# Standard 12: Special Education Staff

| **Special Education Staff** | **Staff Qualifications** | | | **Elementary Panel**  **\*FTE’s** | **Secondary Panel**  **\*FTE’s** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Teachers of exceptional students | | | | | |
| 1.1 Teachers for resource-support programs (Special Education Resource Teachers) | Minimum Special Ed. Part I | | | 181 | 64.3 |
| * 1. Teachers for programs and self-contained classes * Community Pathways Program (Employment Skills Certificate/Community Skills Certificate) * PROPS * Learning Disability * Life Skills * Primary Language Class * Gifted * Behaviour * Communication Class * CTCC | Minimum Special Ed. Part I | | | 28  24  9  37  9  10 | 50.3  1.3  18 |
| 2. Other Special Education Teachers | | | | | |
| * 1. Itinerant teachers   Blind/Low Vision  Deaf/Hard of Hearing  Itinerant Resource Teachers | Minimum Special Ed. Part I  Specialist required  Specialist required | | | 5.5  6  9 | |
| * 1. Instructional Program Leaders | Special Ed. Specialist | | | 8 | |
| * 1. Assistive Technology Lead |  | | | 4 | |
| * 1. CTS Lead |  | | | 1 | |
| 3. Educational Assistants in Special Education | | | | | |
| * 1. Educational Assistants | College Diploma-Early Childhood Education, Educational Assistant, Developmental Services, Applied Behavioural Analysis or equivalent education or experience | | | 650.5 | 192 |
| 4. Other professional resource staff | | | | | | |
| 4.1 Senior Manager of Professional Services | | Registered with College of Psychologists or Social Workers or Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology | 5 | | | |
| 4.2 Mental Health leave | |  | 1 | | | |
| 4.3 Psycho-educational Consultants | | Master’s Degree in Psychology/PhD | 22 | | | |
| 4.4 Speech-Language Pathologists | | Registered with College of Audiologists and Speech–Language-Pathologists | 21.5 | | | |
| 4.5 Social Workers | | Minimum MSW | 21 | | | |
| 4.6 Child and Youth Counsellors | | Child and Youth Counsellor Diploma | 48 | | | |
| 4.7 Team Lead BMS Trainer | |  | 2 | | | |
| 4.8 ABA Trainer/Facilitator | |  | 4 | | | |

\* These services are not provided by school board staff.

## District/Level Support

The following Area teams and personnel are available to support the staff in schools:

* Superintendent of Student Services;
* Senior Managers – Professional Services;
* Principal of Special Education;
* Vice Principal of Special Education;
* Special Education Instructional Program Leaders;
* Multi-Disciplinary Support Teams;
* Assistive Technology Lead;
* Itinerant Resource Teachers/Itinerant Teachers for Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Blind/Low Vision;
* Itinerant Educational Assistants;
* Professional Student Services Personnel (PSSP) (Social Workers, Psycho-educational Consultants, Speech-Language Pathologists, Child and Youth Counsellors);
* Self-Contained classes and programs in selected elementary and secondary school settings.

## School Support

The following supports are available within schools

* School Principals (and Vice Principals where applicable);
* Classroom Teachers – subject and grade team members/departments;
* Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTS);
* Secondary Support Teachers of students identified as Gifted or with Learning Disabilities;
* Educational Assistants (EAs);
* Student (Lunch) Supervisors to support some students with special needs during nutrition breaks.

## Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) Allocation

Special Education Resource Teachers are allocated to schools each spring. The total allocation is determined based on the overall student population of the Board. Individual school allocations are based on school populations, the number of students with special education needs, the number of special education classes in each school and other needs of the school and community. SERT allocations are provided to schools as part of the staffing timeline each spring.

## Staff Roles and Descriptions

### Assistive Technology Lead

The Assistive Technology Lead is responsible for providing management of Assistive Technology services, support and leadership across the system. Works with the Instructional Technology department to coordinate and deliver efficiency of services, equipment and device support. Helps coordinate effective professional development opportunities, project management and training to understand the assistive technology, features and benefits to students. Responsible for large budget and all Ministry reporting.

### Assistive Technology Staff

A full time staff member is dedicated to loading and setting up laptops and peripherals for delivery to schools. The Halton District School Board also maintains service contracts for the use and maintenance of other assistive technology. For example, an audiologist is contracted to assist in the setup and maintenance of personal FM and sound field systems. Services contracted outside the board also provides training and professional development.

### Itinerant Resource Teacher

An Itinerant Resource Teacher (IRT) is a Teacher with Special Education Additional Qualifications who is assigned to provide specialized support to staff and students at more than one school.  Their work focuses on capacity-building for the school team and may look like co-teaching, mentoring and/or modelling in regular and/or self-contained classrooms, in elementary and secondary schools.  IRTs are assigned to schools upon review of school needs and an understanding of interventions that have been tried at the school level. A recommendation for support may arise from discussion at a School Resource Team meeting or awareness of school needs by the Student Services Senior Manager, Principal or Vice Principal of Special Education or Instructional Program Lead.

### Multi-Disciplinary Support Teams

The function of the Multi-Disciplinary Support Team is to provide a deeper understanding of a student’s profile, and provide programming assistance and suggestions for strategies that the school staff can use for students with complex needs.

The team may include a variety or professionals:

* Senior Manager of Professional Services;
* Itinerant Resource Teacher;
* Child and Youth Counsellor;
* Social Worker;
* Speech-Language Pathologist;
* Psycho-educational Consultant;
* Educational Assistant;
* ABA Facilitator.

### Itinerant Blind and Low Vision Team (Teachers and Educational Assistants)

Itinerant Teachers for students who are identified as Blind or Low Vision provide direct instruction to students requiring Braille instruction and specialized technology. Students who use Braille will receive intensive daily instruction and classroom support from either a Teacher or an educational assistant on the team. Low vision students receive regular monitoring. Students are integrated into the regular classroom with support and provision of Braille and large print materials. The itinerant Teachers also provide consultation to school staff.

The use of specialized equipment is facilitated through the Itinerant Teachers and Educational Assistants. A Mobility Orientation instructor (private practitioner) is contracted by the Halton District School Board to work with our blind students.

### Itinerant Deaf and Hard of Hearing Team (Teachers and Educational Assistants)

Itinerant Teachers for students who are identified as Deaf or Hard of Hearing provide direct instruction to these students. All of the students receive service at their home school. The itinerant Teachers also provide consultation to school staff.

The use of specialized equipment is facilitated through the Itinerant Teachers and Educational Assistants and contracted Audiologist from an outside organization.

### Educational Assistants

The Halton District School Board employs Educational Assistants to work with students with special needs, in both our elementary and secondary schools. A collaborative process has been established and is reviewed annually to allocate EAs to schools for student support. Each spring school staff engage in discussion about their Educational Assistant needs for the following year. It is expected that this will include consultation with parents/guardians about the level of EA support needed and plans to fade EA support as student independence increases based on the individual needs of each student. Schools work with Student Services staff to compile information regarding their anticipated needs for the following year. Student Services staff, in collaboration with school administrators representing each geographic area, review the requests and determine the allocation for each school. This allocation is reviewed by School Operations Superintendents before being distributed to schools. Because of student movement and changing school needs, the Student Services Department reviews the allocation on a regular basis throughout the school year.

The Principal of the school is responsible for supervising and assigning the daily work schedule for the Educational Assistants and for communicating with parents/guardians the level of support their child will receive. Their work is directed by the regular classroom Teacher, Special Education Resource Teacher, the Self-Contained Teacher or the Itinerant Resource Teacher.

Work may include:

* Guiding, assisting and monitoring students in the development of skills, e.g. Fine and gross motor, communication, personal care and social behaviour;
* Assisting with individualizing resources, computer programs and specialized equipment;
* Providing crisis intervention when required as a member of a Core Team;
* Assisting with the development of planned independence for students with special needs (strategies of fading and reducing prompts);
* Administering prescribed medication and other approved personal care procedures in accordance with policies /procedures developed by the Halton District School Board based on PPM 81;
* Implementing programs for students under the direction of a qualified professional e.g. recommendations of an Occupational Therapist;
* Observing and tracking day to day behaviours, concerns and needs of students;
* Participating in school team meetings when required by the Principal;
* Communicating observations to relevant staff as required;
* Supporting students with special education needs to facilitate inclusion in extra-curricular and whole school activities.

Educational Assistants receive ongoing training, both job embedded and group training offered on Professional Development days. A dedicated committee (EA Planning Committee) consisting of representative Educational Assistants and regional Student Services staff plan professional learning for our Educational Assistants in addition to the staff learning planned by Principals at individual schools. Specific training may also be provided by an Occupational or Physio Therapist (e.g. lifts, transfers, use of specialized equipment)

Specialized roles in the Halton District School Board include Educational Assistants who serve on Itinerant Teams, or are assigned to Regional Program classes such as the Language Programs. One Educational Assistant works as a member of the Blind/Low Vision Itinerant team to prepare materials in Braille and assist with the ordering of large print, Braille, taped and tactile materials.

A review of the EA Allocation Process is in process to be completed February of the 2016-2017 school year. See motion in Appendix.

## Professional Student Services Personnel (PSSP) Roles and Descriptions

### Psycho-educational Consultants

Psychology staff provide in-depth individual assessments for referred students. Psycho-educational Consultants also attend School Resource Team (SRT) meetings in their assigned schools, participate in Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meetings and provide consultation to schools, staff, and parents/guardians. One Psycho-educational Consultant in each area is assigned to the Multi-Disciplinary Support Team. Psychology staff provide prescriptions where appropriate for specialized equipment.

### Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP)

Students with speech and/or language disorders or delays, regardless of their identification and/or disability, who require screening and/or assessment will be referred to the Halton District School Board Speech-Language Pathologists. In most cases, programming recommendations generated from screenings and/or assessments are delivered by school-based staff in collaboration with the Speech-Language Pathologist. SLPs also provide direct in-class intervention as well as collaborative support to Teachers and EAs in the Primary Language Classes and Communication Classes. Speech-Language Pathologists provide prescriptions where appropriate for specialized equipment.

### Child and Youth Counsellors (CYCs)

Child and Youth counsellors (CYCs) are typically assigned to a group of schools. In a few circumstances (e.g. school with a BRC, school with a large student population), a CYC may be assigned to one school. While CYCs are primarily assigned to elementary schools, some elementary school based CYCs may also provide support in secondary schools. A few CYCs are assigned to secondary alternative education programs (STEP, SCORE) and PROPS. Each Multi-Disciplinary Support Team has a designated CYC who is available to provide consultation and short term interventions. Services provided by CYCs include assessment and intervention through whole class (e.g. Restorative Practice, Roots of Empathy, Second Step), small group (e.g. Girls/Boys’ Groups) and individual support (e.g. coping and wellness strategies). CYC’s also provide consultation to enhance educator knowledge and strategies (e.g. PD sessions, behaviour and safety plan consultation, individual student consultation), refer and liaise with community providers and engage and support parents/guardians with service coordination/navigation.

### School Social Workers

School Social Work assignments usually consist of one high school and elementary feeder schools. School Social Worker support in elementary schools are in circumstances of student attendance concerns, students in the BRC classrooms, and students referred through Multi-Disciplinary Support Team. Services provided by school social workers include individual assessment and counselling, crisis intervention, family support and referral, collaboration/coordination with outside agencies and professionals.

There are 5 Safe Schools Social Workers; two of whom work directly in the HOPES programs and three who provide support to schools (i.e. bullying, restorative practices, violence and aggression, VTRA).

### Understanding and Managing Aggressive Behaviour (UMAB) Trainer and Behaviour Management System Trainer

UMAB Trainers are employed by the HDSB and certified by UMAB Canada. Their role is to provide knowledge and skills to staff on how to effectively manage situations where there is a potential for unsafe behaviour. Staff learn to recognize this potential, and to apply appropriate strategies in the least intrusive and least restrictive manner, with attention to maintaining the respect, dignity and safety of students and staff. In collaboration with the multi-disciplinary support team the UMAB trainers may also provide in-school team strategies with environmental considerations and, where necessary, provide student-specific training. Schools may consult with UMAB trainers where de-escalation and potential containment strategies are outlined on a Student Safety Plan. Certification training for staff is 2 days, and yearly certification is 1 day. In-school specific training is an additional 1 day.

### Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) Facilitators

ABA Facilitators are applied behaviour analysis expertise professionals with a minimum of a Masters degree. Applied Behaviour Analysis is a scientific study that examines the relationship between behaviour and the environment and utilizes Behavioural Principles. The key roles of the ABA Facilitators are to support students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and to support students with complex and challenging behaviours. They also lead and facilitate the Connections: Seamless Transitions process. ABA Facilitators conduct functional behaviour assessments in order to assist with behaviour management and programming. They also support Principals, Teachers, and multi-disciplinary transition teams by providing and coordinating ABA resources and training, and facilitate collaboration between service providers and schools. They also support students and schools as a member of area Multi-Disciplinary Support Teams (MDST).

### Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) Trainer

This is a program written by educators for educators for use in schools, and emphasizes prevention (rather than control) of disruptive behaviour. This training is linked to educational policies and programs, supports Special Education protocols, and advocates a systems/community of learners approach and enhances staff confidence and competence.

The primary emphasis is prevention and non-physical interventions. Knowing the child, acting on “early warning signs”, and the effective use of calming and de-escalation techniques are some key strategies. The secondary emphasis is defensive techniques (avoidance, releases, blocks) coupled with calming and de-escalation techniques. The tertiary emphasis is safe containment methods (an absolute last resort rarely required by most staff) coupled with calming and de-escalation techniques. Certification is one day and recertification is half a day.