter affecting the establishment, development, and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the board
- participates in the board's annual review of its special education plan
- participates in the board's annual budget process as it relates to special education
- reviews the financial statements of the board as they relate to special education

The School Principal:

- carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda and board policies
- communicates Ministry of Education and school board expectations to staff
- ensures that appropriately qualified staff are assigned to teach special education classes
- communicates board policies and procedures about special education to staff, students, and parents/guardians
- ensures that the identification and placement of exceptional pupils, through an IPRC, is done according to the procedures outlined in the Education Act, regulations and board policies
- consults with parents/guardians and with school board staff to determine the most appropriate program for exceptional pupils
- ensures the development, implementation, and review of a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), including a transition plan
- ensures that parents/guardians are consulted in the development of their student's IEP and are provided with a copy of the IEP
- ensures that the program is delivered as set out in the IEP
- ensures that appropriate assessments are requested and that, if necessary, parental/guardian consent is obtained

The Teacher:

- carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda
- follows board policies and procedures regarding special education
- works with the special education teacher to acquire and maintain up-to-date knowledge of special education practices
- works with special education staff and parents/guardians to develop the IEP for an exceptional pupil, as appropriate
- provides the program for the exceptional pupil in the regular class, as outlined in the IEP
- communicates the student's progress to parents/guardians
- works with other school board staff to review and update the student's IEP

The Special Education Teacher: *(in addition to the responsibilities listed above under "The Teacher"):*

- holds qualifications, in accordance with the regulations under the Education Act, to teach special education within a specialized classroom
- monitors the student's progress with reference to the IEP and makes changes to the program as necessary
- assists in providing educational assessments and programming for exceptional pupils within the Special Education Teacher's specialized classroom (e.g., Gifted, Structured Teaching, Community Living Classroom, Life Skills Classroom)

The Special Education Resource Teacher: *(in addition to the responsibilities listed above under "The Teacher"):*

- holds qualifications, in accordance with the regulations under the Education Act, to teach special education
- monitors the student's progress with reference to the IEP and modifies the program as necessary
- assists in providing educational assessments for exceptional pupils within the school
- assists in providing resource-withdrawal programs for exceptional pupils within the school
- assists in developing and supporting effective transition processes for all pupils with special education needs

The Early Childhood Educator: *(The early childhood educator, in coordination and cooperation with the classroom teacher):*

- plans for and provides education to students in Full Day Kindergarten (FDK)
- observes, monitors, and assesses the development of FDK students
- maintains a healthy physical, emotional, and social learning environment in the classroom
- communicates with families
- performs duties assigned by the principal with respect to the FDK program

The Parent/Guardian:

- is familiar with and informed about board policies and procedures in areas that affect the student
- participates in IPRCs, parent/guardian-teacher conferences, and other relevant school activities
- participates in the development of the IEP
- is acquainted with the school staff working with the pupil supports the pupil at home
- works with the school principal and educators to solve problems
- is responsible for the pupil's attendance at school

The Student:

- complies with the requirements as outlined in the Education Act; regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda
- complies with board policies and procedures
- participates in IPRCs, parent/guardian-teacher conferences, and other activities, as appropriate

The Educational Assistant:

- responsible to the principal of the school
- works cooperatively with all concerned in the delivery of the board's special education programs and services by implementing programs under the direction of the school principal and/or teacher
- as required by supervisor, assists in meeting educational, spiritual, social/emotional and physical needs of students in their care
- assist in carrying out all board-approved programs including (but not limited to) occupational therapy, physiotherapy, academic and behavioural programs

Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities

On December 19, 2011, the Ministry of Education distributed a memorandum to all school boards on 'Categories of Exceptionalities'. [Click here to review the memorandum](#). Specifically, the memorandum states, *"The broad categories of exceptionalities set out in subsection 1(1) of the (Education) Act (Behavioural, Communication, Intellectual, Physical and Multiple) are designed to address the wide range of conditions that may affect a student's ability to learn, and do not exclude any medical condition, whether diagnosed or not, that can lead to particular types of learning difficulties. All students with demonstrable learning-based needs are entitled to appropriate accommodations in the form of special education programs and services, including classroom-based accommodations."*

The following five categories of exceptionalities have been identified in the Education Act definition of exceptional student:

- Behavioural
- Communication
- Intellectual
- Physical
- Multiple

The Halton Catholic District School Board uses the Ministry of Education definitions for each exceptionality. As one of 72 boards in the Province of Ontario, the consistency of definition from board-to-board is important to assist boards, students, and families with common understandings of exceptionalities and with any transition process from board-to-board. The Halton Catholic District School Board applies these categories and definitions when making decisions on identification and placement.

It should be noted, however, that some local and provincial organizations that represent students and families within each of these categories of exceptionalities do not fully agree with the Ministry of Education definitions as presented. Associations such as the Association for Bright Children (ABC) and Autism Ontario, as presented through their representatives on our HCDSB SEAC committee, suggest alternate definitions for the respective exceptionality they represent. The definitions from associations can be found on each associations' website which can be accessed via the hcdsb.org website on the SEAC page by clicking [here](#).

HCDSB continues to use the Ministry of Education definitions of each category of exceptionality. These categories include the following definitions:

Behaviour:

A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance, and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following:

- a) an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships
- b) excessive fears or anxieties
- c) a tendency to compulsive reaction
- d) an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors or any combination thereof

Communication:

Autism:

A severe learning disorder that is characterized by:

- a) disturbances in:
 - rate of educational development
 - ability to relate to the environment
 - mobility
 - perception; speech and language
- b) a lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language

Learning Disability:

The Ministry of Education defines *learning disability* as one of several neurodevelopmental disorders that persistently and significantly has an impact on the ability to learn and use academic and other skills and that:

- affects the ability to perceive or process verbal or non-verbal information in an effective and accurate manner in students who have assessed intellectual abilities that are *at least* in the average range
- results in (a) academic underachievement that is inconsistent with the intellectual abilities of the student (which are at least in the average range) and/or (b) academic achievement that can be maintained by the student only with extremely high levels of effort and/or with additional support
- results in difficulties in the development and use of skills in one or more of the following areas: reading, writing, mathematics, and work habits and learning skills
- may typically be associated with difficulties in one or more cognitive processes, such as phonological processing; memory and attention; processing speed; perceptual-motor processing; visual-spatial processing; executive functions (i.e., self-regulation of behaviour and emotions, planning, organizing of thoughts and activities, prioritizing, decision making)
- may be associated with difficulties in social interaction (i.e., difficulty in understanding social norms or the point of view of others); with various other conditions or disorders, diagnosed or undiagnosed; or with other exceptionalities
- is *not* the result of a lack of acuity in hearing and/or vision that has not been corrected; intellectual disabilities; socio-economic factors; cultural differences; lack of proficiency in the language of instruction; lack of motivation or effort; gaps in school attendance or inadequate opportunity to benefit from instruction

Language Impairment:

A learning disorder characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors and which may:

- a) involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication
- b) include one or more of the following:
 - language delay
 - dysfluency
 - voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based

Speech Impairment:

A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages; and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm, and stress.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing:

An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.

Intellectual:Giftedness:

An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.

Mild Intellectual Disability:

A learning disorder characterized by:

- a) an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modifications and supportive services
- b) an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development
- c) a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support

Developmental Disability:

A severe learning disorder characterized by:

- a) an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development
- b) an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development
- c) a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support
- d) **Physical:**

Physical Disability

A condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations to provide the opportunity for educational achievement, equivalent to that of pupils without exceptionalities, who are of the same age or developmental level. Note: Identification of students with a diagnosis of FASD is under this category.

Blind and Low Vision

A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that, even with corrections, affects educational performance adversely.

Multiple:Multiple Exceptionalities

A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities, that is of such a nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.

Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario

Information and regular updates around the Provincial Schools and Provincial Demonstration Schools in Ontario, can be found here: [Provincial Schools and Demonstration Schools | Special education in Ontario Kindergarten to Grade 12 – Policy and resource guide | ontario.ca](#)

Admittance to a Provincial School is determined by the Provincial Schools Admission Committee in accordance with the requirements set out in [Regulation 296](#). These schools provide elementary and secondary school programs for deaf students from preschool level to high school graduation.

The curriculum follows the Ontario curriculum and parallels courses and programs provided in school boards. Each student has their special education needs met as set out in a student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP).

HCDSB students currently attending Provincial and Demonstration Schools:

Deaf-Blind	W. Ross MacDonald	0
Deaf	Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf	3
LD	Trillium Demonstration School	1

Admittance to a Provincial School is determined by the Provincial Schools Admission Committee in accordance with the out in [Regulation 296](#). These schools provide elementary and secondary school programs for deaf students from preschool level to high school graduation. The curriculum follows the Ontario curriculum and parallels courses and programs provided in school boards. Each student has his or her special education needs met.

HCDSB's Consultation Process

The Ministry of Education requires that each school board ensure that updated and comprehensive information regarding special education programs and services is made available to the community by the start of each school year. This is accomplished through this Special Education Annual Plan which is completed in consultation with the respective Special Education Advisory Committees as per [Regulation 464/97](#).

In developing and modifying the Special Education Plan annually, HCDSB takes into consideration ongoing feedback from multiple sources, including the board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and community stakeholders.

SEAC's Involvement in the Annual Review

The Special Education Plan is reviewed by SEAC on an ongoing basis and is posted on the HCDSB's public website annually.

The Special Education Plan is informed by SEAC through:

- information and opportunities for feedback and consideration on presentations and staff reports at monthly public meetings of the SEAC,
- local association reports/information; sub-committee updates; and reports from other stakeholder meetings,
- discussions, presentations, and interactions between SEAC representatives, trustees, and staff,
- SEAC webinars, goals and priorities, including SEAC budget priorities,
- participation of SEAC members in various sub-committees with special education staff, including a sub-committee to review the plan,
- the 'SEAC Input on Annual Review of Special Education Plan' form provided to all members, and
- the review of draft(s), and receipt of the proposed final version of the document.

Community Consultation Process

The Special Education Plan is informed by the community through:

- SEAC members at formal association meetings, or informal conversations with the community, including parents/guardians,
- school and board level staff, who have ongoing, formal and informal communication and feedback from parents/guardians, students, and community agencies,
- feedback to special education related questions that are embedded in various board and school surveys and consultation processes
- the review of SEAC meeting recordings, minutes, and agenda materials, as well as the [Parent Guide to Special Education](#), as points of reference for feedback,
- the use of the SEAC email, seac@hcdsb.org, to provide feedback on the plan, including questions or comments, which can be provided at any time in the school year, and,
- a summary of the feedback received, which is collated annually and shared accordingly.
- results of internal and external reviews of existing special education programs and services within the board that have taken place in the previous or current school year will be included in the plan, as well as a list of planned reviews for the following year. See Appendix L for expansion of Elementary Community Classrooms.

The Special Education Leadership Team, including the Superintendent of Special Education, Special Education Coordinator, Clinical Senior Managers, and EA Managers, meet regularly to discuss and implement programs and services; PPMs and initiatives from the Ministry of Education; Board Equity and Improvement Plan (BEIP), associated HCDSB policies and relevant research, informing edits and revisions to the plan.

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

In accordance with [Ontario Regulation 464/97](#), every district school board must establish a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). A SEAC is comprised of representatives and alternates from up to 12 local associations that operate locally within the jurisdiction of the board. These local associations have representatives who promote the interests and well-being of students with exceptional needs and abilities. Local associations have parental representatives who promote the interests and well-being of all students with exceptional educational needs. These associations nominate members and the SEAC members are then appointed by the school board.

Membership also includes appointed Trustees and community Members-at-Large. In 2021, a SEAC sub-committee was formed to create SEAC Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Members. SEAC Guidelines were recently developed and shared with all SEAC members.

In addition, the Superintendent of Special Education and Student Mental Health Services attends each SEAC meeting, along with other board staff who provide information to the SEAC members.

SEAC members are provided with information about Special Education and Student Mental Health Services in HCDSB on a regular basis through appropriate documentation, and electronic communication, and have input on the board's budgetary process, special education programs and services and the preparation of the Special Education Plan. In addition, throughout the year at SEAC, staff presentations occur on a variety of topics based on SEAC feedback and interest. SEAC may pass motions that are then presented to the board for consideration and/or approval.

Members' names and affiliation, along with their telephone numbers and/or e-mail addresses, are listed below. Please [click here](#) for SEAC information on the Halton Catholic District School Board's website.

Also listed are the dates, time and location for each SEAC meeting. SEAC meetings are open to the public and are advertised on the Board website. Agendas are posted in advance of the monthly meetings, and the public can find minutes as well as a number of videos and links to each meeting. Please [click here](#) for meeting information, minutes and videos.

The following local associations have currently nominated representatives to the Board's SEAC:

- Association for Bright Children (ABC) - Halton Chapter
- Autism Ontario
- Easter Seals Ontario
- FASD ONE (Ontario Network of Expertise)
- Halton Down Syndrome Association
- VOICE for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Roles and Responsibilities of SEAC:

- make recommendations to the board concerning any matter affecting the establishment, development and delivery of Special Education programs and services for exceptional students of the board
- participate in the board's annual review of its Special Education Plan
- participate in the board's annual budget process and have the opportunity to review financial statements of the board as they relate to special education
- provide information to parents/guardians as requested

The role of SEAC is also described in the document: A Parent's Guide to Special Education Programs and Services

SEAC REPRESENTATIVES	E-MAIL ADDRESS
Brenda Agnew (Chair) Trustee Representative	agnewb@hcdsb.org
Rick Barreiro (Vice Chair) VOICE for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing Association	rickbarreiro@gmail.com
Amanda Dametto Woloschuk Easter Seals Ontario	amanda.dametto@gmail.com
Jessica Lim Association for Bright Children (ABC)	jesscalim752@gmail.com
Trish Powell Trustee Representative	powellt@hcdsb.org
Marijen Lopez-Watson Halton Down Syndrome Association	Marijen_lopez@yahoo.de
Tracy Veale FASD ONE (Ontario Network of Expertise)	tracy.veale@gmail.com
Abiola Adededeji Member-at-Large	abiolaoadededeji@gmail.com
Briana Hamlet (Autism Ontario)	brianahamlet@icloud.com
SEAC ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVES	E-MAIL ADDRESS
Derin Utake Easter Seals (Alternate)	derin.utake@gmail.com
Mandy Ulcar Halton Down Syndrome Association (Alternate)	mandy@haltondownsyndrome.com
Maria Lourenco Association for Bright Children (Alternate)	gifted.hcdsb@outlook.com
Rhonda Quesnel VOICE for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Alternate)	rhonda.quesnel@wearcheck.com
Chris Saunders Trustee (Alternate)	saundersc@hcdsb.org

SEAC Meetings 2025-2026

MEETINGS	DAY	DATES
SEAC	Monday	September 29, 2025
SEAC	Monday	October 27, 2025
SEAC	Monday	November 24, 2025
SEAC	Monday	December 15, 2025
SEAC	Monday	January 19, 2026
SEAC	Monday	February 23, 2026
SEAC	Monday	March 30, 2026
SEAC	Monday	April 27, 2026
SEAC	Monday	May 25, 2026
SEAC	Monday	June 15, 2026

Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) meetings typically take place on the last Monday of the month unless otherwise posted, in the Boardroom of the Catholic Education Centre, 802 Drury Lane, Burlington. Meetings begin at 7:00 PM. SEAC meeting recordings are posted on the HCDSB website the day after the meeting. Members of the public are welcome to send questions in advance of SEAC meetings to seac@hcdsb.org by 4:00 pm on the day of the meeting.

Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies

The purpose of this section is to provide details of the Board's early identification procedures and intervention strategies to the Ministry of Education and to the public. HCDSB's Tiered Approach to Instruction and Intervention was previously outlined under Model for Special Education.

Guiding Principles/Philosophy

As indicated in the [Ministry of Education Policy/Program memorandum No. 11](#), early identification is 'part of a continuous assessment process and program planning process which is initiated when a child is first enrolled in school and should continue throughout the student's school life'. To gain a comprehensive profile of each child entering school for the first time, the Halton Catholic District School Board draws on detailed parental/guardian knowledge as well as pre-school educational, medical and therapeutic services already partnered with families. The array of strengths and needs of each child serve as the building blocks of early education planning and programming.

The resource [Special Education in Ontario, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Resource Guide](#) (2017) outlines an integrated process of assessment and instruction designed to improve student learning at both the elementary and secondary levels. The key beliefs, based on research, guide all programming for students with or without special education needs. Evidence of our deep commitment to these shared beliefs can be found in our Multi-Year Strategic Plan and will be found in our Board Equity and Improvement Plan, 2023 (BEIP). The level of engagement of staff in professional development and training, and the results in provincial, national and international assessments, is further evidence of our commitment.

The shared beliefs are:

- All students can succeed
- Each student has a unique pattern of learning
- Successful instructional practices are founded on evidence-based research, tempered by experience
- Universal design and differentiated instruction are an effective and interconnected means of meeting the learning or productivity needs of any group of students
- classroom teachers are the key educators for a student's literacy and numeracy development
- classroom teachers have access to the support of the larger community to create a learning environment that supports all students
- Fairness is not sameness

The Parent(s)/Caregivers/Guardians' Role in Early Identification

A parent's perspective is very helpful in understanding a student's early learning needs. As the liaison between the school and community-based resources, parent(s)/guardian(s) gather valuable information about their child based on their interactions in the home and pre-school settings. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to make their observations available to school staff, and to share relevant assessments with informed consent. In doing so, they can contribute to the overall understanding of their child's strengths and needs to ensure a successful transition to school.

The Teacher's Role in Early Identification

The student's teacher makes systematic observations of the student in various settings. Skills in the five areas of development – physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and communication/language – are likely to emerge in a predictable sequence. When students are not achieving learning benchmarks, teachers are provided with suggestions, strategies and resources that can help students progress in these areas. This is part of a tiered approach to instruction and intervention which has

been identified in the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA) and is described in detail below. For those students who achieve and exceed benchmarks, differentiated instruction is provided to foster ongoing progress. Board-based special education staff and curriculum staff support school-based staff with student specific supports and interventions based on student need.

For Students Whose Learning Needs And/or Challenges Are Known Prior To School Entry:

It is important that a student's area of need is addressed in the early stages of their academic program. The following screening process is implemented to recognize those students with significant medical and/or other diagnoses which may affect the delivery of educational services. It is possible that some of these students will eventually be identified based on the identification criteria listed earlier under the Education Act as needing one or a variety of adjunct services to be successful in school over the long term. While many of these services are rendered by regional health service providers, the principal of each school may complete applications on behalf of the student and parents/guardians (please refer to the Specialized Health Support Services section). The process starts before the student enters school as detailed below.

1. Parents/guardians register a student at their local school and complete the HCDSB Kindergarten Questionnaire and a Student Information Form (SE14) in January.
2. A parent/guardian information night is established specifically for students with special education needs in the Spring of the year prior to school entry.
3. The Special Education Consultant along with the school Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) may visit the child in the current daycare or in another setting in April and May prior to school entry in September.
4. In late spring, a case conference is scheduled at the home school with the school team, parents/guardians, and any other professionals currently providing care to the student to share all relevant information.
5. School and board staff design a pre-school to school transition plan to facilitate school entry.
6. During the first term, the school and parents/guardians may call an IPRC (Identification, Placement and Review Committee), and the principal will make an application for regional health services as necessary.
7. Within 30 school days of the start of placement, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be developed and provided to parents/guardians and student (if 16 and older) for parental/guardian consultation.

Ongoing monitoring of the student's progress continues, and any necessary adjustments are identified by the teacher through the tiered approach to instruction and intervention (as outlined in the previous pages of this section).

For Students Whose Learning Needs And/Or Challenges Are Unknown Prior To School Entry

As noted in the tiered approach, all students' needs are assessed on an on-going basis and appropriate supports and strategies are initiated by the teacher.

Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting

The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning. The Ministry of Education document, [*Growing Success, 2010*](#) outlines the policies and practices used in Ontario schools related to assessment, evaluation and reporting. Evidence of student achievement for evaluation is collected over time from three different sources: observations; conversations; and student work samples. Teachers weigh all evidence of student achievement and use professional judgment and interpretation of evidence to determine a student's report card grades. The student's most consistent level of achievement should be reflected by the report card mark. The code 'R' represents achievement that signals that additional learning is required before the student begins to achieve success in meeting the subject/course expectations. A specific, targeted intervention plan will be developed to address the learning needs of any student achieving 'R's on a report card through the tiered approach to instruction and intervention. Enrichment activities may be considered to address the learning needs

of students whose achievement consistently surpasses the provincial standard for grade level expectations; the student consistently achieves Level 4 (80 – 100%/A- to A+).

Educational and Other Assessments

Formal assessment facilitates the generation and refinement of educational programming in support of student achievement in the HCDSB.

Formal assessments are key services provided by the Special Education and Student Mental Health Services department. Such assessments require the endorsement of the Board Special Education Staff (the designates of the Superintendent of Special Education) before approaching and acquiring the signed written and informed consent of parents/guardians.

Whether provided by the HCDSB or obtained privately, numbered among the various formal assessment and observation information are the following:

- Psychological - Educational Assessments
- Speech and Language Assessment
- Behaviour Assessments/Consultation
- Hearing Services Assessment
- Educational Audiology Assessment
- Medical Assessment
- Social Work Assessment (may be available with parent/guardian consent)

These results are used by the school and by the board to provide educational programming for the student and shall be used by their teacher, Special Education Resource Teacher, principal, vice principal, and other educational support personnel. The provision of educational programming may include the formal identification and placement of the student pursuant to [Regulation 181/98](#), preparation of an Individual Education Plan and ongoing consultation by and between professional staff. An Individual Education Plan (IEP), which describes the special education program and services required by a particular student, including any accommodations, modified expectations, and/or alternative expectations or programs, must be developed for each student who has been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC). An IEP *may* also be developed for any student who is receiving special education programs and/or related services but who has not been identified as exceptional by an IPRC.

EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS		
ASSESSMENT	STAFF	QUALIFICATIONS
Educational Assessment (Academic)	Special Education Resource Teacher	Ontario Teacher Certificate, Special Education, Part I (minimum)
Speech and Language Assessment: Expressive, Receptive, Articulation, Fluency; Augmentative Communication; Social Communication	Speech Language Pathologist	Master's Degree (minimum) Registration with the College of Audiologists and Speech Language Pathologists of Ontario
Psychological-Educational Assessments	Psychologist Psychological Associate Psycho-Educational Consultant	Ph.D. or master's degree * Non-registered staff: with supervision and sign off by a registered Registration with the College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario

Behaviour Assessment/Consultation	Behaviour Analyst	Registration with the College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario
Hearing Services Assessment	Itinerant SERTs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Ontario Teacher Certificate, Certificate in Deaf Education

* The term non-registered staff refers to psycho-educational consultants who are not registered to practice psychology in the province of Ontario and therefore work under supervision of a member.

Psychological-Educational Assessments

Psychological assessments are described in Policy II-13 and the associated procedure VI-89.

A member of the HCDSB psychological staff will obtain informed consent from the parents/guardians, after receiving an electronic signed consent form through the Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs) or Department Heads. Once an assessment has been completed, results will be first shared with the parents/guardians and, with their permission, school staff (e.g., principal, SERT, classroom teacher).

Halton Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Diagnostic and Assessment Team Process

The Assessment and Diagnostic Team is part of the Halton FASD Collaborative. The Halton FASD Collaborative consists of organizations representing mental health, child and youth services, developmental services, justice, school boards, addiction services, public health and parents/guardians/caregivers.

The Halton FASD Assessment & Diagnostic Team is funded by the Mississauga Halton LHIN and in-kind support from community partners. The Clinic uses a multidisciplinary and multi-agency approach, and its goal is to support the positive development of children and youth (ages 2 to 24) through assessment and accurate understanding of each child/youth's unique strengths and needs. The goal is to maximize the potential of each child by educating and supporting parents/guardians, caregivers and professionals. Assessment & Diagnostic Team Partners include: Reach Out Centre for Kids (ROCK), Halton District School Board, Halton Catholic District School Board, ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Development, Support House, Enaahitig Healing Lodge & Learning Centre and the Halton FASD Collaborative.

Details and contact information are available online at the Halton FASD website: <http://haltonfasd.ca/>;

Gifted Screening Process

To continue to meet the educational needs of HCDSB pupils, students across HCDSB are administered cognitive group testing in grade four.

The HCDSB gifted screening process consists of two stages:

Stage 1:

Early in November, the school Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) sends home an information letter to parents/guardians regarding the grade 4 group testing. Included in this letter to all parents/guardians of grade 4 students is information on how to obtain the results of this testing once it becomes available in January.

The Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT-7/CogAT) group testing is administered by the school SERT in late November/early December.

CCAT-7 includes the following accommodations on an individual basis to ensure that the test is barrier-free, and students of all abilities are able to take the test: (*Planning and Implementation Guide for Form 7 of the CCAT7 Lohmann, David F. Cognitive Abilities Test TM (2014) Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company/Nelson Education*)

- for students with an IEP, accommodations outlined in the IEP can be followed, with the exception of calculator use, if the accommodations do not alter the nature of the ability the test is intended to measure
- the test includes a large print version which can be administered for low vision students
- the verbal battery can be omitted or administered in English but not scored for ELL learners

In the second half of January, school SERTS review the results of the CCAT-7 to further understand each student's learning profile and determine who should be further assessed. Students qualify for Stage 2 testing based on their CCAT-7 test scores which include scoring 95% percentile or higher on the CCAT-7 screening. This criterion is subject to further evaluation of board data and recommendation for Stage 2 testing may also result from the HCDSB's school team and board process, with the Special Education Consultant gathering data and information from the relevant sources, including further available data and teacher input where appropriate.

Parent consent forms are sent to parents/guardians of those students who qualify for Stage 2 screening.

Stage 2:

In February, psychology staff complete Stage 2 screening, through individual administration of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-V) or other standardized tests of intelligence/cognitive ability as determined based on professional judgment.

At the beginning of March, results are communicated to parents/guardians in the form of a letter outlining the overall test results and indicating whether these results meet identification criteria.

Students demonstrating performance at or above the 98th percentile of intellectual ability as measured by the General Ability Index (GAI) or Full-Scale IQ (Canadian Norms), or other appropriate index scores representing overall cognitive ability are recommended for referral to an Identification, Placement and Review Committee, for identification as 'Intellectual – Gifted'. Specific psychometric and assessment considerations are relevant for students who are English Language Learners.

Gifted classroom open houses take place in early Spring in each region. Information about programming and placement options for students identified gifted is provided by the home school SERT or Special Education Consultant for the appropriate school. All parents/guardians receive an [infographic](#) that outlines programming, placement and pathway options, the date of the open house, as well as the Parent Guide to Special Education at HCDSB.

Speech and Language Assessments

Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) are regulated health professionals and are subject to the Professional Standards of the College of Audiologists and Speech and Language Pathologists of Ontario. Speech Language Pathologists support students, educators, and families through assessment and intervention to enhance speech, language, and communication skills. The HCDSB currently has Speech Language Pathologists as well as Communicative Disorders Assistants who provide support under clinical supervision of SLPs.

A member of the HCDSB's speech and language staff will obtain informed consent from the parents/guardians of the student who has been referred for services. A speech-language assessment may consist of a variety of standardized tests, screening tools, and non-standardized procedures to assess receptive and expressive language, phonological awareness, early literacy, and social communication skills. Assessment also includes evaluation of articulation, fluency and voice. Once an assessment has been completed, results and recommendations are shared with the parents/guardians and the school.

Following an assessment, the Speech Language Pathologist may provide a range of tiered intervention services. These may include:

- consultation/collaboration with parents/caregivers/guardians and educators to support development of communication
- individual or group sessions classroom-based intervention
- monitoring of language/speech/communication development
- participating in case conferences and transition meetings
- supporting development and achievement of IEP goals
- implementation/support of an augmentative communication system,
- providing activities and resources to parents/guardians and educators, referral to School Based Rehabilitation Services to address articulation, fluency, or voice needs
- referral to the Assistive Device Resource Service for an assessment for AAC technology

HCDSB also supports a seamless transition from the Preschool Speech and Language Program (PSLP) to school board services. SLPs support educators in implementing Tier 1 recommendations from the PSLP SLP. Students who need Tier 3 services such as AAC support may be transitioned directly to the speech and language caseload. HCDSB SLPs also collaborate with private SLPs who may be supporting students in our schools.

Audiological/Hearing Assessments/Consultation

External assessment reports are reviewed by a registered Audiologist and an ISERT-DHH. Reports including audiograms will be reviewed to determine possible identification under Communication: DHH as well as recommendations regarding accommodations, programming, and SEA equipment. Reports including results of auditory processing testing will be reviewed to determine if a trial of FM equipment to support the student would be beneficial and to review accommodations recommended with the classroom teacher.

Vision Assessments/Consultation

External reports of both visual acuity and visual processing are reviewed by an ISERT-BLV to determine possible identification as well as make recommendations regarding individual student accommodations, programming, and the necessary referrals/consultations regarding SEA equipment.

Behaviour Assessment/Consultation

HCDSB Behaviour Analysts work with school staff to support students with behavioural challenges. They collaborate with families, school staff and community agencies to enhance the student's success and well-being. Services may include one or more of the following:

- Behavioural observation and assessment
- The development, implementation and monitoring of a behaviour support plan based on the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA).
- Support for transitions to/from community agencies/providers
- Collaboration with community/behaviour analytic providers through observations and meetings where appropriate

Assessment Referral Process

An Overview of the Special Education Process

The assessment and IEP development begins when a classroom teacher and/or parent/guardian becomes aware that a student is having difficulty with learning and/or behaviour and/or require enrichment. The process occurs in a continuous cycle that may involve a variety of assessments and consultation with the Special Education Support Team members. The process begins and ends with the classroom teacher ensuring that the student can meet their learning expectations. Parent/Guardian consultation is welcome throughout the process. There are several phases involved in the process of evaluating a student's educational journey and determining what changes are needed. These phases include:

- **Assessment and Differentiation of Instruction by the Classroom Teacher:** The classroom teacher collects information using a variety of methods that may include observations, Ontario Student Record (OSR) data, checklists, assessments, and information provided by the parent(s)/guardian(s). The classroom teacher, in consultation with the Special Education Resource Teacher, selects instructional strategies and accommodations and interventions to promote learning. These are implemented within specific timelines. If concerns continue, the teacher seeks assistance from the In-School Support Team.
- **A Tiered Approach to Instruction and Intervention:** The tiered approach to instruction and intervention is a systematic approach to providing high-quality, evidence-based assessment and instruction and appropriate interventions that respond to all students' individual needs. It is based on frequent monitoring of student progress and the use of assessment data, focusing on learning rate and level, to identify students who are facing challenges in learning and/or who require enrichment, and to plan specific assessment and instructional interventions of increasing intensity to address their needs effectively. The nature, intensity, and duration of interventions and/or enrichment may be decided by teachers individually or in collaboration with a school team always on the basis of evidence derived from monitoring of student achievement (Special Education in Ontario, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Resource Guide, 2017). The tiered approach can facilitate early identification.
- **In-School Support Team -** All HCDSB schools have an in-school Special Education Team. At the elementary level, this team includes the school principal (who acts as chairperson), the Special Education Resource Teacher and a classroom teacher. At the secondary level, the team includes the school principal, the Special Education Department Head, the Special Education Resource Teacher, and others as determined by the school principal (e.g. Social Worker, Guidance Counsellor). The in-school Special Education Team is a collaborative problem-solving group which holds regular meetings throughout the school year. This process encourages collaboration, providing the classroom teacher with additional tier one interventions to assist those struggling within the classroom. These may include additional observations, individualized educational assessments and intervention and/or enrichment suggestions.

Support is based upon the student achievement and/or well-being data that is brought into consideration. Specific timelines and their effectiveness, as evidenced through data collection, are implemented and reviewed by the classroom teacher and the in-school support team. If concerns continue, the classroom teacher and the in-school support team make a referral to the Board Team with parental/guardian consent.

Minutes are kept of all in-school team meetings and, upon request to the school principal, parents/guardians shall be provided with a copy of the minutes. Educational testing by the Special Education Resource Teacher may be required as an outcome of the in-school team meeting. Parents/guardians are informed regarding the suggested strategies and provide updates regarding the students' progress. The teachers, along with the special education team have ongoing collaboration to monitor progress and to determine appropriate next steps.

- **Referral to the Board Team** (Special Education Consultant, principal, SERT, and classroom teacher): The Board Team reviews the effectiveness of the instructional strategies, accommodations and intervention and/or enrichment and assessment data. Further recommendations and options for support are presented. An action plan is developed that includes specific timelines.
- **IEP Development and/or Referral to IPRC Process:** An IEP may be developed for any student who is receiving special education programs and/or related services. In addition, where supported by assessment information, a referral to an IPRC may be made. The classroom teacher, in collaboration with the SERT, will continue to monitor student progress and refine instructional strategies and accommodations as needed.

Principals meet with their in-school support team to discuss students for consideration for referrals for assessments done by the Special Education department. These students' cases are presented to the appropriate Board staff.

Once a decision is made to refer a student for assessment, parents/guardians are given an SE1 Parental Consent information form and asked to sign the 'Consent for Special Education Services' through the digital referral platform. Prior to an assessment being conducted, parents/guardians will be contacted to obtain informed consent. Informed consent includes a telephone interview with the parent/guardian. In this interview, the assessor addresses:

- the elements and logistics of the evaluation,
- concerns leading to the referral,
- risks and benefits of the assessment,
- legal and ethical framework of the assessment, including confidentiality, record retention and privacy, professional and legal requirements,
- limitations of confidentiality and possible outcomes of assessment.

The parent/guardian is provided with the opportunity to ask questions, and their consent is then confirmed.

Assessment Referral Prioritizing Criteria for Assessments by Psychologists/Psychological Associates/Psychoeducational Consultants, SLPs, and BAs

A process is in place whereby referrals for assessment are prioritized according to criteria. These include but are not limited to the following:

- In general, assessments are prioritized based on date of written parental/guardian consent (SE1) and centralized waitlist management
- The Special Education department reviews the wait times across Families of Schools regularly to ensure fair and equitable access in all regions of the Board
- Under extenuating circumstances and as approved by the Superintendent of Special Education and Student Mental Health Services
- assessments may be prioritized. When considering prioritization, several questions are explored:
- Is this a first-time assessment?
- Will an assessment of this kind of return information that will make a difference or is there another form of assessment that would be equally helpful?
- Are there any pressures or influences that make this assessment critical to the advancement of this student?
- When was the last meaningful assessment?
- Have significant developmental, medical, traumatic or other changes occurred since the last assessment or prior to advancing a first referral?
- Is this assessment required in response to personal and family crisis, or based on the recommendation from a Violent Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA)?
- Is the assessment required to access a special placement?
- Is the assessment required to facilitate entrance to specialized treatment programs (for example Provincial Schools)?

- Is this assessment to complement a larger comprehensive assessment being conducted by an external professional or interdisciplinary team (for example: Halton FASD diagnostic and assessment team)?

The Superintendent of Special Education and Student Mental Health Services will report wait periods for psycho-educational/psychological assessments three times a year (November, March, June) to SEAC members.

Assessment services are provided solely for the purpose of supporting programming delivered to the student while attending Halton Catholic District School Board schools. Consequently, assessment and/or re- assessments required for university or post-secondary school admissions are not provided by HCDSB.

Assessment Cancellation or Withdrawal

A pending assessment may be cancelled, and the student's name removed from the waitlist. The conditions under which this may occur may include but are not limited to the following:

- The student begins assessment with a private provider
- withdrawal of consent by a parent/guardian
- disagreement between shared custody parents/guardians regarding signed consent for assessment
- a parent/guardian of a waitlisted student gives notice that they are moving out of jurisdiction before the anticipated assessment date
- other: as determined in consultation with Senior Managers and the Superintendent of Special Education

Who gets the report and where will it be stored?

A student's assessment report:

- is filed in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR) with parent's/guardian's consent
- may be forwarded to other community partners and professionals with the parent's/guardian's written consent or that of the student when 16 years of age
- may also be used for research purposes, but this information will become part of an anonymous database with no information identifying the student being provided
- is retained by the assessor in their digital psychological file/Behaviour Analysis/Speech-Language
- A digital copy is maintained by the Special Education Consultant for program planning for the duration of the school year and is then securely destroyed
- has limited conditions of confidentiality; if it comes to the attention of a board employee that the student or another person may be at risk of harm, information may be released to the police or the Children's Aid Society as appropriate in accordance with the Child, Youth & Family Services Act
- may be released in accordance with a Court Order or Warrant, or as otherwise required by law
- may be subject to a peer review process in accordance with the assessor's or supervising member's professional college (If there is an objection to a professional college reviewing the student's file, it is important to discuss this when the assessor speaks with the parent/guardian about the consent process)

Reports from community professionals are stored in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), and the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA).

Raw data for professional assessments (psycho-educational/psychological and speech-language assessments, behaviour analysis) is stored only in the psychological file/speech-language file. Access to raw data is limited by legislation and professional standards, including PHIPA 51.1.

Process Regarding External Reports

While HCDSB follows the Ministry definition of each exceptionality, every school Board in Ontario creates their own criteria for identification. As a result, HCDSB does not automatically assume an identification because of an IPRC at another school board. When a student enters our school board from another school board, parents/guardians are encouraged to share all reports which are reviewed by the appropriate HCDSB staff to inform programming supports or IEP development. This process is outlined in Procedure VI-95 Procedure for Receiving Information from Regulated Health Professionals, Social Service Professionals, and Paraprofessionals – External Providers.

Audiological/Vision Assessments

External assessments or progress reports relevant to the hearing or vision needs of a student are reviewed by an audiologist, I-SERT DHH or I-SERT BLV. School based SERTs provide the report and the signed parent/guardian consent for sharing information (SE13b) to the audiologist/I-SERT DHH/BLV. Assessment results will be used to determine eligibility for services from I-SERTs DHH/BLV and equipment needed.

Coordination of Services with Other Ministries or Agencies

Ministry of Education [*Policy Program Memorandum \(PPM149\) Protocol with External Agencies for Provision of Services by Regulated Health Professionals, Regulated Social Service Professionals, and Paraprofessionals.*](#)

The purpose of this memorandum was to provide school boards with direction for the creation of a local protocol that not only recognizes current health and social service professionals and paraprofessionals in boards but also facilitates appropriate partnerships to help these professionals in their important work with students.

Policy/Program Memorandum 149 is posted on the Ministry website at

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-149>

As a result of the Provincial Discussion Tables (PDT) agreement, school boards are required to develop a local protocol for partnerships with external agencies. HCDSB has a local protocol to facilitate the development of partnerships with external agencies that provide services to students to improve their opportunities for learning that are beyond what the board is currently able to provide.

Our administrative procedure for PPM 149 is posted on the HCDSB website, please [**click here to review.**](#)

Additionally, the [**PPM 149 section**](#) on the HCDSB's website contains the most up to date list of partner agencies.

The Halton Catholic District School Board and community agencies have positive working relationships. Both board staff and community agency staff have a high level of awareness of the programs and services provided by each group. Agency staff employ a coordinated intake process. Community agencies and the school board regularly communicate updates or changes in services. Members of both the school board and agencies sit on the Halton Connections Committee.

Connections Halton is a committee with membership from children's mental health agencies, the developmental sector and school boards. This committee reviews all requests for residential placement as well as assisting in resolving and addressing hard-to-serve and complex cases in Halton. The committee meets virtually once per month.

[Click here](#) to access information specific to Woodview Mental Health and Autism Services School Based Support Program.

Halton's Care, Treatment, Custody and Corrections Programs (CTCC)

HCDSB staff are available to support students transitioning to and from CTCC programs.

ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Development (Located in Oakville) Telephone Number: 905.855.2690 x2504

Halton Health CAPIS (Located at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital) Telephone Number: 905.338.4630 x4854

Halton Health REACH (Located at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital) Telephone Number: 905.338.4630 x4854

Kinark Syl Apps Youth and Secure Treatment Centre (Located in Oakville) Telephone Number: 905.844.4110 x2206

Salvation Army MacMillan Youth Centre (Located in Milton) Telephone Number: 905.453.0988 x23

Woodview Mountaineering Program (Located at Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School in Burlington) Telephone Number: 905-689-4727 x140

Woodview Halton Intensive Program (Located at Holy Family Catholic Elementary School in Oakville) Telephone Number: 905-845-6987

Woodview Early Identification, Early Intervention Outreach (E.I.E.I.O) (Located at Burlington Rolling Meadows) Telephone Number: 905-689-4727

Woodview North (Located at Robert Little Public School) Telephone Number: 905-689-4727

Woodview DANO (Located at Aldershot High School) Telephone Number: 905-689-4727

Mental Health and Addictions Strategy

The Ministry of Education has mandated that each school board must have a Mental Health & Addictions Strategy that is supported by the Mental Health and Well-Being Advisory Committee. School Mental Health Ontario (SMH-ON) is the provincial implementation support team that helps all school districts to enhance student mental health using evidence-based strategies, resources and services. SMH-ON has been a critical element in supporting our system to respond to student mental health needs in both the virtual and in person learning models.

The Mental Health and Well-Being Advisory Committee's responsibility is to provide feedback to the Mental Health Lead and the Mental Health Leadership Team about mental health programming, initiatives, clinical support and direction for students. The Mental Health & Well-Being Advisory Committee is led by the Mental Health Lead and is comprised of the Superintendent of Special Education and Student Mental Health Services, Board Trustees, Special Education Senior Managers, SEAC Representation, Administrators, HCDSB staff, students, parents/guardians, and community partners. This committee meets three times per year. Throughout the year, ad hoc committees are formed to address specific needs related to the Mental Health & Addictions Strategy

"Talk. Learn. Support." has become synonymous with our board's strategy. The key ideas for each include:

- **Talk** – Reducing stigma around mental health by continuing the public conversation around positive mental health and addictions
- **Learn** – Committing to on-going professional development grounded in a growth mind-set and shared learning between home, school, and community partners
- **Support** – Building supportive conditions for the promotion of positive mental health by creating mentally healthy schools and classrooms and providing timely access to intervention in the school, through clinical staff, and community agencies and partners

An on-going focus on simple, effective communication continues to be a priority for the Mental Health & Addictions Strategy so that all stakeholders understand the ways in which HCDSB promotes and provides preventative, proactive evidenced-informed programming. This focus promotes positive mental health and well-being for all students. At HCDSB, we provide continuous learning and capacity building for all staff in an intentional and explicit manner.

HCDSB embraces the philosophy that for social emotional learning to be most effective, the focus is on building awareness, promoting positive mental health through preventative, proactive, culturally responsive, identify affirming programming while creating and maintaining safe, caring, inclusive and welcoming school communities.

The four priorities in our HCDSB Mental Health & Addiction Strategic Plan (2025-2028) are: Amplify Student Leadership and Participation in Mental Health; Strengthen Parent and Caregiver Engagement; Amplify Mental Health Supports and Services Across All Tiers; Enhance System Collaboration. Building on the strategic plan, the Annual Mental Health & Addiction Action Plan supports a clear path for advancing student mental health and well-being for the school year and is revised annually in response to support emergent needs. The Mental Health & Addictions Strategic Plan (2025-2028) and the Annual Action Plan are posted on the HCDSB website by June 30 of each year.

Jordan’s Principle

The Jordan’s Principle was created to honour Jordan River Anderson (Oct 22, 1999- Feb 2, 2005), who was a First Nations child from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba born with complex medical needs. Due to government disputes over who would fund his home care, he was forced to remain in the hospital longer. Jordan sadly passed away in 2005 at age 5, never having the chance to return to his home to be with his family and community.

Jordan's Principle ensures that all First Nations children living in Canada have equitable access to publicly funded health, social, and education programs, services and supports. This support applies to public government services for First Nations children such as special education, speech therapy, medical equipment, mental health, dental, early childhood services, physical therapy and more. Funding can help with a wide range of health, social and educational needs, including the unique needs that First Nations Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA children and youth. Jordan’s Principle serves children with or without disabilities, whether they live on a reserve, as long as they are currently living in Canada.

Local service coordinators help families who have questions about Jordan's Principle or would like to submit a request for products, services or supports under Jordan's Principle.

HCDSB Special Education staff work with families and service coordinators as needed through Jordan’s Principle.

Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings

 Specialized Health Support Service	Agency or position of person who performs the service (e.g., LHIN, Board staff, parent/guardian, student)	Eligibility criteria for students to receive the service	Position of person who determines eligibility to receive the service and the level of support	Criteria for determining when the service is no longer required	Procedures for resolving disputes about eligibility and level of support (if available)
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Nursing	Local Health Integration Networks Home and Community Care Support Services	Requisition by Doctor	Case Manager - Home and Community Care Support Services	Doctor with Home and Community Care Support Services	Agency Process
Occupational Therapy	School Based Rehab Services (SBRS) co-ordinated by ErinoakKids	School referral to SBRS	Manager SBRS, ErinoakKids	Collaboration	Agency Process
Physiotherapy	SBRS co-ordinated by ErinoakKids	School referral to SBRS	Manager SBRS, ErinoakKids	Collaboration	Agency Process
Nutrition	Public Health Nurse	School referral	Region Health Department	Collaboration	Halton Region Health Dept.
Speech and Language Services	School Board Staff, SBRS co-ordinated by ErinoakKids	Language: School referral Speech: SLP referral to SBRS	Speech Language Pathologist; Manager SBRS for Speech	Collaboration	Special Education Dept.
Administering of prescribed medications	School Board/ Student/ Parent/Guardian	Requisition by Doctor, Permission form signed by Parent/Guardian	Doctor	Doctor	Halton Region Health Dept.
Catheterization	Training LHIN supervise self- catheterization - School Board Staff	As needed	Principal/Teacher	Collaboration	Special Education Dept.
Suctioning Shallow	Training Home and Community Care Support Services - School Board Staff	As needed	Principal/Teacher	Collaboration	Special Education Dept.
Lifting and positioning	School Board Staff	OT/PT	Principal/Teacher	Collaboration	Special Education Dept.
Mobility Assistance	School Board Staff	OT/PT	Principal/Teacher	Collaboration	Special Education Dept.
Feeding	School Board Staff, Home and Community Care Support Services	As needed	Principal/Teacher	Collaboration	Special Education Dept.
Toileting	School Board Staff	As needed	Principal/Teacher	Collaboration	Special Education Dept.
Deep suctioning /Other	Home and Community Care Support Services	As needed	Manager Home and Community Care Support Services	Collaboration	Agency Process

****Time limits re: Disputes** – Each Agency has its own referral/dispute resolution process with reasonable timelines associated with the process. In the case of the Special Education Department, every precaution will be taken to ensure that the student is not put “in harm's way”. Critical tasks such as feeding, etc. will be prioritized. Other non-critical disputes are resolved at regular intervals during the school year.

Staff Development

The goal of the Staff Development Plan is to provide all employees in the Special Education department opportunities to engage in on-going learning and professional development including research in assessment and instructional strategies, mental health and well-being, collaboration between other departments including Curriculum and Student Success, and Ministry policies and procedures as they impact the learning of students with special education needs. Staff has input into the Staff Development Plan by identifying their own learning needs in relation to student achievement, school data, behavioural data, and goals established in students' Individual Education Plan. The board has an enveloped budget allocation for staff PD in special education to support the Staff Development Plan implementation that is secured through the following Ministry funding: GSN, Special Education Grant, SEA and annual PPF's. There are not currently any cost-sharing arrangements.

Staff also indicate their learning needs through other means such as the PPM 140 survey, collaborative inquiries based upon student learning needs, and for SERTs and SETs in the completion of their Annual Learning Plan. The Staff Development Plan also builds in opportunities for staff to attend workshops and seminars with the expectation that this new learning is shared with others in their own discipline. The Ministry of Education, through their provincial schools, offers a robust schedule of professional development opportunities as well as local parent associations and nearby school boards. The 2024-2025 Priorities and Partnership Funding (PPF) was received from the Ministry to support teachers' completion of approved Special Education AQ courses to increase their capacity for supporting students with special education needs, to increase their knowledge and understanding of students with special education needs and to improve services and support for students with special education needs. This funding was available for all OCT certified teachers. Other provincial staff development opportunities such as the Ontario Council of Administrators in Special Education (OCASE), Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), Association for Special Education Technology (ASET), Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO), Centre for Diverse Learners (CDL) (formally Learning Disabilities Association of Halton and Hamilton (LDAH)), and other in-services, workshops, conferences, and experiences are available to staff. Staff are both encouraged and supported in their pursuit of professional development opportunities whenever possible. Staff development not only includes opportunities for learning during the instructional day but may also include invites for staff to attend late afternoon and evening workshops.

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is consulted when setting budget priorities for special education. Input into the staff development plan flows from SEAC's involvement in setting budget priorities. Recent examples include more hands-on activities with real-life simulations, increased mental health programming and increased staff. As it relates to mental health initiatives, we continue to train staff in the various mental health programs our Board offers such as Safe Talk and ASIST training. As well as the ongoing commitment to a tiered approach to instruction and intervention with the purchase of corresponding resources and training, staff development updates are provided at each SEAC meeting through the Superintendent Report.

The following sections provide details of HCDSB's professional development plans for special education staff. It must be noted that many of the opportunities are open to classroom teachers and school principals. An ongoing emphasis within our staff development planning includes a focus on cross discipline training and professional development opportunities related to specific student strengths, needs and learning profiles. Whenever appropriate and feasible, classroom teachers, SERTs and other system level staff are engaged in learning together.

Special Education Services Professional Development and Training for HCDSB Staff

Professional development and training for Special Education academic staff is ongoing. Topics addressed are determined based on Ministry directives, system needs and related collaborative inquiry projects. Below are topics that were presented in the previous school year.

- Individual Education Plans (IEP) and the electronic IEP management system
 - Educational Assessment with the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement – Third Edition (KTEA)
 - Grade 4 CCAT 7 testing, gifted screening procedures/guidelines, gifted programming
 - From Referral to Identification: The Role of Psychological Assessment in Special Education
 - Effective transition processes both into and throughout school
 - Trauma Informed Approaches
 - Community Classrooms
 - Supports for Blind-Low Vision students
 - Support for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students
 - Speech and Language Supports
 - Collaborating with Educational Assistants
 - Year at A Glance SERT Responsibilities
 - Student Success Meetings
 - Ministry Guide to Special Education
 - FASD Awareness & Transition to Secondary
 - Mental Health and Well-Being
 - ABA Principles and Strategies
 - School Based Rehabilitation Services
 - Elementary Math Curriculum
 - Destreamed Math – supporting all learners including LD and Gifted
 - Kindergarten and Special Education
 - The Science of Reading
 - Post-Secondary Pathways
 - Supporting the DHH Learner
 - ELL and Special Education
 - Support for Gifted Students in Secondary
 - SEA
 - Equity and Inclusion
 - Annual CDL (formally LDAHH) Conference
 - ADHD presentations

Mental Health and Addictions Professional Learning

Mental Health professional development continues on an annual basis in support of staff needs to best support student success. Professional development is offered annually to administrators, teachers, CYCs, Department Heads, SERTs, SETs, Social Workers, Psychology Staff, Guidance Counselors, Behaviour Analyst, SLP/CDA, Chaplaincy Leaders, Special Education Consultants, Mental Health Champions and other members as designated by principals from both the elementary and secondary panels.

Topics of professional development have included:

- Mental health and wellness
- *safeTALK* Suicide Alertness
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST)

- Bullying prevention/awareness
- Teen mental health
- Crisis response/traumatology training
- First Nations, Inuit and Metis history and cultural norms
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
- Leading Mentally Healthy Schools and Classrooms
- Anxiety Modules
- Human Trafficking
- Attendance-Wellbeing
- Trauma Sensitive Classrooms Tier 1 and Tier 2 levels
- Brief Intervention for School Clinicians (BRISC) Psychology and Social Work Staff
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- ADHD symposium
- SMH-ON – Suicide Risk Assessment and Management with Youth – Advanced Crisis Intervention
- SMH-ON – Supporting the Mental Health and Well-Being of 2S&LGBTQIA+ Students
- Centering Black Youth Well-Being through SMHO and YouthREX
- Call-In-Cards for Anti-Black Racism in Action through YouthREX
- Life Promotion, Suicide Prevention Manual Training
- Identity-Affirming Mental Health Care for Students

On-going focus for professional development and support, as per the Mental Health Strategy, includes suicide prevention awareness and strategies, leading mentally healthy classrooms, mental health literacy, social emotional learning and anxiety modules to support student anxiety. The Mental Health Tiered Model of Intervention is the foundation of how support is offered. HCDSB continues strong collaborative relationships with our mental health community partners in the support of students and families.

Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Training

The Ontario Ministry of Education has provided funding to the Geneva Centre for Autism to offer the Ontario Educator Online Autism Training Program to publicly funded school boards. These courses are open to all individuals working as an educator in one of the following areas: SERT, SET, Classroom Teacher, Educational Assistant, Designated Early Childhood Educator, Child and Youth Counsellor, Special Education Consultant, Speech Language Pathologist, Principal/Vice Principal, Behaviour Analyst, Psycho-Educational Consultant, Communicative Disorders Assistant, or other educational positions held within the board. The objectives of these courses are to increase the understanding of ASD and ABA methods, enhance the delivery of programming to students with ASD, and improve their education, social, communication and behavioural outcomes at HCDSB.

Introductory and Ongoing Professional Development for Educational Assistants:

Orientation and training provided to newly hired Supply Educational Assistants includes:

- Introduction to Employment
- Health and Safety
- Safe Management Certification
- Supervision Training
- Bill 157 *Keeping our Kids Safe at School Act* and *Duty to Report*.

Training sessions are provided to Educational Assistants in an ongoing manner to meet the criteria of any board re-certification standards.

Training sessions include:

- Safe Management (certification sessions occur on PD days as appropriate and throughout the school year as required)
- EVAC Chair: school-based training as required

- Structured teaching: school-based training as required
- Home and Community Care Support Services training (e.g., specific lifting technics, positioning, physiotherapy, shallow suctioning, and other student specific needs as required)
- Duty to Report: CAS expectations, board policy and procedures
- Opportunities to collaborate with relevant school staff

Ongoing and as needed professional development opportunities are provided for Educational Assistants to ensure that exceptional students with special education needs may be better understood and served and goals are aligned to the Board Improvement Plan. Ministry of Education/Board initiatives and/or current research outcomes, and feedback from HCDSB regarding system needs may generate these training opportunities.

Professional Development sessions included:

- Equity and Inclusion
- Building an Educational Assistant resource
- ABA for All
- Speech-Language Workshops
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- A Variety of Technology PD to Support our Students
- Safe Management Training
- Self-Care
- Health and Safety
- Transdisciplinary Rounds (involvement as necessary)

Enhanced professional development opportunities are provided for Itinerant Educational Assistants to support the coaching and mentoring requirements of their role.

Sessions include:

- Partnership with Speech Language Pathologists (SLP)
- Partnership with Behaviour Analysts/Transdisciplinary Rounds
- Safe Management Trainer Certification (1 additional trainer)
- Coaching and Mentoring
- Peer Mediated Prompting
- Christian Meditation
- Model Me Kids
- Beyond Behaviour Management
- Participation in Catholic Learning Communities
- Development of Collaborative Partnerships with Itinerant SERTs

Communication for Staff Development

Staff are made aware of professional development opportunities in a variety of ways. Special Education memorandums are sent out to staff from the Superintendent of Special Education. Memorandums are also posted on HCDSB's intranet system. Professional development opportunities are posted electronically on the Board's intranet 'Event Registration' system. Specific in-services are brought to the attention of targeted audiences using the Board's internal email system. Professional development opportunities are further communicated personally through Special Education Consultants during school visits, to SERTs at FOS meetings, and to Principals at Principal/Vice-Principal meetings throughout the year.

Accessibility (AODA)

The Ontario government enacted the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#) in 2005. The act lays the framework for the development of province-wide mandatory standards on accessibility in all areas of daily life.

Currently, most HCDSB school buildings, grounds and administration offices provide barrier-free access. All new structures meet the government accessibility requirements. The Halton Catholic District School Board has developed an accessibility template to ensure physical accessibility to and within all schools. Advances in accessibility of buildings and facilities are largely the responsibility of the board and specific departments such as Facilities Services and Human Resources Services. The same is true of the provision of safety and emergency evacuation equipment. Evacuation chairs are installed in all schools and staff are trained at each location to safely and effectively use.

Halton Catholic District School Board, Halton District School Board and Halton Transportation Services continue to collaborate on a common plan that fulfills the AODA legislated requirements.

The HCDSB's Accessibility Plan is presented to SEAC yearly, a member of SEAC sits on the board committee, and members of SEAC are invited to provide input into the plan.

The Accessibility Plan is available on HCDSB's website. [Click here](#) to review.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures for Students and Others Requiring Specialized Assistance:

The Ontario Fire Code requires a fire safety plan for all schools. The plan shall include procedures for evacuating endangered occupants which, under certain circumstances, must be approved by the local fire department(s). This procedure complies with the Fire Code to provide safe egress for all students, including any requiring specialized assistance in evacuating the school premises.

Under all circumstances, careful consideration must be given to limiting placement of any students requiring special assistance in evacuating to the ground floor levels of the building only. If the principal is considering locating students with special education needs on a floor other than on the ground level of a school, they shall develop a plan that demonstrates the ongoing evacuation of the student at least once during a Fire Department monitored drill.

If evacuation of a student/staff member may be delayed due to location above or below ground level, it is required that:

- staff has had training in emergency evacuation procedures
- principal will consult with Facility Services to develop a “Physically Challenged Evacuation Plan”; an insert shall be included in the school’s Fire Plan
- the plan identifies both main and alternate exits
- principal will ensure that the appropriate staff are aware of these amendments

Note: if EVAC chair(s) are in place, specified in the “Physically Challenged Evacuation Plan”, in the building and all staff have been trained in the use of the EVAC chairs then the plan does not require approval of the local fire department. Each principal must ensure the evacuation plan is in place and communicated.

As part of the ‘Fire Safety and Security’ section of the school’s workplace inspection, EVAC chairs are inspected monthly to ensure they are clean and in working order.

Parent Guide to Special Education

[The Parent’s Guide to Special Education Programs and Services](#) handbook is available on our Board website under

‘Programs’ on the ‘Special Education’ page in the ‘document’ section.

Appendix A – Glossary of Terms

A4	Assessing Achievement in Alternative Areas
AAC	Augmentative Assistive Communication
ABA	Applied Behaviour Analysis
ABAS-3	Adaptive Behaviour Assessment System – Third Edition
ABC	Association for Bright Children
ABI	Acquired Brain Injury
ABLLS	The Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills
AFLS	The Assessment of Functional Living Skills
ACC	Accommodations/Accommodated
ADAPT	Halton Alcohol, Drug and Gambling Assessment Prevention and Treatment Centre
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ADRS	Assistive Devices Rehabilitation Services
AE	Age Equivalent
AEP	Annual Education Plan
AFAC	A Functional Assessment and Curriculum
AIP	Autism Intervention Plan
ALP	Annual Learning Plan
ALT	Alternative
AODA	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

OAP	Ontario Autism Program
AP	Advanced Placement
AR	Augmented Reality
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
ASIST	Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training
ASL	American Sign Language
AT	Assistive Technology
BA	Behaviour Analyst
BASC-3	Behavior Assessment System for Children – Third Edition
BIP	Behaviour Intervention Plan
BIPSA	Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement
BST	Behavioural Skills Training
CA	Chronological Age
CAP	Central Auditory Processing
CAPIS	Child and Adolescent Inpatient Unit
CAS	Children’s Aid Society
CASLPO	College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
CBT	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
CCAS	Catholic Children’s Aid Society
CCAT-7	Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test – 7
CD	Conduct Disorder
CDA	Communicative Disorders Assistant
CEC	Council for Exceptional Children
CFS	Child and Family Services
CI	Cochlear Implant
CMHA	Canadian Mental Health Association
CNIB	Canadian National Institute for the Blind
CODE	Council of Ontario Directors of Education
CP	Cerebral Palsy
CPBAO	College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario
CPCO	Catholic Principals Council of Ontario
CPR	Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation
CPRI	Child and Parent Resource Institute
CYC	Child and Youth Counsellor
DBD	Disruptive Behaviour Disorder
DBT	Dialectical Behaviour Therapy

DD	Developmental Disability
DECE	Designated Early Childhood Educator
DEV	Developmental
DHH	Deaf and Hard of Hearing
DOB	Date of Birth
DRA	Developmental Reading Assessment
DSM-VTR	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – 5 th Edition Text Revision
DSO	Developmental Services Ontario
DSW	Developmental Services Worker
E/BD	Emotional/Behavioural Disorder
EA	Educational Assistant
EBP	Evidence Based Practices
EDI	Early Development Instrument
EID	Early Identification
EOK	ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Development
EQAO	Education Quality and Accountability Office
ESC	Essential Skills Class
FA	Functional Analysis
FASD	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
FBA	Functional Behaviour Assessment
FDK	Full Day Kindergarten Program
FOS	Family of Schools
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GDD	Global Development Delay
IB	International Baccalaureate
IBI	Intensive Behaviour Intervention
IBP	Integrated Behaviour Program
IEA	Itinerant Educational Assistant
IED	Intermittent Explosive Disorder
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IPP	Individual Pathways Plan
IPRC	Identification, Placement and Review Committee
IRP	Indicator Response Plan
ISERT	Itinerant Special Education Resource Teacher
KTEA-3	Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement - Third Edition
L4All K-12	Learning for All – Kindergarten to Grade 12

LD	Learning Disability
LI	Language Impairment
CDL	Centre for Diverse Learners (CDL)
LHIN	Local Health Integration Networks
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
LTO	Long Term Occasional (Staff)
MACSE	Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education
MCYS	Ministry of Child and Youth Services
MHAN	Mental Health and Addiction Nurse
MHWPB MDT	Mental Health and Well Being Multidisciplinary Team
MID	Mild Intellectual Disability
MOD	Modification/Modified
MEDU MEDU	Ministry of Education
MOHLTC	Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
NOS	Not otherwise specified
NTIP	New Teacher Induction Program
OAP	Ontario Autism Program
 OCD	Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
ODD	Oppositional Defiant Disorder
OPA	Ontario Psychological Association
OSR	Ontario Student Record
OT	Occupational Therapist
PAAC	Provincial Parent Associations Advisory Committee
PBIS	Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports
PECS	Picture Exchange Communication System
PHYS/MED	Physical Medical
PICS	Picture Symbols
PPM	Program Policy Memorandum
PT	Physical Therapist
RBT	Registered Behaviour Technician
ROCK	Reach Out Centre for Kids
ROM	Range of Motion
SEA	Special Equipment Amount
SEC	Special Education Consultant
SEAC	Special Education Advisory Committee
SEF	School Effectiveness Framework

SEPPA	Special Education Per Pupil Amount
SERT	Special Education Resource Teacher
SET	Special Education Teacher
SIP	Special Incidence Portion
SLD	Specific Learning Disability
SLP	Speech Language Pathologist
SNS	Special Needs Strategy
STC	Structured Teaching Class
SW	Social Worker
TCA	Temporary Care Agreement
TDD	Telecommunications Device for the Deaf
TDR	Transdisciplinary Rounds
TRE-ADD	Treatment, Research and Education for Autism and Developmental Disorders
VR	Virtual Reality
VTRA	Violence Threat Risk Assessment
WIAT-III / WIAT-4^{CDN}	Wechsler Individual Achievement Test - Third Edition / Fourth Edition Canadian
WISC-V	Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children - Fifth Edition Canadian
WPPSI-IV	Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence – Fourth Edition Canadian

Appendix B – Special Education Tiered Model



Special Education Services Tiered Model of Intervention

As a model learning community that is distinctly Catholic, all HCDSB students are supported to **Achieve, Believe, and Belong** in accordance with the core principles of Catholic Social Teaching that create equitable outcomes for all.

The Special Education Services Tiered Model of Intervention continues to be the key strategy of our evidenced-based service delivery model, with equity, engagement, and evidence found at all tiers.

TIER 3:
Essential for Few

TIER 2:
Necessary for Some

TIER 1:
Good for All

EVIDENCE

EQUITY

ENGAGEMENT

➤ **TIER 3: INTENSIVE – ESSENTIAL FOR FEW**

Tier 3 services support students requiring more intensive assessment and intervention services. At Tier 3, multiple disciplines are often involved with one (1) student. Support is individualized and provided through board personnel and in collaboration with school staff, such as Social Workers (SW), and/or external agencies. School and board personnel may assist students and families to access appropriate external agencies for support, some of which may require a school-based referral process.

➤ **TIER 2: RESPONSIVE – NECESSARY FOR SOME**

Tier 2 focuses on prevention and early intervention responses. In every class and school, there will be some students that require additional support. School staff, such as the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) or Child and Youth Counsellor (CYC), reinforce skills and work to remove barriers to learning through a variety of approaches, including individual and/or group intervention, based on student needs. Through a school-based referral process, differentiated support may be provided by board personnel or external agencies.

➤ **TIER 1: FOUNDATIONAL – GOOD FOR ALL**

Tier 1 is the everyday work that school staff implement to create foundations for safe, inclusive, and welcoming learning environments that support student achievement and well-being in our Catholic schools. School staff collaborate with families and other board personnel and/or external providers (where appropriate), to create a positive school climate focusing on promotion and prevention.



Behaviour Analyst
- Tiered Model of Intervention



Mental Health
- Tiered Model of Intervention



Speech & Language
- Tiered Model of Intervention



Literacy & Numeracy
- Tiered Model of Intervention



Psychology
- Tiered Model of Intervention

Updated by the Special Education Services Department, Summer 2022

Achieving Believing Belonging

Appendix C – Summary of Parental Rights and Responsibilities in Special Education

Parents/guardians are encouraged to work closely with the school staff and Special Education staff in addressing and supporting the needs of their child.

Parents/guardians may, at any time, request a meeting with their child's teacher to discuss the child's educational program.

Parents/guardians may request in writing that a principal refers their child to an IPRC, and the principal is then required to refer the student.

Parents/guardians must provide written consent before most assessments can be carried out (as per PHIPA and Education Act). An IPRC can still proceed without such assessments.

Parents/guardians are entitled to review with Psychological Services staff the results of any assessments. Parents/guardians must be provided with copies of any assessments.

Parents/guardians must be given adequate notice of all IPRC meetings. Parents/guardians may ask that the meeting be rescheduled if unable to attend the meeting when originally scheduled.

Parents/guardians and students 16 years of age or older have the right to be present at and participate in all IPRC discussions. Parents/guardians may invite anyone to the IPRC meeting that can provide them with additional support, information, advocacy, clarification, or interpretation. Parents/guardians must notify the principal, in advance, if they wish to bring anyone to the meeting.

Parents/guardians must be provided with a written statement of the decisions reached by an IPRC stating:

- category and definition of the identified exceptionality
 - description of student's strengths and needs
 - placement decision
- recommendations regarding a special education program and special education services (where appropriate)
- Parents/guardians may request a further meeting with the IPRC to discuss the committee's decisions.

An IEP must be developed in consultation with the parent/guardian. The IEP must be completed within 30 school days after the student is placed in a Special Education program and the parent/guardian should receive a copy of the IEP. An IEP can be developed without formal identification.

Parents/guardians and/or students over the age of 16 may request a review of the special education identification or placement at any time after the identification and placement has been in effect for 3 months.

Parents/guardians must be advised in writing to review the identification and placement at least once in each school year, unless the parent/guardian gives written notice dispensing the review.

Parents/guardians have the right to appeal the decisions of the IPRC.

Appendix D – Ministry and Regional Offices

Barrie Regional Office, Ministry of Education 20 Bell Farm Road, Unit 9, Barrie, ON L4M 6E4 Tel: 705-725-7627; 1-800-471-0713

London Regional Office, Ministry of Education 217 York Street, Suite 207, London, ON N6A 5P9 Tel: 519-667-1440; 1-800-265-4221

Ottawa Regional Office, Ministry of Education

1580 Merivale Road, Suite 504, Nepean, ON K2G 4B5 Tel: 613-225-9210; 1-800-267-1067

Sudbury/North Bay Regional Office, Ministry of Education

199 Larch Street, Suite 1103, Sudbury, ON P3E 5P9 Tel: 705-474-7210; 1-800-461-9570

Thunder Bay Regional Office, Ministry of Education

615 South James Street, 1st Floor, Thunder Bay, ON P7E 6P6

Tel: 807-474-2980; 1-800-465-5020 (only available for area code 807)

Toronto and Area Regional Office, Ministry of Education

Sun Life Financial Building, 3300 Bloor Street West, 16th Floor, Suite 3610, Etobicoke, ON M8X 2X3 Tel: 416-212-0954; 1-800-268-5755

Appendix E – Summary and Changes to the HCDSB Special Education Plan 2024- 25

Introduction and Overview:

- Embedded equity and inclusion language

Special Education Plan Consultation Process:

- Updated revised date to memorandum: Instructions regarding School Boards'/School Authorities' Plan for the Provision of Special Education Programs and Services, 2011
- Addition of the CLC Class and Board Report
- Minor edits to some wording

Model for Special Education:

- Added detail to the first paragraph
- Added information on Tiered Model and included infographic of Tiered Model as Appendix B

Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Process:

- Links that were expired due to the Ministry website change were updated
- Incorporated SEAC suggestion for a new chart that indicates identified and non-identified data

Student Independence:

- Reduced domains from seven to six for Independence Rubric (took out Health Medical)
- Revisions to Independence Rubric in 2023 resulting in creating 2 separate rubrics specifically for Secondary and Elementary

Individual Education Plans (IEP):

- Reduced historical IEP Reviews and IEP in-services to reflect last 5 years
- Added dispute resolution

Special Education Support Process:

- Changed section title to Special Education Tiered Model of Intervention
- Moved "A Tiered Model to Instruction and Intervention" to this section

Transition Planning:

- Updated information regarding Kindergarten Information Session
- Grammar and language edits
- Embedded PPM 140 link

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Added the Itinerant Educational Assistant Role

Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities:

- Links that expired due to the Ministry website change were updated

Provincial and Demonstration School in Ontario:

- Updated student numbers

- Embedded websites in school titles

Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies:

- Moved “A Tiered Approach to Instruction and Intervention” from this section to Special Education Tiered Model of Intervention section

Psychological-Educational Assessments:

- Refer to Policy

Assessment and Referral Process:

- Expanded some bullet points and revised others

Staff Development:

- Added information on Ministry funding and initiatives
- Updated staff development section

SEAC:

- Added additional staff presentations that were presented at SEAC from the 2022-2023 school year.
- Updated SEAC Directory.
- Added new meeting dates for 2023-2024.

Appendix F – Summary of Feedback from SEAC on HCSDB Special Education Plan 2024-25

- Update name of Association to: VOICE FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING ASSOCIATION

IPRC Appeal Information <https://www.ontario.ca/document/special-education-ontario-policy-and-resource-guide-kindergarten-grade-12/iprc-appeal>