

## Support Services' Service Evaluation Results

### *Executive Summary*

May 2007

This survey of Support Services (Social Work & Attendance, Speech-Language Pathology, Occupational & Physiotherapy and Psychological Services) was conducted during the weeks from May 6 to May 18, 2007. A sample<sup>1</sup> of Superintendents, Principals, Vice Principals, Classroom Teachers, MARTs, SERTs, Central Special Education Staff and SEAC members were asked to complete a brief survey which asked them to rate the services provided by each discipline and rank order the top three services they value. The quality of service (e.g., timeliness, value of information provided, strategies recommended and readability of report) was also evaluated for each service. Finally, suggestions for improvement were requested.

Overwhelmingly, the TDSB staff who were polled indicated that they place high or very high value on the services provided (91.8% endorsed, across services). They also reported that they find the strategies and recommendations from the professionals of Support Services to be highly or very highly useful (93.2% endorsed, across services). Professional reports were also well rated, with 93.2% of respondents indicating that they highly or very highly valued them.

Ratings of timeliness of service were more variable. The timeliness of Social Work & Attendance services was rated high or very high by 85.5% respondents. Psychological Services received the next highest endorsement at 77.4%, then Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) at 73.3%, followed by Occupational & Physiotherapy (OT/PT) at 67.4%. It is noteworthy that the most frequent comment in response to suggestions for improvement was an endorsement of the need for more staff in each of the disciplines (92%, 63%, 67% and 45% for each service named above, respectively). Thus, there was a clear indication that more timely service could be provided with an increase in staff to better match the need for the service.

The survey also asked respondents to identify the three most highly valued services. For Psychology, SLP and OT/PT, assessment and the provision of detailed professional reports were most highly valued. The provision of programming suggestions to teachers was also highly valued for SLP and OT/PT. Participation in School Support Teams was

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<sup>1</sup> Each service sampled a family of schools within each quadrant: Psychology gathered responses from FOS 1 and 2, Social Work & Attendance from FOS 3 and 4 and Speech-Language Pathology from FOS 5 and 6. Occupational Therapy/Physiotherapy sought responses from schools most familiar with their services.

highly valued for Psychology and Social Work. Individual/family counselling and crisis response were two other highly valued services for Social Work.

In conclusion, the results of this survey clearly endorse the value of having highly-trained, competent professional staff that can provide service to TDSB students in a timely manner. Support Services’ assessments, reports, consultation with staff through the School Support Team, recommendations to teachers, crisis response and the counselling they provide to students and families are recognized as high quality and of great benefit to the educational success the students they touch. The most frequent and significant recommendation was the request for an increase in staff for each of Support Services, to better meet the needs of students in the TDSB.

### **DETAILED SURVEY RESULTS FOR EACH SERVICE**

#### **Psychological Services:**

The services that respondents reported that they valued *highly or very highly* (by 70% or more respondents) were as follows:

<b>Service</b>
Individual Assessments
Detailed Professional Reports
Diagnosis
Assessment Feedback to School and Family
School Support Team Participation
Consultation to Staff and Parents
Risk Assessment and Management Reviews

Respondents were then asked to rank order services provided by Psychological Services, in order to ascertain the three most valued services. This item was designed to help the service determine which of the many possible services should be considered their “core” services.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Service</b>
1	School Support Team Participation
2	Individual Assessment
3	Detailed Reports

Next, respondents were asked to evaluate the service they receive:

<b>Quality</b>	<b>% Rating of Good or Better</b>
Timeliness of Service	77.4
Usefulness of Information Provided	96.4

Helpfulness of Strategies and Recommendations	97.0
Readability of Reports	96.5

In a final section, respondents were asked to provide suggestions for improvement:

- More staff are required in Psychological Services to provide more assessments (issue most frequently referenced, representing 63% of comments)
- Ensure the school’s Psychology staff member is attends the School Support Team as the input is so valuable
- Additional training for staff in Autism Spectrum Disorder assessment, diagnosis and remediation
- More support for Senior Schools, to allow more assessments for students transitioning to grade 9
- More time for the Psychology staff to consult with teachers and see individual students for counselling

**Social Work & Attendance Services:**

The Social Work & Attendance services most valued and ranked *high or very high* (by 70% or more respondents) are:

Service
Counselling Individual/Family
Crisis Response
Consultation with School Staff
School Support Team Participation
Liaison/Referral to Community Resources
Communication/Mediation (with parents, staff, admin)
Information Provision (e.g., re: Mental Health)
Risk Assessment and Management Reviews
Advising re: Abuse Policy/Procedures
Counselling - Group

Respondents were then asked to rank order services provided by Social Work & Attendance Services, in order to ascertain the three most valued services. Again, this was to help the service determine which of the many possible services should be considered the “core” services.

Rank	Service
1	Counselling – Individual/Families
2	School Support Team Participation
3	Crisis Response

Respondents were next asked to evaluate the services they receive:

<b>Quality</b>	<b>% Rating of Good or Better</b>
Timeliness of Service	85.5
Usefulness of Information Provided	93.8
Helpfulness of Strategies and Recommendations	93.7
Readability of Reports	90.4

Respondents were then asked to provide suggestions for improvement:

- Need more staff to provide both the counselling and attendance services to schools and students (mentioned in 92% of comments)
- Provide more group counselling for students concerning issues such as Social Skill Development, Peer Mediation, Anti-Bullying and Anger Management Skills
- Provide more communication and mediation strategies to students and families

### **Speech-Language Pathology Services:**

The services that respondents reported that they valued *highly or very highly* (by 70% or more respondents) were as follows:

<b>Service</b>
Individual Assessments
Detailed Professional Reports
Assessment Feedback to School and Family
Consultation to Staff and Parents
Providing Programming Suggestions to Teachers
School Support Team Participation
Kindergarten Early Language Intervention (KELI)

Respondents were then asked to rank order services provided by Speech-Language Pathology Services, in order to ascertain the three most valued services. Again, this was to help the service determine which of the many possible services should be considered the “core” services.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Service</b>
1	Individual Assessment
2	Detailed Professional Reports
3	Providing Programming Suggestions to Teachers

Respondents were next asked to evaluate the service received:

<b>Quality</b>	<b>% Rating of Good or Better</b>
Timeliness of Service	73.3

Usefulness of Information Provided	90.4
Helpfulness of Strategies and Recommendations	93.0
Readability of Reports	92.9

In a final section, respondents were asked to provide suggestions for improvement:

- Need more TDSB Speech-Language Pathology staff to serve students (mentioned in 67% of comments)
- A further 17% of comments requested more direct service including in-class demonstrations for teachers and hands-on service for students. This would also require more speech-language pathologists
- Comments related to speech-language services provided through Community Care Access Centres (CCAC) included:
  - Serious concerns about the lengthy wait time and the short duration of CCAC service
  - The two step process for accessing external services (e.g., CCACs) is confusing and delays service to students
  - The communication between CCAC staff and school needs to improve

**Occupational Therapy/Physiotherapy Services:**

The services that respondents reported that they valued *highly or very highly* (by 70% or more respondents) were as follows:

Service
Individual Assessments
Providing detailed reports
Consultation to staff and parents
Oral Feedback to Teachers and Parents
Providing Programming Suggestions to Teachers
SEA Claim Assessments

Respondents were next asked to rank order services provided by OT/PT Services, in order to ascertain the three most valued services. Again, this was to help the service determine which of the many possible services should be considered the “core” services.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Service</b>
1	Providing Programming Suggestions to Teachers
2	Individual Assessments
3	Detailed Professional Reports

Respondents were asked to evaluate the service received:

<b>Quality</b>	<b>% Rating of Good or Better</b>
Timeliness of Service	67.4
Usefulness of Information Provided	86.7
Helpfulness of Strategies and Recommendations	89.1
Readability of Report	93.1

Respondents were then asked to provide suggestions for improvement:

- Need more TDSB OT/PT staff to serve a wider number and variety of students (mentioned by 45% of respondents)
- More PD from OT/PT staff to classroom teachers
- Streamline applications for SEA claims so external and internal assessments are not required
- Community Care Access Centres/Bloorview Kids Rehab/Community OT Associates comments:
  - Serious concerns about the wait time for these external services
  - The differential process for external services is confusing, disjointed and delays service to students