

MEMO

TO: School Administrators

FROM: Karen Gravitis,
Executive Superintendent, School Services: Special Education & Support Services
Dr. Janice Currie,
Senior Manager of Professional Support Services

DATE: September 05, 2007

RE: **Assisting Professional Student Services Personnel (PSSP) Staff Work Efficiently in Schools**

Increased pressure on some school buildings is the outcome of primary class size caps, expanded French Immersion and Extended programs and enrolment shifts in both regular and special education. School support services staff are finding it increasingly difficult to find suitable workspace in schools. There is a concern that the issue is jeopardizing staffs' ability to provide timely and effective service. Given the demand for the involvement of Professional Student Services Personnel (which includes staff from Speech-Language Pathology, Educational Audiology, OT/PT, Social Work, Attendance and Psychological Services, along with Child and Youth Workers, Multilingual Team Leaders and Student Equity Program Advisors), it is important to utilize their time in your school as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Space Guidelines:

- *It is acknowledged that available and suitable assessment/counselling workspaces are at a premium in schools. TDSB professional student support personnel should always be given access priority over any external student support service provider.*
- *Suitable assessment/counselling workspaces need to have an entry door that can be shut (to ensure quiet and confidentiality/privacy), a window (either in the door or the wall), suitable furniture (i.e. desk and appropriate- sized chairs) and enough space to be commensurate with current health and safety standards.*
- *Comfort of both the student and the student support professional with regards to adequate lighting, air quality and heating/cooling should be taken into account, particularly if the space is used for an extended period of time (e.g., over half an hour).*
- *Spaces which contain hazardous materials (i.e. cleaning chemicals), physically dangerous objects (i.e. broken furniture) or offer no privacy/confidentiality are not acceptable assessment/counselling workspaces.*
- *Communications access is important for professional student support staff, to allow them to provide their service in the most efficient and effective manner (e.g., to contact parents, other professionals and to write up reports and other records while in the school). Optimally, an assessment/counselling workspace should have both a phone and network drop line. If the space provided does not have these, access should be made available, when requested, in another space in the school.*
- *It is recommended that the Principal meet with the school's professional student support staff annually to develop a shared schedule for use of assessment/counselling spaces by all users. Space should be shared fairly and no single service provider should have exclusive use of any space. As noted above, TDSB staff must be given priority over external staff when scheduling access.*

Your assistance in providing the PSSP professional in your school with appropriate space to do their work will benefit the students in your school. Your support is most appreciated!