

# STUDENT SERVICES INTERNAL REVIEW

MISSION PUBLIC SCHOOLS (District 75)

**Student Services Internal Review**

**Date:** November 16, 2010

**Submitted By:** Randy Huth, Project Leader

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❖ The following individuals helped to develop this report:

❖ The Student Services Advisory Committee

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❖ School Visits and Advisory Committee Facilitation

George Connolly	External Facilitator
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# **STRUCTURE FOR THE REVIEW**

Resulting from the Vision 2020 community consultation process, the Board of Education requested an internal review of the current model of inclusion for the delivery of service to students with unique needs. The Project Manager, Randy Huth, Director of Student Services for Mission Public Schools, along with the help of an External Facilitator, George Connolly, a former long time administrator and teacher of Mission Public Schools, conducted the Student Services Internal Review.

The review studied and analyzed information gathered through school visits, surveys and focus group meetings. During the first week of November, the External Facilitator George Connolly and the Student Services Advisory Committee analyzed the data and made recommendations for the district.

The purposes of the internal review are as follows:

- To ensure an open and inclusive process.
- To retain and attract high quality and specialized teaching staff.
- To review current practices in light of best practice.
- To review current services and service delivery models.
- To identify strengths and challenges, both at the school level and district level, via focus meetings and surveys.
- To view, via school visits, both services and supports available to students with special needs.
- To explore staffing allocation, staffing models and the roles of those that are providing support throughout the district.
- To provide the Board with recommendations that can be considered for the short, mid and long term implementation based on best practice.

The Project Plan was developed over the summer and shared with the Board of Trustees and the Senior Management team in August 2010. The Project Plan was also shared at the September Education Committee Meeting and the September 2010 Board of Education Meeting.

The following outline provides the overall purpose of the review, the three specific questions of the review, data collection and the timeline

## **The focus of the Review:**

Within the current ministry funding formula, how do we provide the best service delivery model in our schools to support students with special needs.

The following three specific questions were asked at the focus group meetings, the school visits and the survey questions:

1. What is working well with our current support?
2. What challenges do we face with our current support?
3. What needs to be improved or changed?

## **The information from these questions was collected from the following three data collections:**

- **School Visits** – (school based teams and a meeting with parents) External Facilitator – September 20 to October 1, 2010. George Connolly visited Silverdale Elementary, West Heights Elementary, Albert McMahon Elementary, Hatzic Secondary, Heritage Park Secondary, Mission Secondary, Summit Learning and Riverside College. See Appendix 1
- **Surveys** – Director of Student Services and District Vice-Principals sent on-line surveys to students, parents and staff at the beginning of October. Surveys collected by October 25, 2010. See Appendix 2
- **Focus Group Meetings** – Two school administrators, Dave Cyr and Linda Ziefflie, used the first three steps of Situational Appraisal (survey, classify and assess the strengths and challenges in the district) to collect the data. See Appendix 3

## **The information gathered at the Focus Group Meetings, the School Visits and the Surveys were gathered and brought to the Student Services Advisory Committee.**

The Student Services Advisory Committee met from Monday, November 1<sup>st</sup> to Thursday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010, reviewed the information, analyzed the data and developed recommendations.

# SCHEDULING OF THE REVIEW

- ▶ The Draft of the Student Services Internal Review was taken to the Senior Management team in August 2010.
- ▶ The District Plan was taken to Education Committee on September 14, 2010.
- ▶ The District Plan was shared at the September 21<sup>st</sup> Board Meeting 2010.
- ▶ The School Visits took place from September 20, 2010 to October 1, 2010 and were conducted by George Connolly, External Facilitator.
- ▶ The Surveys were on the district website from October 1 to October 24, 2010 for parents, staff and community members to complete. At each school, all designated students from grade 4 to grade 12 had an opportunity to complete the survey.
- ▶ The focus group meetings took place on the following dates:

Two administrators, David Cyr and Linda Ziefflie facilitated all the focus group meetings

- **Student Services Focus Group Meeting** – Friday, September 24, 2010 from 9:00 am to 11:00 am at the Board of Education office
- **Community and Outside Agencies Focus Group Meeting** – Tuesday, September 28, 2010 from 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm at the Board of Education office
- **Principal/Vice-Principal Focus Group Meeting** – Thursday, September 30, 2010 from 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm at the Board of Education office
- **Elementary School Teaching Staff Focus Group Meeting** – Monday, October 4, 2010 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm at Christine Morrison Elementary School
- **Education Assistant Focus Group Meeting** – Tuesday, October 5, 2010 from 3:00 pm to 5:30 pm at Heritage Park Secondary School
- **Parent Focus Group Meeting** – Wednesday, October 6, 2010 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at Heritage Park Secondary School
- **Secondary School Staff Focus Group Meeting** - Thursday, October 7, 2010 from 3:30 to 5:30 pm at Hatzic Secondary School

# **Student Services Advisory Committee Findings**

## **What is working well with Student Services current support?**

(The findings are reported in order of importance and frequency as weighted by the Internal Review Committee).

### **1. Program Services (38)**

- Contact with District Vice-Principals – timely, effective, supportive
- Hydrotherapy
- Transition from Elementary to Secondary – information sharing was very useful
- Secondary Adapted Program – at Hatzic Secondary School and Heritage Park Secondary School
- Learning Centre classes – Support Block
- Secondary Integrated Support Program
- Hearing Assessments – timely, effective
- Youth Care Worker Support
- Strong Start for English as a Second Language
- Vice-Principal Model (Support for vulnerable students)
- Supportive Learning Assistance Teachers
- Inter-agency collaboration – i.e. WHIN Program (West Heights Neighbourhood Program)

### **2. Staff (28)**

- Quality of Education Assistant Support - talented, skilled, effective
- Education Assistant Team for Integrated Support Program - District program held at HPSS
- Supportive administrators
- Flexible allocation of Education Assistant time – school based
- Relationships are very important

### **3. System (27)**

- Teamwork and communication working well – elementary
- Inclusion of Low Incidence students promotes tolerance
- School-Based Teams

### **4. Communications (17)**

- Parent inclusion in Individual Education Plan process – feeling welcome and included
- Detailed Individual Education Plans for Low Incidence Students

5. Human Resources (3)

- Consistency of Education Assistants – continuity = success

6. Resources (3)

- Technology
- Professional Development Opportunities

# What Challenges do we face with our current Student Services system?

(The findings are reported in order of importance and frequency as weighted by the Internal Review Committee).

## 1. Psycho-educational Assessments/Designation process (77)

- VISION Roadblock!
- Length, bureaucracy, bog downs/delays
- Incoming Kindergarten Students
- New students from other districts (lack of temporary designations) – clarify the need for file reviews
- Loss of funding around 1701 deadlines
- Primary students are low priority
- Post-psycho-educational testing conference recommendations (need to be timely and realistic)
- Spread very thin
- Inflexible

## 2. Education Assistants (63)

- Continuity
- Number of/lack of
- Training
- Match/best fit
- Casual Education Assistant qualification
- Better use of Education Assistant's time
- A preferential callout of Education Assistants is not available
- Coverage of breaks
- Safety of the Education Assistant/student
- Supervisor Assistant skill set/training
- Probationary Appointment (system to ensure fit is positive)
- Bumping process
- Posting process

## 3. Implementation of Individual Education Plans/Individual Behaviour Plans (62)

- Writing/form is cumbersome- time consuming!
- Impracticality of recommendations in the Psycho-educational Reports
- Insufficient resources – equipment, personnel, available blocks
- Timelines (review, initial plan)
- Lack of knowledge/training
- Who is responsible for writing Individual Education Plans?
- Quality is inconsistent
- Challenge of implementing recommendations
- Challenge of inclusion (limited by resources, staffing, funding, BILL 33)

#### 4. Communication (43)

- Secondary students unaware of their Individual Education Plans/Individual Behaviour Plans
- Between staff to staff and staff to parent there are communication gaps
- Disconnect between what was identified as important to teachers, Education Assistants , parents, and administrators and what was important to Student Services
- Parents unaware of Dogwood/Evergreen differences

#### 5. Safety Issues (28)

- Break coverage (Supervision Assistants, new Education Assistants, casuals)
- Education Assistant support for high-risk activities (for example, shop, foods)
- “flight risk” students
- Behaviour students – safety plans – resources
- Maintenance installation of locks, gates, latches, etc.
- Bullying – especially at break times

#### 6. Learning Assistance Teacher Role (26)

- Lack of clarity around parameters of job description
- Caseload (volume)
- Questions about priorities for service
- Allocation by Full Time Equivalent (f.t.e.) versus actual need of demographics within the catchment

#### 7. Adapted classes for core courses (25)

- More classes needed to support demand
- What will the model be at Middle School?
- Junior Alternate Delivery class and Senior Alternate Delivery class?

#### 8. Consistency of programming (20)

- All parties consistently implementing Individual Education Plans (teachers, Supervisor Assistants, Education Assistants, administrators, multiple staff)

#### 10. Bureaucracy (15)

- Accessing files, Individual Education Plans
- Leverage technology to help

#### 10. Behaviour students (15)

- Lack of timely, appropriate interventions

#### 10. Implementing Differentiated Instruction (15)

- Lack of funding to support
- Lack of expertise
- Lack of willingness to differentiate

12. Speech/Language Services (12)

- Insufficient service (across the board frustration)
- Too much time on screening
- No service at Secondary
- Referral process frustrating
- Speech and Language Pathologists do not communicate with schools (teachers, administrators, Learning Assistance Teachers, parents)

13. Students who benefit from Alternate Delivery Models (10)

- No place for Grade 8 and Grade 9 students failing in the regular system – the students are going to Summit by default because it is the only option. What are the unmet needs?
- No place for senior students leaving the system
- Type III Funding (Ministry funding of Stand Alone Programs)
- Lack of options for kids at-risk

15. Counselling Services (8)

- Spread very thin at Elementary (assigned to multiple schools , volume of caseload)
- Youth Care Worker support also spread very thin

15. Small Schools (8)

- Challenge of providing Learning Assistance, Counselling , Youth Care Worker, Aboriginal support, etc., to small populations
- Bill 33 requirements – impacting configuration
- Consistency and frequency of Support Services

15. Increase in number of designations of Autism (8)

- Volume-demands on system
- Skill level related to Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Tolerance and inclusion challenges

17. Classroom Teachers feeling lost (5)

- Doing adaptations or modifications of students with Individual Education Plans (volume at secondary)
- Overloaded

18. Mental Health issues (3)

- Timely/appropriate support
- Profound anxiety is a rising issue

20. Technology (1)

- Lack of access
- Lack of training
- SET BC equipment not connecting to District Network

- Technology support

20. Onsite Learning Centre support for low incidence students at elementary schools (1)

- Resource Room model – safe zone, Individual Education Plan implementation
- Lack of Teacher specialist – on site expertise

22. Gifted students (0)

- No specific programming

22. Perceived lack of Student Services support for secondary schools (0)

- Lack of understanding service model delivery
- Missing the role carried out by Secondary Student Services facilitator

# **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are presented in order of priority. The priority was based on the committee's assessment of the responses from the data. The Student Services Advisory Committee is aware that the recommendations are interconnected and interdependent.

## **Recommendation 1 – Designation Process**

**The Designation Process needs to be reviewed and revised to address the following concerns and possible solutions:**

- The requirement of vision screening is slowing down the process of designating students.
  - Provide vision screening at the schools.
- There are funding risks and student service support risks if file reviews are not completed before September 30.
  - Temporary designations pending File Reviews ending at the Echo date. During the month of September file reviews are the priority.
- Preparing referral packages take an inordinate amount of time for Learning Assistance teachers.
  - Time is needed to prepare the referral packages.
- The length of time to receive service is long.
  - Provide intervention strategies to schools that support the students while waiting for their full assessment.
- Schools would like to identify with a specific psychologist.
  - Consider the allocation of psychologists to specific schools or grade levels i.e. Elementary, Middle, and Secondary.
- Recommendations in Psycho-educational reports need to be practical for the classroom setting.

### **Rationale**

All stakeholders are frustrated with the designation process. The District needs to protect Ministry funding and the service it provides to our students. Timely and effective formal individual assessment should be available.

## **Recommendation 2 – Education Assistants**

**The Education Assistants Support Model needs to be reviewed and revised to address the following concerns and possible solutions:**

- For some students the change of an Education Assistant is highly traumatic and impedes their well being.
  - Negotiate contract language around continuity beyond a year. Utilize natural breaks within school year to manage changes when postings occur within the school year.
- Some students are having multiple Education Assistants in a school year. Outside support staff (Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist and health nurse have to retrain Education Assistants every time there is a change in assignment).
  - Look at contract language around the Bumping and Posting Processes during the school year.
- The assignment of an Education Assistant should address the needs of the students.
  - Utilize CARE Team process to guide the placement and assignment of Education Assistants.
- Relationships are important for the emotional and educational needs of the student and the skill set and the interests of the Education Assistant.
  - Reinstate probationary period and assessment process to ensure positive match between the student and the Education Assistant.
- Students with special needs have a variety of challenges.
  - On-going training of staff is needed to support the students.
- In some situations, students who have sensory, social, behavioural and emotional issues need to have familiar and appropriate support.
  - Implement a preferential call-out of casual Education Assistants to ensure the needs of these students are going to be met.
- Support levels at some schools are not enough to provide the students with continuity of service.
  - School allocation needs to be sufficient for coverage of breaks and meetings.
- Some Education Assistants are directed to do activities which are unrelated to direct service to students.
  - Clarify the Education Assistant job description/role.
- Consistency and timeliness of intervention varies across the district when students are transitioning.
  - Develop transition procedures (pre-school to Kindergarten, elementary to middle, middle to secondary, and secondary to community.)

### **Rationale**

All stakeholders identified continuity of service as important to many special needs students. Relationships are important. Student relationships are paramount to their success and well being. Students who need student services benefit from appropriate transition strategies. Students' needs should determine student services. Human Resources practices should result in a well trained staff that delivers quality support to students. Staff should receive child-specific training when needed.

### **Recommendation 3 A – Implementation of Individual Education Plans**

**Part A:** The template for the student Individual Education Plan (Individual Education Plan) needs to be replaced to address the following concerns and possible solutions:

- The present template is not user-friendly.
  - Find or create an electronic template that has drop- down menus that would be the standard for elementary, middle and secondary schools.

**Part B:** The Individual Education Plan (Individual Education Plan) process, procedures and responsibilities need to be reviewed and revised to address the following concerns and possible solutions:

- The quality and the usefulness of the Individual Education Plan varies greatly throughout the district.
  - Policy needs to be clarified to clearly outline the managing and the writing of the Individual Education Plan to ensure consistency and quality. Case managers need to be identified in each school to manage the Individual Education Plan to facilitate consistency, quality, relevancy and currency.
- Identification of resources needed to support the Individual Education Plan is difficult.
  - Develop an online catalogue of available resources, for example, list of district software licenses.
- There is not efficient access to the Individual Education Plans.
  - Use technology to ensure all educators supporting the student have access to the student's Individual Education Plan.
- There is a lack of integration and inclusion for secondary students with special needs in elective courses.
  - Ensure allocation to schools is sufficient to allow inclusion and integration i.e. elective PE, Foods, Shop and Art and Hydrotherapy.

#### **Rationale**

The Individual Education Plan should be a living document guiding students with special needs education on a daily basis. The Individual Education Plan is the foundation for assessment and evaluation of students with special needs. School communication with parents of students requiring student services should be effective.

## Recommendation 4 – Communication

The District needs to communicate the policies, procedures and practices of the Student Services Department to address the following concerns and possible solutions:

- Current policies, procedures and practices appear to be not readily available or understood.
  - Ensure that documents/references are easily accessible and reflect current practises and actual resources. Develop communication and shared understandings.
- It is difficult to support some at-risk students and vulnerable families.
  - There needs to be a shared responsibility between the school and the district to develop outreach practices.
- Many of the stakeholders feel they have knowledge concerning a student with special needs and do not get an opportunity to share their expertise.
  - Communications should value the knowledge and contribution of parents, Education Assistants, teachers, administrators, Learning Assistance Teachers and Itinerant staff.
- There is a perception that Ministry funding for Student Services is not being used for designated students.
  - The District should demonstrate transparency around funding and allocation of resources, including staffing and equipment.
- Many parents of designated students are not aware if their child is on a Dogwood diploma (High School graduation) or the Evergreen diploma (School Completion certificate).
  - Develop protocols (Form and Parent Signature) regarding students on the Evergreen program.

### Rationale

There is evidence from students, parents, Education Assistants, teachers, and administrators that there needs to be better communication practices. Students need to be the focus for the system. We are a student-centered service oriented organization. Information sharing and collaborative problem-solving increases the effectiveness of services to students.

## **Recommendation 5 – Safety Issues**

The safety procedures when working with students with special needs have to be reviewed and revised to address the following concerns and possible solutions:

- There is not enough coverage to support students when the Education Assistant is on a break.
  - The allocation of staffing needs to be calculated to provide support for students during Education Assistant breaks.
- Some students with special needs provide safety challenges.
  - Education Assistant assignments should be cognizant of safety demands (i.e. – flight risk/medical).
- Some Education Assistant assignments include multiple students.
  - There needs to be a clear plan around the safety issues for all the students which may present safety challenges.
- In order to meet the needs of students with special needs, modifications to the physical plants need to be made.
  - Maintenance requisitions involving student safety must be given a high priority.
- Education Assistants support students in potential high-risk elective classes (i.e. Shop classes, Food classes).
  - Education Assistants need appropriate training to support students in these courses.
- Students are vulnerable to bullying from other students during break times.
  - Adequate supervisory support needs to be in place.
- Peers of students with special needs do not always act in an appropriate manner.
  - Programs need to be in place to foster empathy and understanding. Restorative Justice and Roots of Empathy are two effective programs that could be expanded.

### **Rationale**

The safety of students and staff is essential. Safety plans need to be created in a timely and proactive manner. Students' needs should determine student services. Staff should receive child specific training when needed.

## **Recommendation 6 – Learning Assistance Teacher**

The role of the Learning Assistance Teacher needs to be reviewed and revised to address the following concerns and possible solutions:

- There is confusion concerning the role of the Learning Assistance Teacher.
  - Develop a clear, consistent job description which outlines priorities for service. Does the Learning Assistance Teacher service Low Incidence students, High Incidence students, and non-designated students? Does the Learning Assistance Teacher provide service to primary and intermediate students?
- There is no Middle School model for learning assistance.
  - Develop a delivery model.
- There are increasing bureaucratic demands such as testing and paperwork, on Learning Assistance Teachers.
  - The assignment of the Learning Assistance Teacher needs to take this into account.
- The Learning Assistant Teachers' caseloads are becoming unmanageable.
  - District needs to set priorities for service.
- The perception is that Learning Assistance Teachers' assignments are based on full time equivalent not on student needs.
  - The process for determining Learning Assistance Teachers' assignments should consider the number of students who need support, taking into account indicators such as: transiency, designations, Early Development Indicator, aboriginal population, and English as a second language.

### **Rationale**

The learning assistance centre is the "hub" of special education service within the school. The Learning Assistance Teacher cannot effectively provide service to all students with special needs.

## **Recommendation 7 – Consistency of Programming**

The consistency of programming needs to be reviewed and revised to address the following concerns and possible solutions:

- There is inconsistency of policies and procedures in schools and the district.
  - Investigate ways to ensure consistent policies and procedures are in place, i.e. Individual Education Plans, transitions, teacher-on-call files (sub files), Education Assistant (sub files).
- Staffing practices create consistency issues.
  - Develop staffing practices that provide consistency when making teacher and Education Assistant placements.
  - Need for Case Manager Position.
- When staff is absent, critical information concerning some student may not be shared with replacements.
  - Develop procedures that ensure information is shared as needed.

### **Rationale**

A more consistent approach will ensure more effective student learning and student safety.

## **Recommendation 8 – Differentiated Instruction**

Differentiated Instructional practices across the system need to be reviewed and revised to address the following concerns and possible solutions:

- Many educators do not have the skill set to provide differentiated instruction.
  - Provide ongoing Professional Development on differentiated instruction at all levels of the system. Provide demonstration lessons and modelling of differentiated instruction in classrooms. Continue to utilize District Helping Teachers to assist teachers with strategies.
- Where there is a willingness to provide differentiated instruction there is a difficulty finding resources.
  - Provide materials and resources to support students and teachers.

### **Rationale**

Students learn in different ways. When having difficulty with a concept, students should be taught in a different way to meet their needs rather than asked to do more of the same thing. Educators are responsible for meeting the students' needs. Expectations for staff should be clear and explicit. Staff development enhances educational programs and services for students.

## **Recommendation 9 – Adapted Classes**

Adapted classes in secondary schools need to be reviewed and revised to address the following concerns and possible solutions:

- Students are not receiving differentiated instruction in many secondary school classrooms.  
→ Adapted classes can provide differentiated instruction in a manageable way.
- At-risk students in secondary schools are failing in regular classrooms.  
→ An adapted classroom can provide for student success i.e. passing provincial examinations.
- At-risk students are reluctant to use adaptations (calculators, computers) in regular classrooms. The students do not wish to appear different than the other students.  
→ Students find it easier to be a self-advocate in an adapted class.
- Students' needs should determine student services.

### **Rationale**

Success and self-advocacy promote self-confidence and self-esteem.

## **Recommendation 10 – Behaviour and Mental Health Issues**

Behaviour and mental health interventions and supports across the system need to be reviewed and revised to address the following concerns and possible solutions:

- There appears to be insufficient support for students who have behaviour or mental health difficulties.  
→ Appropriate staff levels for timely and appropriate interventions should be available.
- There are an increasing number of students with anxiety issues.  
→ Investigate and expand programs for anxiety reduction.
- Some students require support beyond what the school district does provide.  
→ Promote inter-agency collaboration and intervention. Facilitate access to community programs.

### **Rationale**

If behaviour and mental health issues are not addressed, learning will be affected adversely.

## **Recommendation 11 - Bureaucracy**

Bureaucratic policies and procedures across the system need to be reviewed and revised to address the following concerns and possible solutions:

- A large amount of time is spent on paperwork.
  - Determine ways to leverage technology to create efficiencies around files, Individual Education Plans, parent forms and other district forms.
- The time from initial identification to a psycho-educational assessment takes an inordinate amount of time.
  - Streamline the process.
  - Consider specific clerical support at key times of the year i.e. September 1701 forms.

### **Rationale**

If we spend less time on the bureaucratic items, Learning Assistance Teachers can spend more time directly working with students. Students would receive support services in a more timely manner.

## **Recommendation 12 – Speech and Language Services**

The service model of the Speech and Language Department needs to be reviewed and revised to address the following concerns and possible solutions:

- Stakeholders have expressed dissatisfaction with the service level provided by the Speech department.
  - Ensure that direct service is a priority. Utilize pre-screening at the school level to streamline referrals.
- There is confusion and dissatisfaction with the referral process for screening and assessment.
  - Review and clarify the steps in the referral process. Ensure it is a timely process. Is the Parent Information form necessary and appropriate?
- The frequency and continuity of service is a concern.
  - Schedules need to be clear to schools and the schedules need to be followed.
  - The frequency of services should be communicated.
- There is little communication between the Speech Department and the school (administration, teachers and Learning Assistance Teachers) and parents.
  - Communication needs to be frequent and ongoing.
- There is dissatisfaction with the service being limited to primary students.
  - Define priorities for service and clarify access for older students.

### **Rationale**

Some students need effective speech and language intervention. Students' needs should determine student services. District staff should provide timely and useful communication in response to information needs.

## **Recommendation 13 – Students Who Benefit from Alternate Delivery Models**

Services to students who could benefit from an alternate delivery model need to be reviewed and revised to address the following concerns and possible solutions:

- The regular school structure does not meet the needs of some students.
  - Explore options for students “at-risk” in addition to services already in place, i.e. an off-site intervention.
- Grade eight and grade nine students are failing courses and have to repeat them the next year.
  - Explore options for students failing a course other than repeating i.e. Summer School for grade eight and grade nine students.
- There is no Middle School model.
  - Develop plans for the support for at-risk middle school students.

### **Rationale**

We need to meet the needs of all students. Some students need an alternate delivery model to be successful. There is a lack of options and settings for these students. Programs and service should be tailored to the needs of students. Each student should receive his or her educational program in an integrated setting unless the educational needs of that student or other students indicate that the program would be delivered more successfully elsewhere.

## **Recommendation 14 – Small Schools**

Service levels for students with special needs attending small schools need to be reviewed and revised to address the following concerns and possible solutions:

- Small increments of student service intervention are provided to small schools. This does not provide adequate service.
  - The Board needs to examine the challenge of maintaining appropriate service levels at small schools i.e. Learning Assistance Teachers, counsellors, and youth care workers.
- The composition issues in small schools are compounded by the lack of options to deal with Bill 33 requirements.

### **Rationale**

Students in small schools deserve appropriate service levels. Students’ needs should determine student services. District services and resources should be equitably distributed.

## **Recommendation 15 – Increases in the Number of Students Designated with Autism**

Service levels for the increasing number of students with Autism and Complex Development Behaviour Condition need to be reviewed and revised to address the following concerns and possible solutions:

- Few educators in the district have an understanding of students with Autism or students with Complex Development Behaviour Conditions.
  - Provide training and support for classroom teachers to support these students. Consider the possibility of magnet schools or classes, i.e. specialized instruction, appropriate space, richer resources, more inclusion, and extensive life skills programs.
- Peers of students with special needs do not always act in an appropriate manner.
  - Programs need to be in place that foster empathy and understanding. Restorative Justice, Friend to Friend and Roots of Empathy are effective programs that could be expanded.
- Consider offering magnet classes to other categories of low incidence students.

### **Rationale**

We need to be responsive to a change in demographics. The developed strategy could be used to support other students in other categories. Students' needs should determine student services.

## **Recommendation 16 - Technology**

Technology service to support students with special needs should be reviewed and revised to address the following concerns and possible solutions:

- Loading available software program on computers used by students with special needs computers is not timely. It is also difficult for students who are using assistive technology to complete classroom assignments to leave a hard copy of their assignment with their classroom teachers.
  - The Board address appropriate access to assistive technology for designated students and ensure that such barriers due to infrastructure and Information technology support are removed.
- Technology and software are improving and are available to meet students' needs.
  - Develop processes to ensure access to new and current technology.

### **Rationale**

Some students with special needs require assistive technology to meet the goals of their individual education plans. The district should provide the necessary equipment and software. Technology resources should be used to enhance the learning and the participation of students with special needs.

## **Recommendation 17 – Gifted Students**

- There is no specific program for students with a designation of being gifted. The committee has no recommendation at this time.

### **Rationale**

With limited resources it is difficult to justify funding for a new gifted program for students. Improving Differentiated Instructional practices would benefit all students including Gifted Students.

## **Recommendation 18 – Student Services Support**

The role of the Student Services Department concerning supporting middle and secondary schools needs to be reviewed and revised to address the following concern and possible solution:

- Parents and educators believe that the Student Services department does not provide support for secondary students.
  - The Board needs to clarify their position on such service.

### **Rationale**

The Student Services department needs to clarify their role in servicing middle and secondary students.

# Further Recommendations

The following recommendations are from the members of the Student Services Advisory Committee.

## **Recommendation 19**

The Board consider the recommendations from the Student Services Review when developing the Middle School delivery model, recognizing the recommendations are highly interdependent.

## **Recommendation 20**

The Board consider expanding the mandate of the Student Services Advisory Ad Hoc Committee to become an on-going committee to assist with implementation of the approved recommendations.

### **Rationale**

Opportunities should be provided for timely input and consultation by stakeholders into decisions regarding allocation of education resources (human and material).