

Special Education Vision

Reaching Every Student

Special Education Teachers, Education Workers, Consultants, Occupational Therapists, Mental Health Counsellors, Speech-Language Pathologists, Psychology staff, and administration are dedicated and committed to increasing student achievement and well-being for our exceptional students. The department successfully facilitates students meeting I.E.P. goals, completing identified and measurable performance tasks and making major gains in provincial, school, and board-wide assessments. The Board ensures that technology is accessible for student learning and provides the necessary accommodations required to complete assessments.

CDSBEO supports Learning for All, the Ministry of Education document on Literacy and Numeracy instruction for students with Special Education needs. We believe that all students can succeed and achieve high standards given sufficient time and support. Providing differentiated instruction recognizes that each child has unique patterns of learning.

Together we are striving to “raise the bar” for students to achieve higher standards and student specific goals and “close the gap” between student potential and performance. Monitoring student improvement is critical and results indicate that gaps in learning are closing.

The responsibility for Inclusive Education is shared between Classroom Teachers, Special Education Teachers and Education Workers, who collaborate to plan and deliver programs that motivate and engage students in learning.

A parent handbook explaining the Identification, Placement and Review Process is available at all schools. An electronic version is also available on the CDSBEO website.

Empowering Students to Succeed

Special Education Teams target learners at their unique instructional level and design systematic and explicit instructional practices based on evidence of learning. Individual Education Plans (I.E.P.'s) and transition plans are created to identify strengths, needs, expectations and necessary accommodations and/or alternative programming. To empower and support students we:

- Provide ongoing observation, feedback, assessment, evaluation, and next steps to ensure students can demonstrate competence and succeed.
- Analyze assessment results for all students to identify areas of proficiency and concern and cluster students needing support.
- Establish routines and expectations, determine support required, organize the classroom setting, and identify instructional, environmental, and physical accommodations to meet student needs.
- Provide school embedded training in assistive technology for teachers and students.
- Introduce evidence-based strategies to support students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- Create Plans for Success with school teams to identify goals, necessary supports and the skills needed for student success in the educational environment.
- Create Safety Response Plans with school teams to identify antecedents, unsafe behaviour and strategies needed to ensure the safety of students and staff.
- Offer opportunities to participate in mini enrichment courses at Ottawa and Carleton Universities for one week each year.
- Provide school embedded professional development from special education consultants and school-based special education teachers whose role it is to model, collaborate and assist the classroom teacher to support students with special needs.
- Apply for Specialized Equipment Assistance (SEA) grants to help provide the assistive technology required for individual students.

Striving for Higher Levels of Achievement

The Science of Reading

CDSBEO understands that all students have the right to read. Scientific research has shown that all human brains learn to read in the same manner; the reading circuit is developed by developing an awareness of the individual sounds in speech (phonemic awareness) and by relating the speech sounds to letters (phonics). This is done through explicit instruction beginning in kindergarten.

The Speech-Language Pathology (S-LP) team provides ongoing professional development to help teachers align their classroom practices to the reading brain and provide evidence-based structured literacy instruction for all students. For those students who struggle to read and write, the S-LP team conducts oral language and early literacy assessment and consultation. This informs school teams to help close the reading gap and prevent long-term reading failure. Educators access resources through S-LP Share TEAMS that include a phonemic awareness binder, embedded letter mnemonics & keyword pictures, sound wall displays which reflect a suggested scope, and sequence for teaching phonics and decodable books

F.R.O.G.

Facilitating Reading for Optimum Growth

Maximizing early reading comprehension strategies for each child is the goal of "Facilitating Reading for Optimum Growth" or FROG! FROG hops into action throughout primary classrooms, and the strategies are used with junior and intermediate students where appropriate. Reading skills are developed through small groups, allowing the classroom and special education teachers, working together, to focus on the unique language development and needs of each child.

Children working together in small flexible guided reading groups using leveled books, receive intensive instruction to expand their reading strategies, make connections and achieve targeted goals.

H.A.W.K.

Higher Achievement for Writers' Know-How

Developing writing strategies for all students and helping struggling writers is the focus of "Higher Achievement in Writers Know-How" or HAWK! The HAWK soars to all regions of the Board's junior classrooms, and key strategies are used across all divisions.

Targeted and systematic instruction for the traits of writing promotes the specific skills necessary to utilize the traits, processes, and genres of good writing. Through flexible groupings, children interact with one another and are guided to become more effective writers and readers.

S.T.O.M.P.

Success Through Optimizing My Potential

Optimizing thinking skills for every learner is the purpose of "Success Through Optimizing My Potential" or STOMP! STOMP is a specialized framework used with grade seven and eight students which ensures the development of higher order thinking and questioning skills. Special Education and Classroom Teachers team together to create learning experiences based on layers of thinking. Evidence from student learning allows teachers to systematically differentiate instruction. Stomp lessons include three R's (Retell, Relate and Reflect) and regular practice with the Reader Writer's Notebook provides student choice in the world around them.

T.A.F.A.

Targeting Achievement for All

TAFA is a comprehensive framework that identifies the critical Reading, Writing and Thinking components for CDSBEO's unique models of FROG, HAWK and STOMP to support "all" learners. There are seven board created magazines:

- Systematic and Explicit Instruction

- Assessment For, As, and Of Learning
- Differentiated Instruction
- Flexible Grouping
- Universal Design for Learning
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Mathematical Learning for All.

Consultants visit schools to model strategies and support primary teachers, ECE's and EA's for students with exceptional social, emotional, and learning needs, with a focus on creating classroom environments conducive to learning and emotional regulation, as well as establishing effective routines and support structures to enhance the growth and development of all primary students. Information is shared to further advance educators' knowledge of the various developmental continua (e.g., social, emotional, spiritual, cognitive, communication, and physical), to allow for optimal learning opportunities for children in our kindergarten to grade three programs. Two documents that capture the Framework, learning and key messages have been created to support this work, SHINE (kindergarten) and SHINE ON (Grade 1-3).

Enhancing Learning Through the Use of Technology

Students accessing curriculum and being able to communicate is critical for the success of our learners with exceptional needs. Assistive technology and adaptive equipment (i.e.: Laptops, tablets, speech to text and text to speech software, sound field systems, vision magnification equipment, augmentative communication systems and apps) provide the necessary tools for students, regardless of grade level, to acquire and process information, and to demonstrate learning, empowering students to achieve success.

These devices allow students to access curriculum, demonstrate learning, and communicate using a variety of software and hardware tools, including voice recognition to assist with writing, text readers to access print, and specific programs to help organize and convey thinking.

The board's Special Education Assistive Technology Training Plan focuses on building capacity through modeling, co-planning, and co-teaching, to enhance teaching and learning.

Supporting Teachers and Staff Collaboration

School communities learn together and work in partnership to help foster a culture of collaboration and strengthen the network of support.

Student success special education resource teachers are provided as part of the special education staff allotment to elementary and secondary schools to help support learning loss, reading, literacy, numeracy, and reengagement. As part of the role, they liaison with secondary student success teachers to support Grade 7-8 transitions to secondary school. Literacy and numeracy assessments, along with monitoring and tracking, is an essential aspect of the student success SERT role.

Professional Learning Teams

Special Education Consultants facilitate resource teachers coming together virtually or in-person as a family of schools to focus on IEP development and transition planning. These targeted sessions are highly successful due to their supportive nature, and networking opportunities.

Targeting Assessment for Learning

School Assessments using PM Benchmarks, CASI and OWA have identified major gains in our special needs students' reading and writing achievement for knowledge and understanding, thinking, comprehension and application of the information read.

Visual Assessment Portfolios for students with high needs provide an opportunity for the teacher and psychology staff to work collaboratively to gather and review learning information with families. The three-tier approach to primary and junior assessment displays information gathered from all tiers using charts and graphs

that highlight areas of strength and need and allows for effectively grouping students for targeted information based on the student's learning profile.

Psycho-Educational consultations and formal assessments provide teachers and families with critical assessment information on students cognitive, academic, social and emotional functioning.

Speech and Language assessments and consultations provide a wealth of valuable information, which is instrumental in supporting the language and literacy development of our students.

Multi-Disciplinary Team

The multidisciplinary (MD) team is made up of a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst, Occupational Therapist, and Speech-Language Pathologist and provides support to students with complex needs across the board. When a referral is accepted, the MD team, in collaboration with the school-based team, identify the dysregulation that is limiting the student's success. The MD team then completes in-school observations and comprehensive assessments to determine the underlying function of the behaviour and the impact of underlying oral language, communication, or sensory concerns. Following this assessment, recommendations are shared with the school team and the MD team supports their implementation.

Autism and Building School Capacity

School teams including administrators, teachers and education workers receive extensive support and training as they implement Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) strategies and develop effective transition plans for students with Autism. Board ABA Expertise Professionals and/or BCBA's provide observation, consultation, coaching, and professional development training to educators. Topics include, increasing staff understanding of the learning styles and strengths of children with ASD, increasing independence and learning opportunities, social and life-skill development and decreasing challenging behaviours. The team helps schools identify appropriate goals and next steps for students. They support IEP development as well as the implementation of Ministry of Education policies

specific to children with ASD. They work with both schools and community service providers to support continuity and consistency across environments.

Our ABA Expertise Professionals partner with our school staff and families to provide social skills training to our students from kindergarten to grade 12+. Group topics include learning play skills, conversation skills, good sportsmanship, and how to make friends and keep them.

Occupational Therapy at CDSBEO

Students can overcome difficulties at school with the guidance of an Occupational Therapist (OT). OTs explore the underlying why and help students build on their strengths to develop functional skills. OTs can also collaborate with teachers, make changes to the school environment, and introduce tools to make school a better place for learning. The Occupational Therapist at CDSBEO supports all students through a tiered model of services.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a diagnostic term used to describe impacts on the brain and body of individuals prenatally exposed to alcohol. FASD is a lifelong disability. Individuals with FASD will experience some degree of challenges in their daily living, and need support with motor skills, physical health, learning, memory, attention, communication, emotional regulation, and social skills to reach their full potential. Each individual with FASD is unique and has areas of both strengths and challenges.

The occupational therapist at CDSBEO provides ongoing professional development to educators and education workers to increase FASD knowledge and build capacity. The OT provides evidence-based resources to equip educators to help students with FASD overcome barriers at school by utilizing their strengths to support identified areas of need. Due to the complexity of each individual student's presenting needs, a multidisciplinary assessment may be required to best support.

OurSCHOOL Survey

Our school board has partnered with The Learning Bar to provide students from grades 4-12 with the opportunity to give us confidential feedback about their school experiences. By completing the OurSCHOOL survey, students from grades 4-12 can share their thoughts on how we can continue to work together to ensure their schools are a place where everyone feels safe, like they belong and that this is reflected in the culture of their school. Our new surveys created for students, parents and staff, will be launched in the fall of 2021 and will be conducted every second school year. The data and feedback collected will inform our school board and school communities in the creation of Board and School Improvement Plans for Student Achievement. Student, parent, and staff voice and collaboration will help ensure the best learning experiences possible for everyone.

Resiliency and Positive Mental Health

Rooted in the positive relationships between home, school and parish, we recognize that students need to feel connected, capable and contributing members of our school and faith communities. A variety of programming is offered in our schools that support mental health, such as: [The Umbrella Project](#), [School Mental Health Ontario's Faith and Wellness programming](#), [Roots of Empathy](#), [Sources of Strength](#) and [Christian Meditation](#). Many of these programs are led by Student Support Workers (SSWs) in our schools. Additionally, our secondary schools have Mental Health and Addiction Counsellors, and we have several protocols to support students who are struggling at all grade levels. These include our [Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Risk Review \(SPIRR\) protocol](#) and our [Guide for Supporting Struggling Students](#). We work closely with many community partners, including child and youth mental health agencies and our Mental Health and Addiction Nurses (MHAN), to ensure our students have support when needed. More information about the many mental health resources provided within our school board can be found in the [Mental Health section](#) of our website.

When serious conflict occurs, and student behaviour is deemed unsafe, progressively more intensive supports must be employed. Crisis Workers and Itinerant ABLE Workers support the school teams to help stabilize students and support staff to develop successful programs and plans at the school level. This

process includes reviewing and revising the student safety plan or plan for success, modeling different strategies and enlisting support from parents and community partners.

Specialized A.B.L.E. (Alternative Behaviour Learning Environments) programs are provided as alternatives to suspension or long-term suspension placements. In this supportive small group setting, focused student action plans with academic and behavioural goals are completed and restorative re-entry meetings occur when students are ready to return to their community schools.

Education and Community Partnership Programs and Turning Points programs for Mental Health and Addictions are available for students requiring longer term support from mental health agencies who, as partners, play an important therapeutic role in these classrooms.

Enhancing Communication and Partnerships

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) comprised of Trustees, Association members and the Special Education Superintendent and Principal, which is open to the public, hold ten meetings per school year to review and discuss the Board's annual plan, programs, and policies in Special Education. The committee also invites individuals and groups to present on topics related to Special Education. Parents, Association members, administration and staff are invited to attend. The minutes and agendas are posted on the Board website and a copy of the Annual Plan on the provision of Special Education programs and services is provided to each school for parents and staff review.