



Building Our Vision for the Future

Enhancing Special Education Services in Our District



June 2016

Introduction:

In February 2016, the Limestone District School Board (LDSB) invited a variety of diverse stakeholders, including elementary and secondary students, parents/guardians, community partners, staff, trustees, federation partners and neighbouring school boards to provide input and feedback in order to develop a comprehensive vision and road map for special education over the next several years. This work was led by the Board's Educational Services Leadership Team.

The purpose of the review was to ensure:

- our special education programs, services, supports and resources continue to meet the changing needs of all of our students;
- we are making the best use of all of our resources; and
- we continue to serve students with special education needs within a creative, supportive and inclusive environment.

The framework for the review:

1. Within the area of special education, what does our school/school board do well?
2. What innovative ideas would you suggest for special education within our school/system to enhance student well-being, learning and inclusion?

The review findings:

This report summarizes the key messages of our diverse stakeholders and provides recommendations on how we can continue to enhance special education services for all students in the Limestone District School Board. Our goal with this report is to provide a comprehensive vision and road map for Special Education Services within the Board over the next several years.

LDSB Mission

Our mission is to prepare students within safe and inclusive environments to embrace a changing world as lifelong learners and informed, responsible citizens.

LDSB Philosophy of Special Education

In the Limestone District School Board . . .

We believe that all students can succeed.

We believe that our schools are welcoming and inclusive.

We believe that children and youth learn and develop differently and that it is important that we respond to individual needs.

We believe that our community is an important partner in supporting our students with special education needs.

Consultation process for the review:

Between February and May 2016 the Educational Services Leadership Team embarked upon a consultation process using a personalized approach of focus group interviews in an effort to collect a wide variety of qualitative data. The Board provided a variety of stakeholders with the opportunity to provide input during a series of consultations (see chart below).

Stakeholder Group	Focus Group Participants
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Education Advisory Committee • Various Community Partners • Community Living Focus Group Sessions
Parents and Guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary Parent Council Meetings • Secondary Parent Council Meetings • Parent Involvement Committee
LDSB Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary Staff Meetings • Secondary Staff Meetings • Educational Services Staff
Federation Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario • Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation • OSSTF Professional Student Services Personnel • Canadian Union of Public Employees • ETFO Occasional Teachers
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inter School Council (all secondary schools) ➤ Queen Elizabeth Collegiate & Vocational Institute ➤ Granite Ridge Education Centre ➤ LINKS Special Education Program • Elementary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cataraqui Woods Elementary School ➤ The Prince Charles School ➤ Rideau Heights Public School ➤ Granite Ridge Education Centre ➤ Odessa Public School
Other District School Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algonquin Lakeshore District School Board • Hastings Prince Edward District School Board • Renfrew County District School Board • Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board

Evidence:

Building on our strengths...

Stakeholders were invited to share what their school or school board does well in the area of special education. There were many strengths expressed:

- strong collaborative relationships with community partners
- transition to kindergarten process for students with special educational needs
- access to assistive technology and special equipment
- exemplary staff both at the school and central level
- multi-disciplinary team approach
- a responsive range of supports, services and programming options available based upon student need
- professional learning for staff
- in school teams and supports
- a belief in and commitment to inclusive learning environments
- responsiveness and expertise when dealing with crisis
- access to mental health supports and services supported by community partners

Building our vision for the future:

Stakeholders were also invited to share innovative ideas for special education to enhance student well-being, learning and inclusion. There were many creative and innovative suggestions that we are calling **Big Ideas**. These ideas have been further categorized into specific initiatives, some of which will be introduced over the short term (2016-2017 school year), and others which will extend into 2017-2018 and beyond.



**Reallocation
of Resources**

Reallocation of resources to provide consistent and increased in school support and to respond to the demographic/specialized needs within an inclusive environment

Professional Learning

Professional learning for ALL staff that focuses on programming for ALL students within an inclusive environment

**Strengthen
Partnerships**

Strengthen positive partnerships with our families

Leverage Supports

Leverage other supports to maximize student learning, well-being and inclusion

Reallocation of Resources	Short-Term: 2016-2017 School Year	Long-Term: 2017-2018 & Beyond
<p>Restructuring supports and programming for students to create a more inclusive whole school approach to supporting students with special needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot at J.G. Simcoe PS, Molly Brant ES and Rideau Heights PS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Student Support Teacher time allocated to J.G. Simcoe, Molly Brant & Rideau Heights in lieu of site-based and itinerant School to Community support to support a variety of student needs ➤ Access to both provincial curriculum and alternative curriculum as appropriate ➤ Use of provincial report for all students who have a developmental disability • Remove language delays as a criteria for identification of a developmental disability and access to School to Community services • Maintain KCVI Transitions Program with current student enrolment for the 2016-2017 school year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot data to inform future decisions around elementary school to community programming
<p>Restructuring Educational Services District Programs to support a more inclusive learning environment for all students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of District Learning Centres (Behaviour) and transition students to their home schools with the support of the Behaviour Action Team and other Educational Services staff • Placement into the Primary Learning Centre will be full time to capitalize on instructional time and to support inclusion into regular classroom at host site • Placements in the Learning Disabilities program will continue to be half time but with the opportunity for students to attend full time at the host schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the structure of Educational Services District Learning Centres to support changing needs across the district

Reallocation of Resources	Short-Term: 2016-2017 School Year	Long-Term: 2017-2018 & Beyond
<p>Restructuring some Educational Services teams/groups to increase consistency of in school supports, build school capacity to meet needs of students and effectively allocate resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redirect resources from Early Learning Team to school based allocations • Review of the Educational Assistant Job Selection Process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess structure of the Behaviour Action Team, School to Community Team and Autism Team to support changing needs across our district • Assess structure of the work related to the role of the School Attendance Counsellor (SAC) and Student Support Counsellor (SSC) and Adolescent Care Workers (ACW) • Assess structure of the work related to the role of the Clinical Consultants and Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) • Explore the concept of decentralization of Educational Services
<p>Differentiating supports equitably based upon demographic and socio-economic needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot at J.G. Simcoe PS, Molly Brant ES and Rideau Heights PS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Re-evaluate Student Support Counsellor, Clinical and Speech Language allocation to optimize in-school supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot data to inform future decisions around allocation of Professional Support Services Personnel (PSSP)

Professional Learning	Short-Term: 2016-2017 School Year	Long-Term: 2017-2018 & Beyond
<p>Learning For All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build capacity with all school staff to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ support the needs of all students within an inclusive environment ➤ support the development and implementation of exemplary Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) ➤ implement Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) ➤ implement Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) ➤ support the development of social and emotional learning and self-regulation ➤ offer a summer institute to all staff related to Mental Health and Wellness (Summer 2016) ➤ support the continued training and effective use of assistive technology for both staff and students ➤ support math programming and assessment for all students, including students with special needs (as per K-12 Math Strategy) • Pilot at J.G. Simcoe PS, Molly Brant ES and Rideau Heights PS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ focus on a whole school approach with community partners (PACE model) to support students with trauma and attachment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive to the changing needs of students, staff and the community

Strengthen Partnerships	Short-Term: 2016-2017 School Year	Long-Term: 2017-2018 & Beyond
<p>Deepening parent understanding of special education supports and services available to students in our schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and share user friendly parent and student resource materials related to the IEP and IPRC process and student advocacy • Continue to enhance use of social media in order to share information related to special education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop and refine resource materials in consultation with parents and community partners
<p>Empowering parents as an important and knowledgeable stakeholder when making decisions about their student’s learning and well-being.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to investigate the concept of strength based, person-centred planning in consultation with parents, community partners, and other school boards • Engage parents and community partners in effective and ongoing transition planning from school entry to a meaningful adult life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to investigate and begin to develop strength based, person centred planning in consultation with parents, community partners, and other school boards

Leverage Supports	Short-Term: 2016-2017 School Year	Long-Term: 2017-2018 & Beyond
<p>Collaborating with our community partners to promote social inclusion and student learning and well-being.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the enhancement and impact of natural supports and programming (peer tutor/student mentor/volunteer) within our schools • Continue to offer information and networking opportunities with community partners and LDSB staff to further understand available resources and services for our students and their families • Investigate opportunities within our schools and within our communities to support pathways for students and explore employability supports in partnership with our community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to seek out new partnerships and programs that promote natural supports • Investigate the concept of school as a community hub to support family access to services
<p>Investigating partnerships that support shared services and use of resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore with the Ministry of Education and co-terminus boards opportunities to access additional Section 23 funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider future partnerships and shared approach to services to support student learning and well-being
<p>Continuing to work with the Ministry of Education to serve student with special education needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with the Ministry for special education funding that meets the needs of the students in LDSB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing data collection and information gathering to advocate for the needs of students and families within our LDSB community • Promote continued partnerships with other Ministries that support services for students and families
<p>Investigating the concept of coaches to support inclusion of students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to Ontario School Boards that have implemented a focus on coaching to better understand the impact on student learning, well-being and inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess structure of the work related to the role of program team and special education coordinators • Dependent upon data and information gathering to inform future decisions

Communication & Next Steps:

This report has been shared with the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) for review and input, and with the Board of Trustees for information. The report will also be shared with all relevant stakeholders including those who participated in our consultations. The Educational Services Team will regularly monitor progress of the initiatives and will report these results, in November 2016, March 2017 and June 2017 to SEAC and the Board of Trustees. The report will also be posted to the Board website.

Glossary of Terms:

Adolescent Care Worker: Provide social, emotional, and other related support to secondary school students.

Applied Behavioural Analysis: A systematic and individualized method of teaching based on principles of learning and behaviour, to reduce undesirable and increase adaptive behaviour. ABA can be implemented in schools by teachers and school teams.

Autism Team: Provides support for students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The multidisciplinary team includes a Special Education Program Coordinator, Secondary Autism Support Teacher, Student Support Counsellor, Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Student Support Counsellor and Speech-Language Pathologist.

Behaviour Action Team: Provides support for students who are exhibiting a high level of behaviour at school and may be a risk to themselves and others. The multidisciplinary team includes Clinical Consultants, School Attendance Counsellors, Student Support Counsellors, the Aboriginal Resource Student Support Counsellor and the Itinerant Behaviour Teacher.

Behaviour Management Systems: The focus of the Behaviour Management Systems program is the understanding of those factors which impact behaviour, early interventions of a non-physical nature to address concerning behaviours and the reduction of aggressive behaviour in our schools.

Clinical Consultant: Provide support to students with learning challenges, social, emotional and /or behavioural issues through consultation and assessment for students. The clinical consultant assists the school by problem solving with staff to identify the concern and develop a plan to support the student, teacher and family.

Co-Terminus Boards: School boards that have the same or overlapping boundaries.

District Learning Centres: Provide intensive student support in select sites across the district and can only be accessed through a referral process. Includes Primary, Junior and Intermediate Learning Centres.

Early Learning Team: Uses a collaborative problem-solving approach and works directly with the in-school team and Kindergarten educator team. The multidisciplinary team

includes a Special Education Coordinator, Student Support Counsellor and Clinical Consultant.

Educational Assistants: Members of the educational system who work in schools to support student needs. Educational Assistants work with teachers to ensure the safety and medical needs of students are met. EAs may also implement accommodations and support students with their modified and/or alternative programming goals.

Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC): The purpose of an IPRC is to formally identify children who have special education needs as “exceptional pupils” and to determine appropriate special education programs and services.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP): A written plan for learning, developed for students with special needs, who may or may not be formally identified as exceptional, that outlines special education programming and accommodations and/or modifications of curriculum. The plan may also include alternative programming and transition plans.

PACE Model: Stands for Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy and is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving that aims to make a child feel safe.

Professional Support Services Personnel: A multidisciplinary team of professionals consisting of Adolescent Care Works, Student Support Counsellors, Clinicians and Speech Language Pathologists who provide consultation and direct services to students in our schools.

School Attendance Counsellor: Respond to referrals regarding habitually absent students. Provide consultative support to school staff and parents.

School to Community Services: Name of the service delivery model the Board has to provide supports and services for students identified with a developmental disability.

School to Community Team: Provides support for students identified as having a Developmental Disability and includes a Special Education Program Coordinator, Student Support Counsellor, Speech-Language Pathologist, and Transition Planning Coordinator.

Section 23: A governmentally approved, specialized class that students may attend when he/she is unable to attend schools in their area because of individual care or treatment needs. The number “23” refers to the related section in the Grants for Student Needs and the number could be revised at any time.

Speech Language Pathologists: Assess students for speech and/or language difficulties and provide consultative support to school staff.

Student Support Counsellor: Address the behavioural, emotional and social needs of children in elementary schools; provide behavioural problem solving and programming and school support.

Student Support Teacher: Provide program support to both elementary students and teachers in special education programming.