

LEARNING DISABILITIES STRATEGIC PLAN

CONTEXT

In alignment with the Ontario Ministry of Education in "Achieving Excellence", the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) recognizes the importance of setting high expectations and closing the gap for students with learning disabilities. Board and provincial data indicate the need to support students with learning disabilities to ensure they achieve high levels of academic success and experience a sense of well-being. A proactive approach to supporting students with learning disabilities is required.

Research says students are successful when they are:

- a strong voice in their learning
- [self-advocates](#) for their learning
- knowledgeable about their own learning strengths and needs
- valued, supported and challenged with high expectations
- supported in the development of a growth mindset
- provided appropriate supports in an accessible learning environment
- provided timely, precise and personalized interventions
- provided with necessary accommodations and/or modifications informed by their individual learning profile
- provided with multiple entry points to access the curriculum

THEORY OF ACTION

If we:

- build knowledge in support of students with learning disabilities
- foster deep learning, innovative teaching and equitable assessment
- design inclusive and collaborative learning environments
- engage parents and community as partners

then we establish the learning conditions that promote high levels of academic success, self-actualization and well-being for students with learning disabilities.



BUILDING KNOWLEDGE

Building knowledge requires enabling educators to be change agents by building evidence based knowledge and understanding of what a learning disability is and the necessary conditions to ensure student success.

ACTIONS

System

Provide modern learning opportunities to support the natural curiosity of learners with a [learning disability](#)

Provide professional learning for educators with a focus on strategies to support positive [mental health](#) in all students (i.e. ADHD, anxiety)

Develop leaders who believe that students have the potential to succeed regardless of their identification

Increase knowledge of what components are needed in a rich [transition plan](#) and why are they valuable for student success

Understand, honour, and value all [pathways](#)

School

Understand and utilize equitable and effective assessment practices

Provide opportunities for students and educators to share effective, evidence-based practices, including the use of assistive technology

Facilitate opportunities for students to share evidence-informed practices for using technology as a tool to support learning

Develop school wide understanding of a wide variety of accommodations

Explore and understand the various learning pathways available that fit the needs of students with learning disabilities

Classroom

Understand the positive impact and need for students to identify and connect with a caring and supportive adult and create conditions to support these relationships

Develop and utilize strategies to support equitable and inclusive classrooms

Understand how to develop individual and classroom [learning profiles](#) based on learners' strengths, needs, and interests

Understand and utilize equitable and effective assessment practices

Understand that each student with a learning disability has a unique learning profile

Use learning profiles when planning assessment and making instructional decisions

Use knowledge of the specific processing areas as identified on the [Learning Disabilities Processing Skills Chart](#) to inform all programming

Develop knowledge around the creation of detailed [transition plans](#) that honour student voice



LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Learning, Teaching & Assessment involves intentional planning, personalized instruction and equitable assessment for students with learning disabilities.

ACTIONS

System

Support school leaders to understand students' multiple intersecting exceptionalities and identities to ensure personalized instruction and assessment

Support educator collaboration to design lessons to ensure multiple points of entry

Set high expectations and ensure learning spans the [Achievement Chart](#) for students with learning disabilities

Support school leaders in the creation of [growth mindset](#) communities

Support educators to develop a deeper understanding of how assistive technology supports learning for all students

Support school leaders to use the [In-School Team Meeting \(ISTM\)](#) as a foundational, ongoing, iterative problem-solving venue to support the creation and implementation of tailored, precise and personalized programs

School

Collaborate with system partners and utilize their expertise to provide support for students' multiple intersecting exceptionalities and identities

Provide differentiated, timely and tiered interventions supported by a team approach that responds to individual student learning needs including ongoing/persistent learning difficulties

Provide professional learning on strategies that support individual learning and differentiated instruction and assessment

Use the in-school team meeting as a foundational, ongoing, iterative problem-solving venue to support the creation and implementation of tailored, precise and personalized programs

Use information from multiple sources (i.e., parents, student, educators, healthcare professionals, and assessment reports) to support programming for students with learning disabilities

Create and use detailed [transition plans](#) to support students transitioning between environments and grade

Promote equity and equal opportunity by ensuring accommodations are provided throughout the learning, teaching and assessment process/cycle

Collaboratively create and implement [Individual Education Plans](#) for students

Classroom

Understand students' multiple intersecting exceptionalities and identities to ensure that planning aligns with student strengths, needs, interests and lived experiences to personalize instruction and assessment

Ensure students' voice informs the development of the Individual Education Plan (IEP), including the transition plan

Elicit student voice, choice, and engagement as part of the process of learning (refer to [Self-Advocacy Resources](#))

Explicitly teach students to be able to articulate the accommodations that work for them

Explicitly teach the use of specific strategies to ensure equitable access to the curriculum

Support strategic use of assistive technology in the classroom to enrich instruction and assessment

Provide accommodations during both instruction and assessment to ensure students use the tools they need to effectively demonstrate their learning

Monitor and assess student progress to make ongoing adjustments to their programming and to foster student independence (refer to [Fostering Student Independence Brochure](#))

Utilize varied assessment and instruction to achieve high levels of success

Co-Create authentic and engaging learning tasks that allow for multiple entry points that supports a variety of learning profiles

Use assessment for and as learning regularly and support learners to use teacher feedback to monitor their learning, make revisions to their work, and set goals



ENVIRONMENT

Environments that ensure equity of access, are inclusive and promote proactive approaches that are responsive to students with learning disabilities.

ACTIONS

System

Set conditions to ensure reflective and collaborative practices

Set high expectations and support all students with learning disabilities to achieve those expectations

Make asset based decisions

Understand stigma and the impact it has on students with learning disabilities

Foster mentally healthy learning environments that supports resiliency, self-advocacy and stigma reduction

Develop [growth mindsets](#) that encourage students to be autonomous and independent learners

Construct a strategic plan for the seamless access and use of [assistive technology](#) for students with learning disabilities

School

Engage in reflective and collaborative practices Embrace responsibility for all students with learning disabilities

Build a culture of inclusion and high expectations that is responsive to students with learning disabilities

Intentionally develop a culture of growth mindset Identify stigma, barriers to inclusion and the impact they have on students with learning disabilities

Empower students to understand and use their learning profile

Ensure full implementation of the seamless access and use of assistive technology

Construct flexible learning environments (time, space, resources) that support individual strengths and needs

Create differentiated environments where students work with a variety of tools to support learning strengths and needs

Create an environment that encourages and responds positively to student advocacy as a tool to increase student achievement and well-being

Classroom

Elicit Student voice and provide choice Co-create learning opportunities, spaces, routines and classroom expectations to support diverse learners

Develop students as self-advocates for their learning strengths, needs, interests

Ensure students with learning disabilities are active agents in their learning and have voice in the development of their pathway

Create safe learning environments and [mentally healthy classrooms](#)

Invite learners to take-risks, explore new ideas and feel safe and comfortable in doing so

Create a learning environment that reduces stigma and fosters inclusion

Create a learning environment that supports and encourages the use of assistive technology



FAMILY/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Family/Community Engagement embraces the shared commitment to build and support the partnership between educators, families and communities required to ensure the success of students with learning disabilities.

ACTIONS

System

Provide opportunities to develop and enhance leadership skills in building relationships with parents and community members

Coordinate efforts to mobilize resources to support students with learning disabilities

Provide access to information regarding available community supports and services

Promote access to [YRDSB website](#) for information on Learning Disabilities

Create processes to allow for the use of [assistive technology](#) at school and home

School

Ensure that parents understand Learning Disabilities and how they impact student learning

Ensure that parents understand the process leading to an identification

Cultivate relationships with parents and community members to mobilize resources to support students with learning disabilities to reach their potential

Provide resources for families so that they can act as advocates for their children

Support the navigation of families to appropriate community supports and empower parents to access resources and advocate for their child's strengths, needs and interests (i.e., [CAMH, LD@School, LD@Home, LDA-YR](#))

Provide opportunities for parents to participate in IST meetings and the development of their child's IEP

Engage parents and the community in conversations about the benefits of the use of assistive technology as a tool to support learning at home and school

Classroom

Support parent learning and how the processing chart informs the instructional, environmental and assessment decisions for their child's learning

Invite parental voice in all aspects of transition planning

Select and assign achievable, meaningful, and relevant homework opportunities that reinforce learning

Access community partnerships, such as [The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario - York Region](#)

Engage parents to ensure use of assistive technology between home and school

Collaborate with families to foster student independence (refer to [Fostering Student Independence Brochure](#))

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Professional learning on the IST brochure Educators understand the importance of and how to nurture:

- [Student voice and agency](#)
- [Self-advocacy](#)
- [Understanding learning disabilities](#)
- [Transitions](#)

RESOURCES

YRDSB Resources
[Understanding Learning Disabilities Processing Chart](#)
[Getting to Know Your Learners Module](#)
[In-School Team Meetings Brochure](#)
[Learning Disabilities Waterfall Chart](#)
[Fostering Inclusive, Mentally Healthy Learning Environments](#)

Community Resources
[Learning Disabilities Association of York Region](#)
[LD@School](#)
[LD@Home](#)

Ministry/Resource Documents
[Growing Success](#)
[Learning for All Regulation 181/98](#)
[Ministry Equity Policy](#)
[Supporting Minds: An Educator's Guide to Promoting Students' Mental Health & Well-Being](#)

Policy/Program Memorandum
[PPM#8](#)
[PPM#11](#)
[PPM#59](#)
[PPM#189](#)
[PPM#156](#)

Ontario College of Teachers
[Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession](#)

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
[LDA-YR](#)
[LD@School](#)
[LD@Home](#)

Growth Mindset
[Video: George Couros on Growth Mindset](#)
Resource from Carol Dweck: [How to Encourage Students](#)
Article by Carol Dweck: [Mind-Sets and Equitable Education](#)