

Transitional Intervention Program for Suspended Students (TIPSS)

Date:	September 21, 2009
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide information about the Toronto Public Library (TPL)/Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) partnership program for suspended students called the Transitional Intervention Program for Suspended Students (TIPSS). This program furthers our Strategic Plan goal of “supporting youth in their educational achievements as a foundation for success” and “engaging them in ways that are meaningful”.

The program was initiated in April 2008. From April 2008 to June 2009, there were 2,054 visits by TIPSS students to 25 branches. School principals are increasingly using TIPSS as a valuable resource in their toolkit for promoting student achievement.

The program introduces both students and teachers to library services. As well, a closer relationship has developed between the TCDSB and TPL staff, and their teachers view the Library as a more active partner in student development. The Library provides an excellent location for the program as it is in the community and has online access for the students.

It is a program that the Ministry of Education is watching eagerly as a possible model for application at the provincial level.

TPL is applying for the Ontario Public Library Service Awards - Minister’s Award for Innovation, for this program.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact associated with this report.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and is in agreement with it.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

A review of the Safe Schools Act in January 2005 indicated concern in a number of areas, including an alleged increase in suspension/expulsions of students. In June 2007, Bill 212 mandated that all Boards provide programs for suspended and expelled students. The TCDSB approached TPL in December 2007 to partner on a program for suspended students. A pilot program was implemented successfully in the spring of 2008. During the pilot, students suspended for 6 to 29 days received schooling and counselling for two hours a day in library branches. The Library provided study space, computer access, and promoted the services of TPL to the teachers, students and their parents.

In fall 2008, the program resumed, refined and enlarged.

COMMENTS

The initial program served students that visited 629 times in April, May and June 2008 at seven different branches. Students were almost exclusively high school level.

For the 2008/2009 school year, more teachers were hired for the program and branch locations fine tuned. Nine branches were designated for the program initially. However, the TCDSB used many other branches mainly because there was an increase in the number of elementary school students in the program who were unable to travel far from home. TCDSB staff attributes this increase to the recognition by elementary school principals of the value of the program in helping younger students too.

During the 2008/2009 school year 342 students visited 25 branches 1,425 times. Agincourt, Albion, Maria A. Shchuka, Richview and York Woods saw the most students but many other branches experienced a significant number of visits. Tracking of library card registration will be implemented next year.

Two students have joined Youth Advisory Groups and a third was trained as a Leading to Reading tutor. Through this initiative we have also explored the possibility of linking our Teen Summer Reading Club to one of the TCDSB summer school courses in the future.

A thank you event is being planned by the TCDSB for TPL staff participants where we can once again review our successes and build on our experience for the upcoming TIPSS season. The media is being invited to this event.

TCDSB staff have also provided speakers for TPL's Everyone Serves Youth staff training sessions and they have been very cooperative in supporting other TPL initiatives.

Some comments from TCDSB and student participants in the program:

"TIPSS is a good place to be when you are in trouble. Especially when you think you won't succeed in the future." --Student

"It's a great opportunity for students to continue with their academics as well as receive social and emotional support." --Teacher

"The Toronto Public Libraries are a welcoming and safe place for our students. They look forward in receiving help from the staff." --Teacher

"It's inspiring to witness teaching and learning in such a unique setting. Holding the program in public libraries really gets the community involved in the education of our youth." --Student Teacher

Some comments from TPL staff:

"Fantastic program for all involved that brings students to the Library who wouldn't otherwise come with relatively little impact on staff workload - which is more than offset by the great benefit to the student participants."

"Having teachers in the library also has benefits for staff development; teachers are asked for advice regarding 'problem' students; they also give advice regarding dealing with individual schools; this program develops relationships between teachers and library staff - great outreach!"

"A great bridging program to assist suspended teens to keep up with their academic studies and obtain one-on-one counselling; it is a Wake-up program for students who may be unaware that their behaviour poses a problem for the school, students, their family and themselves; TIPSS program help students re-examine their role in the school and society."

"Program encourages students to interact directly with their teachers and help them build self-confidence and an urge to succeed; teachers are encouraging, patient and willing to assist the students in their academic studies and with disruptive behaviour."

CONTACT

Anne Bailey; Director, Branch Libraries; Tel: 416-397-5944; Fax: 416-393-7083,
Email: abailey@torontopubliclibrary.ca

SIGNATURE

Jane Pyper
City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Number of TIPSS Visits

