



# Pilot to Improve School- Based Supports for Students with Autism

Final Report

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Prepared for: Ministry of Education

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## SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 Background and Objectives

The Ontario Ministry of Education (the Ministry) partnered with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to conduct a pilot to improve school-based supports for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). A total of 18 Ontario school boards were involved in the pilot, the goal of which was to “create a more seamless day for students, reduce demands on families, and increase confidence in the public-school system.”

The pilot, which launched in the fall of 2017, included funding for three components: a dedicated Space for Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) in 11 of the 18 school boards; Education Assistant (EA) Training provided by the Geneva Centre for Autism and in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) led by the Project Coordinator or Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA) or equivalent; and hiring a BCBA or BCBA Equivalent. R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd. (Malatest) was retained to evaluate the pilot. Results of the evaluation will inform policy, practice and future direction with respect to providing school-based supports for students with ASD.

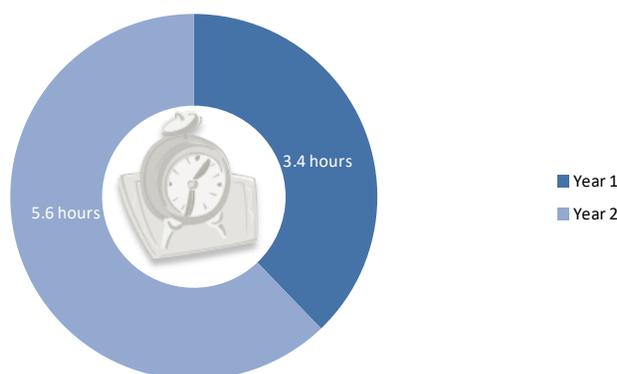
### 1.2 Key Findings

#### 1.2.1 Dedicated Space

##### **The dedicated space was being accessed by more students in Year 2**

In Year 2, the dedicated space was accessed by more students than in Year 1, both in number of hours per week the space was used and the number of students accessing the space simultaneously. In most pilot school boards, 2 or more students accessed the dedicated space and the space was being used for a greater number of hours per week. In 3 schools, more than 1 student accessed the dedicated space simultaneously.

Figure 1: Average Hours per Day Dedicated Space was Used



All school boards reported a growing population of students with ASD; however, students were unable to access the dedicated space in their school if they were on the provincial waitlist for ABA therapy. Students who accessed the dedicated space must have had a service provider already in place before they could participate in the pilot.

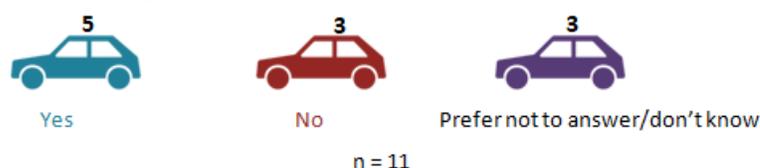
##### **Schools want to increase the number of service providers accessing the dedicated space**

In Year 1, MOUs were developed with one service provider per pilot school board, typically with a service provider that already had an established relationship with the school board. The number of service providers accessing the dedicated space increased in Year 2, but school boards were still looking for opportunities to include more ABA service providers by developing MOUs with additional providers. For example, Ottawa Carleton had agreements with three service providers, some of which had more than one therapist who used the dedicated space. As a result of scheduling, only one therapist and student accessed the dedicated space at the same time; however, protocols had been established to facilitate access by multiple service providers. A significant amount of time was spent developing legal agreements regarding how the various parties would work together. Up to four therapists and students could access the space at the same time, although it was mentioned that two would be preferred (less chaotic). Other study participants mentioned that a potential challenge associated with increasing the number of service providers in the school would be finding available school staff to cover the service provider's breaks or absences. Staff shortages were cited as a major concern by almost all pilot school boards.

### **Increased familiarity with the school environment and reduced travel burden for parents are the key benefits of in-school ABA therapy**

The key perceived benefit of students receiving ABA therapy in the school setting was that this increased their familiarity with the school, school routes and school staff. In Year 1 and Year 2, student transitions between the classroom and dedicated space were reported as relatively smooth. Communication among school personnel (e.g., classroom teacher, EA, school support person) helped students adjust quickly if the student required a change to the transition process. Collaboration enabled the student's support team to develop strategies that would best support the student before and after the transition into the dedicated space or classroom. Among the eight parent respondents who participated in the study and expressed an opinion, five reported reduced travel burden and increased convenience as a result of having their child access ABA therapy in school (Figure 2). Parents also reported that, as a result of the pilot, they had more time for other activities, their child was able to participate in school community activities more than before the pilot, and support for their child in school had improved as a result of the pilot.

Figure 2: Has the amount of travel time daily for your child(ren) to travel to school and to the service centre/home for therapy changed as a result of your child(ren) accessing ABA therapy at school?



### **Collocation has improved collaboration between school personnel and external service providers**

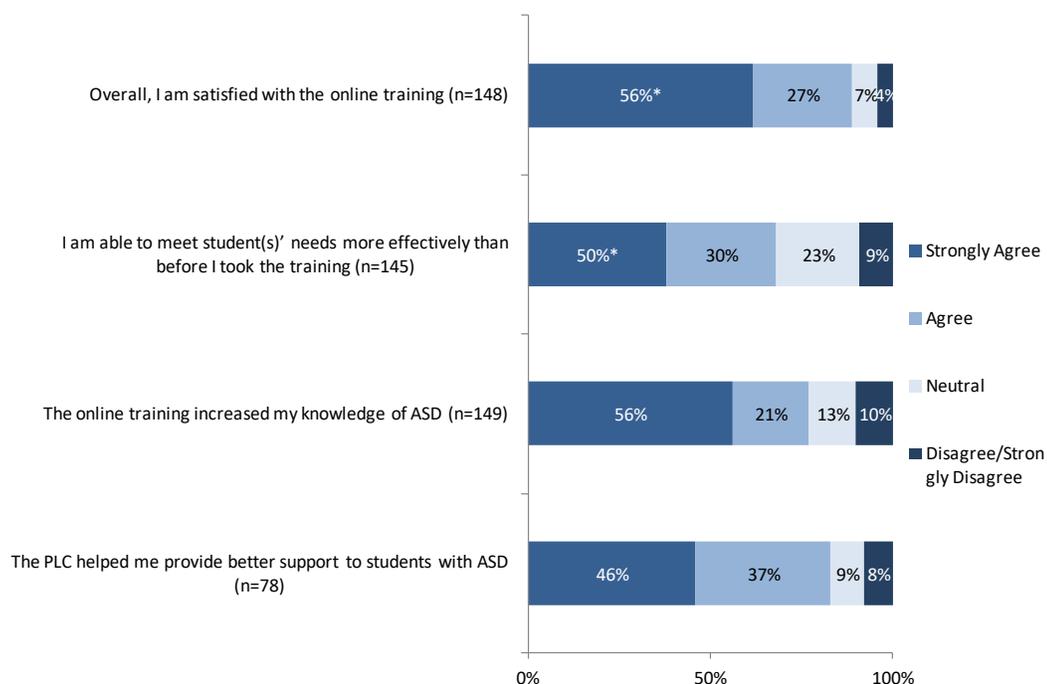
In Year 1, all school boards participating in the pilot reported there was limited communication between school staff and external service providers regarding students' therapy. This reportedly led to confusion and miscommunication regarding the student's time in the space, the student's behaviours, and strategies for the student in the classroom and the dedicated space. In Year 2, school boards reported an increase in communication between external service providers and school staff as a result of collocation and increased familiarity with the pilot and processes involved with the pilot, such as transitions. In Year 2, school staff and service providers were in more regular contact regarding the time of the student's therapy; they communicated more frequently during transitions; and they communicated during organized, formal meetings.

### 1.2.2 Online Training and PLCs

#### The Geneva Online Training and PLCs were an effective means of increasing capacity to support students with ASD

Study findings suggest that the Geneva Centre online training and PLCs were an effective means of increasing school personnel's capacity to support students with ASD using ABA principals. The majority of EAs who had taken the Geneva online course in Year 2 reported having retained all (28%) or most (47%) of the content from the online course in Year 2. BCBAs or equivalent indicated that the training helped EAs improve how they worked with students, and EAs had increased their understanding of behavioural triggers and how to respond to these behaviours. Similarly, a majority of EAs indicated that the Geneva online course had allowed them to meet students' needs more effectively than before the training (80%), and that the online training increased their knowledge of ASD (77%). In addition, 83% of EAs agreed that the PLC helped them to better understand ABA practices and provide better supports to students with ASD, as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Aspects of the Geneva Online training



\* Indicates statistical significance

#### The PLC was important in supplementing the Geneva online course

Over three-quarters (83%) of EAs indicated that the PLC was an important supplement to the online training. Similarly, all participating school boards described the PLC as a critical component of the training. The PLCs provided an opportunity for the BCBA or equivalent to provide a more in-depth explanation or review of concepts, work on case studies and offer hands on learning opportunities. Although 14 out of the 18 participating school boards already offered ASD specific professional training to school personnel, 78% of EAs agreed that the training provided unique learning opportunities on ABA practices.

#### There was strong interest in offering the Geneva online training and PLCs to more school staff

School administrators agreed that staff require ongoing training to gain the necessary skills and experience to work effectively with students who have ASD and other exceptionalities. In both Year

1 and 2, Project Coordinators and Superintendents from 7 schools reported that interest in the Geneva online course exceeded the number of spaces available. Both EA survey participants and Principal and Project Coordinator interview participants believed that additional school staff, such as Special Education Teachers and French teachers, would benefit from taking the Geneva online course. Providing the online training to a greater number of staff would build capacity, not only among teachers who work with the student in the classroom, but also among other staff who teach and support students in other settings such as music, gym or French. Allowing other staff to participate in the training and PLCs would provide them with the opportunity to learn more about ASD and how to best support students in different settings.

### **1.2.3 BCBA or Equivalent**

#### **BCBAs or equivalents fill a unique role within the school that cannot be replaced**

Project Coordinators and Principals in both Year 1 and 2 of the pilot believed that there was a significant advantage to having a BCBA or equivalent in their school. Due to the growing number of students with ASD, BCBAs or equivalents provide crucial support to students and staff. Most Superintendents and Principals reported that they are looking for a way to continue the role of the BCBA or equivalent through school board funding, even if the pilot does not continue. In addition, BCBAs or equivalents' reported taking on more responsibilities in Year 2 of the pilot to support a greater number of students and staff including: responding to crisis situations with students; observing student behaviours and creating behaviour plans; collecting and sharing data regarding the student with service providers; and supporting school staff. School boards noted that it would be difficult to make the BCBA or equivalent role remote due to their responsibilities for supervision and observation. It was also noted that due to the specific expertise and knowledge the BCBA or equivalent has, the role cannot be filled by another individual, such as the Project Coordinator.

#### **BCBAs or equivalents supported the Geneva online training and PLCs, school teams and external service providers**

BCBAs or equivalents brought a specialized understanding of ABA principals to the Geneva Online training and PLCs. The BCBAs or equivalents did not perform administrative tasks; they were involved only in tasks requiring their expertise, such as consultations, program development and professional development. They were responsible for supporting and overseeing EAs, acted as a resource to SERTs and other teaching staff, and provided training to EAs and teachers. In addition, they provided recommendations to front-line staff on how best to work with ASD students in the classroom settings and they shared data regarding students with external service providers.

#### **A greater number of BCBAs or equivalents were hired in Year 2 of the pilot**

A greater number of schools were able to hire a BCBA or equivalent in Year 2 compared to Year 1, possibly due to having more time in Year 2 to recruit these individuals. In Year 2, 13 out of 18 schools had a BCBA or equivalent compared to just 8 schools in Year 1. Four of the five school boards from Year 1 had not been able to hire a BCBA or equivalent in Year 2. The main recruitment challenges cited by the 5 school boards without a BCBA or equivalent in both Year 1 and 2 were the shortage of qualified professionals, the short-term contract and the lower salary they were able to offer compared to private sector wages. This was especially the case for Francophone school boards due to the additional requirement of fluency in French, and in Northern school boards where there are very few individuals with this qualification. Three of the school boards in Year 1 and 2 that were unable to hire a BCBA or equivalent were in remote locations.

Most BCBAs or equivalents were supporting more than one school within their pilot school board; however, the exact number of schools one BCBA or equivalent supported varied based on the number of students in need of support and the geographical distance between schools. BCBAs or

equivalents felt they could continue to support multiple schools; however, this would depend on the number of students with ASD requiring their support and the travel distance between schools.

#### 1.2.4 Feasibility of a Province-Wide Rollout

Based on the findings, the considerations for province-wide rollout of the pilot would include assessing the extent to which:

- Specific aspects of each of the pilot components could be modified to realize cost efficiencies without compromising quality; and
- It would be feasible to expand the pilot components into more schools across the province.

More specifically, assessing the feasibility of province-wide rollout of the pilot would take the following into consideration:

- How many school boards could add a dedicated space to the schools within their board?
- Is the Project Coordinator role required if the pilot were to expand to include more schools?
- Do the Geneva online course and PLCs offer training that is unique and which could not be delivered in a more cost effective manner?
- Is the BCBA or equivalent role required or could an individual with lesser qualifications fulfill the responsibilities associated with this role?
- Could the work of the BCBA or equivalent be completed more efficiently without compromising quality?

These questions are considered in more detail in Table 1, below.

**Table 1: Considerations of a Province-Wide Rollout**

Considerations	Details
How many school boards could add a dedicated space to the schools within their board?	<p>Of the 11 pilot schools with a dedicated space, 8 indicated there is room in additional schools to add a dedicated space, and 3 out of 7 pilot schools without a dedicated space indicated they would have room in additional schools for a dedicated space. School boards with limited space reported that they were keen to create a dedicated space even if it was not a classroom.</p> <p>(Note that the feasibility of adding dedicated spaces to school boards that did not participate in the pilot would require additional exploration.)</p> <p>No Ministry funding would be required to establish a dedicated space in schools with an existing space that could be used for this purpose. However, if no available space exists in some schools, funding for construction/retrofits would be required. To reduce funding pressures, construction funding could be provided to only those school boards that require it rather than providing the same funding to all school boards.</p>

	<p>Although it would not be equivalent to ABA therapy, schools with no available spaces could consider Positive Behaviour Support (PBS). PBS can include aspects of ABA therapy; as such, PBS can occur in the classroom or the student's natural environment rather than a specifically designated space.</p> <p>If the pilot is rolled out more broadly across the province, it may be important to consider the supply of dedicated spaces available within each school board and balance the demand for the spaces to avoid underutilization. In addition, to ensure that different service providers can access the spaces more quickly, the Ministry could develop an MOU template for school boards. This would reduce the MOU development/negotiation process which can be lengthy.</p>
<p>Is the Project Coordinator role required if the pilot were to expand to include more schools?</p>	<p>6 of the 11 school board administrators interviewed for this study believed the pilot required a full time Project Coordinator. They reported that the BCBA or equivalent and school administrators were already working at capacity and would be unable to take on the roll. It was reported that if the pilot were to expand, the magnitude of the Project Coordinator's role would likely increase significantly. 4 of the 11 school board administrators felt the BCBA or equivalent or school board level staff member could fulfill the responsibilities currently assigned to the Project Coordinator role. However, it was reiterated that anyone who took on the responsibility of the Project Coordinator would need knowledge and experience with students with ASD in a school setting.</p> <p>Continuing/expanding the Project Coordinator role would require Ministry funding.</p>
<p>Do the Geneva online course and PLCs offer unique training that could not be achieved in a more cost effective manner?</p>	<p>Study participants reported that the Geneva online training is an effective way to build capacity among staff who work with students with ASD. A total of 67% of EAs reported that the Geneva online training provided them with unique learning on ABA principals which they had not learned prior to completing the course. When Project Coordinators and BCBAs or equivalents were asked if they knew of alternative training courses that offered more</p>

	<p>effective or less expensive training, they had difficulty responding with confidence; no alternative courses were provided as options.</p> <p>Study participants felt that it would be beneficial to offer the training to more roles within the school (support staff, French teachers, etc.). However, if the training were offered to more staff, a significant challenge would be finding supply staff to cover absent online training participants.</p> <p>Ministry funding would be required to cover the cost of training more school staff and to cover release time for participants.</p>
<p>Is the BCBA or equivalent role required or could an individual with lesser qualifications fulfill the responsibilities associated with this role?</p> <p>Could the work of the BCBA or equivalent be completed more efficiently without compromising quality?</p>	<p>Interview participants from 16 of the 18 school boards indicated that the BCBA or equivalent is invaluable to students and staff, and suggested that individuals without their qualifications could not fulfill their role. BCBAs or equivalents who participated in the pilot were supporting more than one school and were perceived to provide crucial, irreplaceable support for students and staff. BCBAs or equivalents reported that they could continue supporting multiple schools but if the pilot were to expand to include more schools, consideration would need to be given to the number of students they support and the geographical distance between schools.</p> <p>A lack of funding and a shortage of certified individuals (BCBAs®, BCBA-Ds™) were cited as two major challenges with expanding the role province-wide.</p>

## SECTION 2: INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Background

The Ontario Ministry of Education (the Ministry) partnered with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to conduct a pilot to improve school-based supports for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). A total of 18 Ontario school boards are involved in the pilot, the goal of which was to “create a more seamless day for students, reduce demands on families, and increase confidence in the public school system.”

The pilot, which launched in the fall of 2017, included three components:

- Dedicated Space for Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA): Funding to 11 of the 18 school boards was provided in Year 1 of the pilot to set up a dedicated space within the pilot school. The space is used by external behaviour therapists to provide autism services for students with ASD within their school.<sup>1</sup>
- Target The Education Assistant (EA) Training and Professional Learning Community (PLC): Funding in both years for a maximum of 30 Educational Assistants (EAs) within each of the 18 participating school boards to participate in 40-hours of online RBT training provided by the Geneva Centre for Autism, and in a PLC led by the Project Coordinator or BCBA or equivalent. The training included 19 modules which were designed for EAs by the Geneva Centre for Autism (Geneva). The content of the training is based on the Behaviour Analyst Certification Board™(BACB®) Registered Behavior Technician® task list. The training was supported by PLCs, the format of which was determined by each school board. Each school board determined when their PLCs would be conducted and what specific content would be included.
- Hiring a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA) or BCBA Equivalent: Funding in both years to hire one School Board Pilot BCBA or equivalent who is a BCBA, or working towards a BCBA certification/equivalent, was provided to all 18 participating school boards.

R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd. (Malatest) was retained to evaluate the pilot and identify aspects of the pilot that are working well and aspects that can be improved should the Ministry expand the pilot. The evaluation was completed in two phases over the two years of the Pilot. In Year 1, the evaluation focused on the process, or implementation of the pilot at the 18 school board sites. Where applicable, the findings for Year 1 have been incorporated into this report. The Year 2 evaluation objectives were:

- To assess the extent to which the goals of the pilot have been met;
- To identify best practices and key challenges;
- To assess whether specific components of the pilot should be continued/rolled out more broadly (based on outcomes and value for money); and
- To assess whether province-wide rollout is feasible using the current delivery model, or if changes would be required.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that funding for retrofitting concluded on August 31, 2018.

## 2.2 Year 1 and 2 Evaluation Outcomes and Research Questions

The Year 1 evaluation answered twelve questions which are listed in Table 2 below. Year 1 assessed the extent to which the implementation of the pilot met short term outcomes identified in the Logic Model.

Table 2: Year 1 Evaluation Questions

<b>Year 1 Evaluation Questions</b>
1. To what extent is the program aligned with Ministry priorities?
2. To what extent is the target population being met for the dedicated space?
3. To what extent is the target population being met for the EA online training?
4. To what extent has the dedicated space component been implemented as intended?
5. To what extent has the EA learning component been implemented as intended?
6. To what extent has the BCBA component been implemented as intended?
7. How effective is the dedicated space in facilitating access to quality therapy during the day?
8. How effective is the EA training in building capacity among EAs to support students with ASD?
9. How effective is the BCBA role in supporting student transitions between the classroom (school) and the dedicated space (community)?
10. To what extent has there been communication and collaboration between the school board and service providers?
11. Is the funding provided by the Ministry sufficient to implement the components?
12. Were there any unintended outcomes or impacts, positive or negative, as a result of the implementation of the pilot?

The Year 2 evaluation assessed the extent to which the pilot met the following short and medium-term outcomes identified in the Logic Model. The full Logic Model can be found in Appendix B.

Table 3: Year 2 Evaluation Outcomes

<b>Group/Element</b>	<b>Short-term Outcomes (1-2 yrs)</b>	<b>Medium-term Outcomes (2-5 yrs)</b>
Families/Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased convenience for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced burden for parent(s)</li> </ul>

	parent(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smooth transitions for children participating in the pilot</li> <li>• Reduced challenging behaviours in children in the classroom</li> <li>• Increased time in classroom for children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved behaviours in children in the classroom</li> <li>• Increased ability of child to participate in classroom setting</li> <li>• Child requires less time in the dedicated space</li> <li>• Increased confidence in public school system</li> </ul>
Schools and School Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased understanding of ASD and ABA practices</li> <li>• Increased tracking of behaviours in classroom setting</li> <li>• More sharing of information about child's progress among child's support team (school personnel, external service providers, parents)</li> <li>• Increased transfer of ABA knowledge from BCBA to other school personnel</li> <li>• Mechanisms for collaboration between service providers and school staff are established</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated spaces are utilized to best effect (never empty)</li> <li>• More staff completing ABA training</li> <li>• Increased tracking of behaviours in classroom setting</li> <li>• Increased collaboration on child's goals among school personnel, external service providers, parents</li> <li>• Increased confidence in competencies and skills in providing ABA support to students with ASD</li> <li>• Increased collaboration between service providers and school staff</li> </ul>

The Year 2 evaluation answers four broad questions which are listed in Table 4 below. The full evaluation framework, including indicators and data sources, can be found in Appendix B.

Table 4: Year 2 Evaluation Questions

Year 2 Evaluation Questions
1. To what extent is the dedicated space improving in-school supports for students with ASD?
2. Is the online ABA training/PLC component providing value for money?
3. To what extent has the school-board hired BCBA/BCBA equivalent component been effective in helping to achieve the intended outcomes of the pilot?
4. To what extent is province-wide rollout feasible using the current delivery model?

## SECTION 3: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Methodology

The methodology used to conduct the Year 1 and Year 2 evaluations of the Pilot to Improve School-Based Supports for Students with Autism is outlined below.

#### 3.1.1 Ethics Approval Process

Malatest submitted ethics applications for both Year 1 and Year 2 evaluations and received approvals from the school boards listed in Appendix A.

#### 3.1.2 Online Surveys

An online survey was available in Year 1 to Educational Assistants and support staff who completed the Geneva online training course. A total of 155 surveys were completed.

Two online surveys were available in Year 2. The first survey was available to Educational Assistants and support staff who completed the Geneva online training and Professional Learning Community (PLC) in Year 1 and Year 2 of the pilot. A total of 171 surveys were completed. The second survey was available to parents of students who participated in Year 1 and Year 2 of the pilot and resulted in 11 completed surveys.

The survey instruments are included in Appendix C.

#### 3.1.3 Data Templates

To ensure that the same type of data was collected from all school boards with a dedicated space, a template was circulated among the Project Coordinators and BCBA's or equivalents. Data collected from the templates included: the number of students involved in the pilot; the hours the dedicated space was utilized and empty per day; tasks of the Project Coordinators and BCBA's or equivalents and the hours spent on each task. The template is included in Appendix C.

#### 3.1.4 Jurisdictional Scan

An online jurisdictional scan was completed in Year 1 to identify best practices and lessons learned by other jurisdictions with school-based supports for students with ASD. Interviews were also conducted to supplement the online findings of the jurisdictional scan. A full list of jurisdictions interviewed can be found in Appendix A.

#### 3.1.5 Case Studies

Eight case studies of students participating in the pilot were completed in Year 1. The case studies involved site visits and in person interviews with BCBA's or equivalents, Project Coordinators, Classroom Teachers, Educational Assistants, support staff, school Principals, parents and external ABA service providers. The case study questions focused on the student's experience with the pilot from the perspective of those interviewed.

Case studies and site visits were not conducted in Year 2. The case studies were replaced by research activities which would better meet the information needs of the study. As such, site visits had already been conducted in Year 1 and did not need to be conducted again in Year 2.

### 3.1.6 Key Informant Interviews

Year 1 included interviews with: BCBA's or equivalents, Project Coordinators, Classroom Teachers, Educational Assistants, support staff, school Principals. The key informant interviews differed from the case study interviews and focused on the pilot implementation.

Malatest also conducted an interview with a representative of Geneva Centre for Autism (the Geneva Centre) to better understand the following:

- When the Geneva Centre first developed Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) training tools for those who support students with ASD in a school setting;
- What types of tools the Geneva Centre offers;
- How their training tools have developed over time;
- What feedback the Geneva Centre has received regarding the online RBT course developed for this pilot project; and
- If any modifications to the online RBT course developed for this pilot project have been planned.

Year 2 included interviews with: school Principals, school board Superintendents and parents from 11 school boards that included the dedicated space. Project Coordinators from all 18 school boards also participated in an interview. Interviews were conducted over the phone and followed a structured interview guide. The interview guides are included in Appendix C.

### 3.1.7 Focus Groups

Year 1 did not include focus groups.

In Year 2, two focus groups were held via teleconference with the BCBA's or equivalents from each school board. Two focus groups were held: the first included four participants, all of whom were BCBA's or working towards attaining their BCBA qualification; and the second included four participants, two of whom were Project Coordinators without BCBA qualification and two were BCBA's or equivalents with BCBA qualification. The focus groups followed a semi-structured guide, which is included in Appendix C.

### 3.1.8 Analysis of Qualitative Data

Year 2 qualitative data were analyzed using NVivo. Interviews and focus groups were coded based on thematic codes developed from the evaluation framework to ensure responses were analyzed in correlation with indicators. Areas of concurrence or divergence within and across the stakeholder groups were identified and, where appropriate, triangulated with survey data.

### 3.1.9 Analysis of Online Survey Data

Survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (cross tabs and frequencies) by key groups (Educational Assistants, teachers and special education teachers).

### 3.2 Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

While the data collected for this study can be considered with confidence, the following limitations should be noted. As applicable, the mitigation strategies employed to overcome these limitations are described and their efficacy discussed.

The operation of the pilot can differ in each school board/individual school depending on the communications and partnerships developed between school staff and external ABA service providers.

- Some school boards had collaborative relationships with service providers that were established before the pilot began. A small number of school boards had greater difficulty establishing a collaborative relationship with service providers, which impacted perceptions of the pilot in these school boards. This strained the relationship between the school boards and service providers in Year 1, and contributed to a negative view of the pilot in Year 2.

Parent sample size is small and data should be interpreted with caution.

- Eleven participants completed the parent survey. The number of eligible participants was estimated at 15 parents. The data provides findings from this sample, but the small number of participants cannot result in statistical significance or findings that can be generalized to a larger population.

### 3.3 Context of Ontario Autism Program changes

In 2019, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services announced changes to the Ontario Autism Program funding model. The new model will allocate direct funding to families to be used towards services such as behavioural services, speech language pathology, occupational therapy and physiotherapy, family/caregiver capacity building and training, respite services, technology aids and travel. Children under the age of six are eligible to receive \$20,000 annually in funding directly to families, while those aged six and over are eligible to receive \$5,000 annually in direct funding. This model is aimed at reducing the waitlist for ASD services in Ontario<sup>2</sup>. As of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 clinical supervisors are now considered qualified providers under the Ontario Autism Program<sup>3</sup> and are accepted under the Directing Funding Option<sup>4</sup>.

The previous model, under which Year 1 of the evaluation took place, offered a Direct Service Option (DSO) and a Direct Funding Option (DFO). The DSO required parents/guardians to work with the regional provider to identify the child's goals, strengths and needs for behavioural services. The DFO allowed parents/guardians to choose the provider they felt was most appropriate for their child's needs<sup>5</sup>. The funding was dependent on the type and amount of services the child needed, what was available in their community and what types of support the family was already receiving<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>2</sup>Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services: Ontario Autism Program. 2019. Retrieved from: <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/english/specialneeds/autism/ontario-autism-program.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Qualification Requirements, Autism Ontario. Retrieved from <https://www.oaproviderlist.ca/join/qualification-requirements>

<sup>4</sup> Ontario Autism Program, News and Updates. Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. Retrieved from <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/english/specialneeds/autism/ontario-autism-program.aspx#provider>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Provincial and Territorial Funding Programs for Autism Therapy: Ontario. 2017. Autism Canada. Retrieved from [https://autismcanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/AC\\_ProgramsForAutismTherapy.pdf](https://autismcanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/AC_ProgramsForAutismTherapy.pdf)

## SECTION 4: KEY FINDINGS: DEDICATED SPACE

### Introduction to Section

Results in this section answer the evaluation question, “To what extent is the dedicated space improving in-school supports for students with ASD?”

#### 4.1 Extent to Which Dedicated Space is Utilized

Underutilization of the dedicated space in Year 1 was due, at least in part, to the misconception that the space could be accessed by only one student at a time and not used simultaneously by multiple students. Based on the Year 1 findings, Malatest developed the following evaluation questions to explore in Year 2; these questions will be addressed in the following subsections:

- Is the dedicated space being utilized all day every day?
- Is current demand for the space being met?
- Are multiple students accessing the space simultaneously?
- To what extent are therapists from different service providers delivering therapy in the space simultaneously/concurrently?
- Are there barriers/challenges to securing agreements with external service providers?

### Key Findings

In Year 1, in approximately half the pilot schools, one student accessed the space, and in the remaining schools, two students accessed the space. In Year 2, most schools increased use of the dedicated space relative to Year 1. **The average number of hours increased from 3.4 hours per day in Year 1 to 5.6 hours per day in Year 2 (based on hours reported by 9 school boards).** In addition, the dedicated space was accessed by more students with ASD in Year 2 compared to Year 1. In Year 1, on average, just one student was able to access the space at the same time. In Year 2, three school boards had multiple students who received ABA therapy from the same service provider accessing the dedicated space at the same time, as illustrated in Table 5.

**Table 5: Number of students and service providers accessing dedicated space by school board in Year 2<sup>7</sup>**

	Toronto DSB	Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB	Toronto Catholic DSB	St.Clair Catholic DSB	Ottawa-Carleton DSB	Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB	Thunder Bay Catholic DSB	Algoma DSB	CSDCE O
No. of service providers accessing the space simultaneously	1	2	1	1	2	1	Data not provided	1	1

<sup>7</sup> Hamilton-Wentworth DSB and CS des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario are not included in table as the dedicated space is currently not in use for the pilot. Hours were not provided by Thunder Bay Catholic DSB.

ously									
No. of students accessing the space simultaneously	1	4	1	1	3	2	Data not provided	1	1

**In Year 2, all school boards identified a growing population of students with ASD and an increasing demand for in-school supports for these students.** School boards that do not currently have any schools with a dedicated space indicated that they see the benefit of adding a dedicated space to their schools to provide ABA therapy within the school space and decrease the amount of time students are absent because of receiving their ABA therapy in service centers. As illustrated in Table 5, school boards with a dedicated space had varying numbers of students with ASD in their pilot school or within the school board overall. However, none of the school boards were using the dedicated space to maximum capacity.

Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB and Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario were not using the dedicated space at the time of reporting. Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB reported that both students that had been accessing the space in Year 1 are no longer at the school and Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario had not finalized their MOU with the service provider.

*I would say (the demand) is pretty high. Yeah. And only going to increase, I would say. Whether it's those students transitioning from OAP providers to new students, whether they're in JK or transferring from other boards, I think it's only going to get higher. – Project Coordinator*

**Table 6: Number of hours dedicated space is used<sup>8</sup>**

Toronto DSB	Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB	Toronto Catholic DSB	St. Clair Catholic DSB	Ottawa-Carleton DSB	Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB	CSDCEO	Algoma DSB
5-15 hrs/wk	35 hrs/wk	24 hrs/wk	25 hrs/wk	48 hrs/wk	21.3 hrs/wk	10 hrs/wk	25 hrs/wk

In Year 1, initial challenges with the space included having little time for the design and construction or retrofitting of the dedicated space. In some cases, the dedicated space was not ready early enough in the school year to be used at all. This challenge did not continue in Year 2 as retrofitting for all dedicated spaces had been completed prior to the start of the 2018/19 school year.

Utilization of the dedicated space in Year 2 was influenced by multiple factors including: the size and capacity of the space (as also reported in Year 1); the behaviour plan developed by the students' ABA therapist (as it could dictate that the student could not receive therapy in the same space as another ASD student); and feasibility of aligning the students' therapy schedules in order for them to receive therapy in the dedicated space at the same time.

<sup>8</sup> Hamilton-Wentworth DSB and CS des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario are not included in table as the dedicated space is currently not in use for the pilot. Hours were not provided by Thunder Bay Catholic DSB.

The hours the dedicated spaces were in use in Year 2 was based on the number of students participating in the pilot. At the time of reporting, there were two school boards (Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB, Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario) that did not have students accessing ABA therapy in the dedicated space. In Year 1 Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB's had two students accessing the dedicated space however, both students moved to other schools before Year 2 began. Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario invited 2 students to access the dedicated space but due to delays with the MOU and service provider agreements, the students' start in the space was delayed. The MOU process was lengthy for the school board due, in part, to the length of the document which required translation from English into French. In these schools, the dedicated spaces were used for purposes that were outside the scope of the pilot, such as using the room for meetings or as a breakout room for students who needed time away from class. Schools using the dedicated space for a student's ABA therapy reported that the hours of use ranged from 5 hours per week to 48 hours per week (Table 6).

Although school boards received requests from parents to allow their child to access the dedicated space, **they were unable to grant access if the student had been waitlisted to receive ABA services from a service provider, even if the school board had an established MOU with that service provider; only students receiving ABA therapy from a board approved service provider with an existing MOU with the school could be accommodated.** Many participants noted that the provincial waitlists for ABA therapy are long. One Project Coordinator, one Principal and three Superintendents noted that the waitlist for ABA therapy was a limitation to increasing the number of students accessing the dedicated space.

*We've had parents say 'Can I enroll my child at the pilot school from another school?' – Superintendent*

*There is a huge demand from families for support for their children with ASD. As mentioned, we have 6 students at the school with ASD who are currently on a wait list for therapy from an external provider. – Principal*

In Year 1 it was suggested that, where possible, service agreements should be developed with several service providers so that other students with ASD may transition into the dedicated space more quickly when spots become available. Ten of the eleven Principals, Project Coordinators and Superintendents interviewed in Year 2 of this study indicated that they **would like to see use of the dedicated space increase in future, and mentioned that they are looking for opportunities to include more ABA service providers by developing service agreements with different providers.** However, some schools indicated that they are challenged to increase the number of service providers accessing the dedicated space for the following reasons:

- Unfamiliarity with ABA service providers and challenges establishing a collaborative relationship with school staff;
- Limited amount of time to develop an agreement with other service providers for the purposes of the pilot; and
- Uncertainty regarding the changes to the Ontario Autism Program and its effect on service providers requesting access to the space. School boards reported that they anticipate an increase in the number of service providers that will be offering ABA services, and are unsure how to handle the potential increase in requests to access the dedicated spaces available.

Year 2 interview participants suggested mitigation strategies including:

- Implementing a proper referral system to ensure service providers are vetted (e.g., referral from credible sources);
- Regarding the above, the “credible sources” would have to be well defined as the referral could be biased and/or have negative outcomes if the person making the referral lacks the skill/expertise to judge the service provider’s ability to provide adequate service. This is especially important in a privatized system. An independent review committee would be ideal (made up of ABA experts and others). Since there is no mechanism of accountability for the service providers (i.e., regulation), public protection is of key importance;
- Implementing clear guidelines to schedule service providers in the space;
- Developing protocols around confidentiality and safety (e.g., student transitions); and
- Developing guidelines around the relationship between the service provider and school to collaborate on the best approaches for the student.

School board representatives also noted that if the number of service providers accessing the dedicated space increased, it would be difficult for them to find available school staff to cover the service providers’ breaks or absences. (In Year 1, some schools reported difficulty with finding available school staff to be paired with the student when the service provider did not communicate to the school that they would be absent that day.) During the interviews, almost all school boards noted that staff shortages are a major concern overall, and finding available staff to cover breaks is becoming increasingly difficult.

*Yeah so, ideally, the dedicated space—we’ve been chomping at the bit. We’ve wanted to. We’ve been asking the Ministry, “Can we expand this? Can we continue this work?” We’re seeing such great results...We now have a system in place, so, you know, opening the next dedicated space is going to be a lot less work because we’ve been there. We’ve met with the legal team, we’ve done that piece, we have an understanding of...what needs to be in the space and what the space design needs to look like. – Project Coordinator*

*So, for us the only—most important protocols that would need to be in place is those consents that are very clear in letting each provider know that they are only responsible for their client while they’re operating in the space. And if they had any concerns or felt like their space was being intruded upon or their program was being affected by the other students, that’s what myself, as a project coordinator, would be involved in taking action upon. – Project Coordinator*

Use of the dedicated space used in the pilot school boards in Year 2 is detailed in Table 7 below. This information was provided by Project Coordinators and BCBA’s or equivalents.

**Table 7: Details of Dedicated Space use in Pilot School Boards**

	Toronto DSB	Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB	Toronto Catholic DSB	St.Clair Catholic DSB	Ottawa-Carleton DSB	Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB	Thunder Bay Catholic DSB	Algoma DSB	CSDCE O	CEPC O	Hamilton-Wentworth DSB
No. of students with ASD in the school or board	3187 in school board	Unknown	20 in the pilot school	7 in the pilot school	12 in the pilot school	20 in the pilot school	Data not provided	25 in the pilot school	15 in the pilot school	10 in the pilot school	1 in the pilot school

No. of students accessing the dedicated space	1	3	1	2	5	3	2	4	1	0	0
Max. capacity of the space	Varies	2 per room	2	6	6	4 to 6	Data not provided	6	5	2 to 4	4

#### 4.2 Extent to Which Dedicated Space Supports Students

Year 1 findings suggested that the dedicated spaces are functioning as intended. Students with ASD received ABA therapy in the school setting and this reduced the travel burden on families. Based on the Year 1 findings, Malatest developed the following evaluation questions to assess the extent to which the dedicated space continues to function as intended in Year 2:

- Are students experiencing reduced transitions?
- Do students have greater attendance in school?
- Are students more active in the school community?
- Are the educational and behavioural supports students receive while in school improved as a result of the pilot?
- Are parents experiencing increased convenience/reduced burden?

#### Key Findings

**Increased familiarity with the school setting, school routines, school staff and peers was perceived as a key benefit of students receiving ABA therapy in the schools in Years 1 and 2.** In addition, parents reported experiencing improved transitions between school and home as a result of their child's increased familiarity with the school setting. Parents also reported that feedback from classroom teachers and support staff suggests that increased time at school has improved their child's ability to engage in the classroom as they are not tired or restless as a result of having to adjust to different settings (i.e., school and external service provider). In total, 84% of the EAs who participated in this study indicated they have seen positive changes in behaviour in the classroom since they began in the pilot.

Results of virtually all case studies conducted in Year 1 indicated that therapists were unable to work on social interaction programming in the dedicated space. This was based on the lower number of students accessing the dedicated space in Year 1. In Year 1, no more than 2 students were accessing the space during the day at any school board, and only one pair of students was accessing the space at the same time. This challenge was reduced in Year 2, with multiple students accessing the space simultaneously in three school boards.

**Overall, student transitions between the classroom and dedicated space were reported as relatively smooth in Year 1 and 2.** Students continued to transition between spaces in the school and the dedicated space such as the classroom, gymnasium, library, and outside yard, but interview participants reported that these "gentle handoffs" were smooth. This finding is similar to the Year 1 finding that students were able to transition relatively smoothly between the dedicated space and classroom. Communication among school personnel (e.g., classroom teacher, EA, SSP) helped students adjust quickly if the student required a change to the transition process. Collaboration

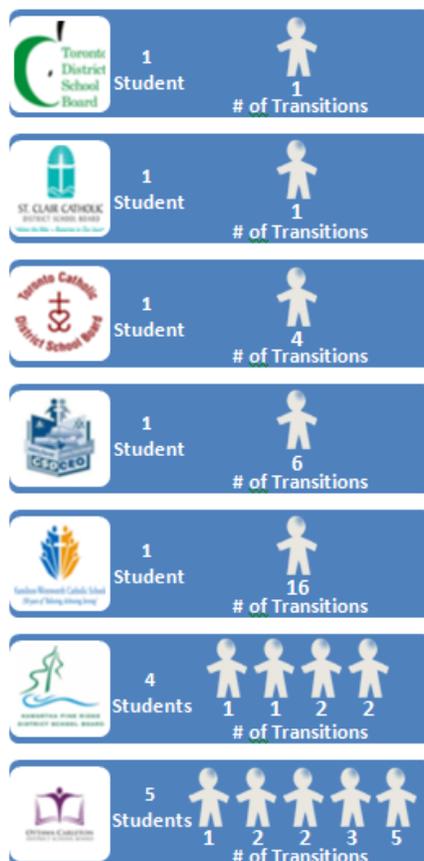
enabled the student’s support team to develop strategies that would best support the student before and after the transition into the dedicated space or classroom.

*Transitions between therapy and the classroom are much smoother and less disruptive for the student. – Project Coordinator*

*And, you know, transitions are generally not easy for him. But having this space means that, you know, he doesn’t have to leave school, he doesn’t have to come back, he doesn’t have to miss too much, he’s used to this routine. – Parent*

Detailed in Figure 4 is the number of transitions each student made per day in Year 2 (as reported by the Project Coordinators). Specific reasons for the number of transitions included: getting dressed for recess (e.g., coat, winter boots, etc.); walking through hallways in the school; walking upstairs; entering or leaving the dedicated space; and re-entering the classroom.

**Figure 4: Number of Transitions per Day**

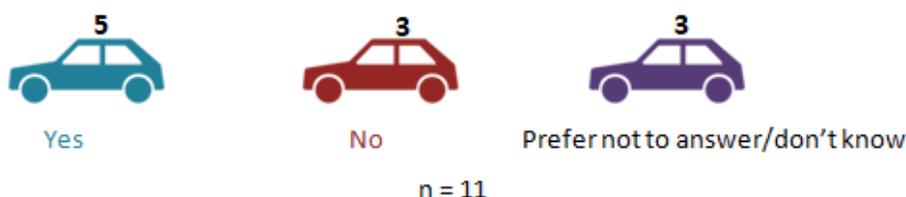


**Parents in Year 1 reported reduced travel burden and increased time for other activities as a result of the pilot. Year 2 findings are similar; all parents interviewed reported reduced burden and increased convenience as a result of having their child access ABA therapy in school (see Figure 5).** Parents also reported that they now have more time to work, complete errands and tasks, and establish a routine. Three parents surveyed (n=11) reported that the amount of time spent on doing things with their family such as board games, watching a movie, or attending events together has increased “a lot” since their child began receiving therapy in the dedicated space. An additional

three parents reported that it had increased “a little” or “stayed the same.” One parent reported that, as a result of the pilot, they have been able to return to work because they do not spend so much of their day transporting their child to therapy and back. Another parent reported that, as a result of school-based therapy, their child can now access ABA services; prior to the pilot, the parent had been unable to transport the child to therapy due to their work schedule.

*Probably around 2 hours. Yeah, I mean, not knowing, it's time. You know, the travel time for—I mean, let alone myself but for my son to have to sit in a car when that's time he could have been in the classroom, right? So he's missing out on valuable time. You know, with that space, when it's time for him to go to the space, he just walks up the stairs and goes to that room. – Parent*

**Figure 5: Has the amount of travel time daily for your child(ren) to travel to school and to the service centre/home for therapy changed as a result of your child(ren) accessing ABA therapy at school?**



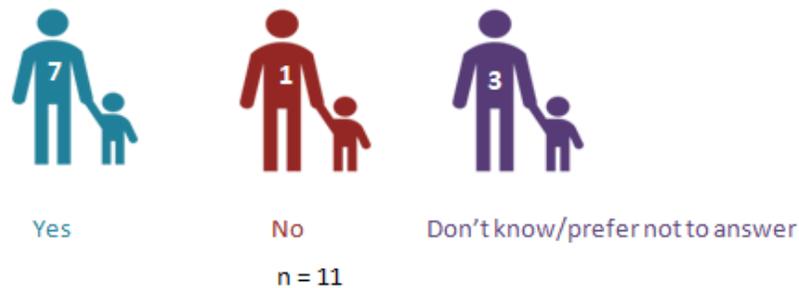
Five parents (n=11) reported their child has not been absent from school because of therapy being offered in the school setting. Two Project Coordinators in schools with the dedicated space reported that some students who use the dedicated space continue to be absent for many days of the school year (e.g., 84 days; 1 day per week; 9 hours per week); however, reasons why were not provided. A representative of the Northeastern Catholic DSB who is one of seven pilot schools without a dedicated space speculated that a dedicated space would help with attendance issues which are an ongoing challenge.

*And it would mean positive things for attendance, which is something that I know, as a board, we struggle with greatly. So, you know, students wouldn't be leaving and missing instruction in school and benefit families and things for parents, so they don't have to leave work or their home to take their child to appointments. – Project Coordinator*

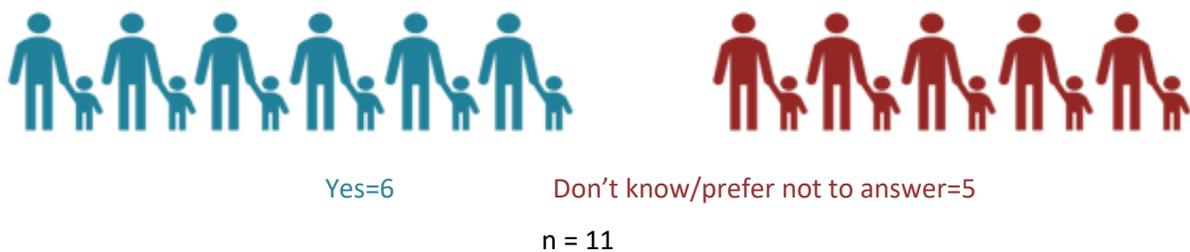
**Parents indicated that in-school ABA therapy increased the opportunities for their child/children to participate in the school community:** Five parents (n=11) reported increased opportunities for their child/children to participate in extracurricular activities and seven parents (n=11) reported increased opportunities to attend school activities such as field trips, assemblies and school events.

Overall, six parents (n = 11) reported that the supports their child/children receive while in school have improved as a result of the pilot, and the majority of parents believed their child/children now has access to evidence based behavior analytical intervention during the day at school as a result of the pilot (Figure 7).

**Figure 6: I believe that my child(ren) has access to evidence based behaviour analytical intervention during the day at school as a result of the pilot**



**Figure 7: I believe that the supports my child(ren) receives while in school have improved as a result of the pilot**



*His teachers have said that it's helped a lot. That, you know, he looks forward to the time in the classroom and when it's time to go for the therapy he looks forward to that as well. And he's become—he's much more engaged. Another difference is that when he was in kindergarten, he wasn't as—he didn't care as much about his peers, and now they're a huge—I mean, we've seen huge, huge gains. Like, he has his favourite friends. He wants to be with them. He loves learning. It's just made a huge difference in his life. – Parent*

### 4.3 Extent to Which Collocation Improves Collaboration

Year 1 findings suggested that, while some communication/collaboration did occur among members of the student's support team, there were challenges/barriers that hindered their ability to fully communicate/collaborate between school staff and external service providers. Based on Year 1 findings, Malatest developed the following evaluation question for Year 2, which will be answered in the subsection below:

- Does collocation improve communication/collaboration among members of the student's support team?

## Key Findings

In Year 1, all school boards participating in the pilot reported that there was limited communication between school staff and external service providers regarding students' therapy<sup>9</sup>. Many interviewees who participated in the pilot program noted that the lack of communication between the school team and therapy team resulted in several challenges including: confusion regarding when the external behaviour therapist will be in the space; behaviours the student had exhibited that day; and inconsistencies in the support and strategies used for the student in the classroom and dedicated space. This confusion was the result, primarily, of misinterpretation of the TPA and miscommunication about the rules and restrictions.

**In Year 2, school boards reported that they had experienced an increase in communication between external service providers and school staff.** This was a result of collocation and increase familiarity with the pilot and processes involved in the pilot, such as transitions and scheduling for the student to access the space. Quick information exchanges during student transitions enabled staff and therapists to provide updates regarding the student's behaviour or impactful events that occurred during or prior to the transition. This information allowed the student's support team to better support the student in the dedicated space and in the classroom. This increase was the result of an increase in communication about the time of the student's therapy, an increase in regular contact between the service provider and school staff during transitions, and greater familiarity with the pilot and processes involved with the pilot such as transitions.

As in Year 1, communication between external service providers and school support teams in Year 2 also occurred through emails, phone calls, file sharing programs (e.g., DropBox), and formal meetings. One BCBA or equivalent reported that they also collected data on the students and shared these data with the service provider. They suggested that this practice contributes to better-informed decision making regarding the student. School staff members were inconsistent in their opinions regarding how frequently meetings should occur; some school teams reported that there were too many meetings with the student's support teams while others wanted more formal meetings. In Year 1, school staff suggested that all individuals who interact with the student on a regular basis should be included in the communication process. This includes EAs, other support staff, classroom teachers, SERTs, the external behaviour therapist, etc. The actual involvement of specific school staff in meetings varied among school boards; some involved all staff who interacts with the student, others involved only the primary educators, such as teachers and the principal.

When asked, 80% of the EAs who participated in the online survey (n=115) agreed or strongly agreed that collocation improved communication and collaboration among members of the student's support team and the service provider. Five Project Coordinators and Principals indicated that collocation had a positive effect on collaboration and communication between school staff and the service provider.

One school board noted that there had been significant challenges with the service provider in Year 1; including, instances in which the service provider did not adhere to scheduled times with the student in the dedicated space, and did not share the list of students who were eligible to use the dedicated space. In Year 2, the school board met with the external service provider to discuss these issues which resulted in better communications with the service provider during Year 2.

*Having one central space has not improved communication and/or collaboration between service*

<sup>9</sup> Parents would have provided consent to share information about their child between the external service providers and school staff.

*providers and school staff. Last year they had issues with the external provider CCR with respect to sharing lists of which students are eligible and when the therapists would be using the dedicated space. The provider would not commit to scheduled times or provide any indication as to how much they could anticipate using the dedicated space. Both Principals with dedicated spaces in their schools had a meeting with CCRs coordinator and the Board Superintendent to air their grievances as to why the dedicated space was not being utilized and to work out any issues so that the space could be used more. They found the biggest issue was the lack of communication from the service provider.*

*- Principal*

*I think it's been a fantastic time saver; it makes the collaboration much more effective. So, by having our guy in the designated space, his BCBA comes to the designated space once, sometimes twice, a week, to oversee her instructor therapist, make sure that they're running programs effectively, see how the student is reacting to it, and put in next steps for the kiddo. By having her right in here in the space while she's doing those observations, she gets to collaborate with our pilot BCBA and we're able to make those effective decisions that much quicker. So, when she comes in and says, "We need to change the tracking data collection for this behaviour for reasons A, B, C." Instantly, the very next day, we're able to bring that over to the classroom. And when he goes to classroom on Fridays, the school team is able to implement the same consistent approach. – Project Coordinator*

## SECTION 5: KEY FINDINGS: ONLINE TRAINING AND PLCs

### Introduction to Section

Results in this section answer the evaluation question, “Is the Geneva Center online training/PLC component providing value for money?”

### 5.1 Effectiveness of Geneva Center Training/PLCs

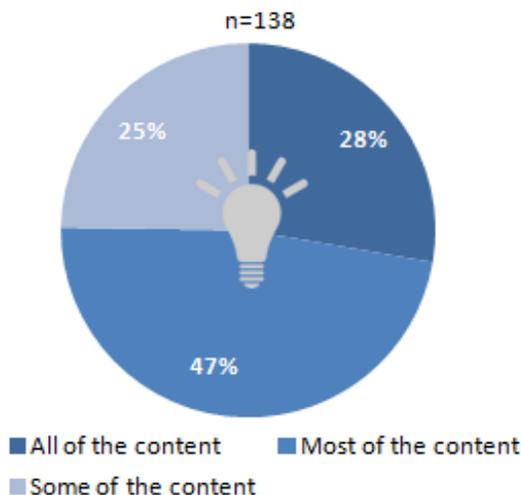
Year 1 findings suggested that the Geneva Center online training and PLCs increased EAs’ ability to support students with ASD. Year 1 findings also suggested that barriers may limit the extent to which EAs can fully implement, in the classroom setting, the training they had received. Based on the Year 1 findings, Malatest developed the following evaluation question for Year 2 which will be answered in the following subsection:

- Are the Geneva Center online training and PLCs continuing to increase EAs’ ability to support students with ASD in the classroom setting?
- Do the Geneva Center online training and PLCs provide more effective training than other ASD PD opportunities?
- Do the Geneva Center training and PLCs provide better value for money than other ASD PD opportunities?
- Is the Geneva online training and PLC delivery model sustainable?
- Are there barriers/challenges to offering the Geneva Center online training/PLCs that should be considered?
- Can the role of the BCBA/equivalent be sustained province wide?
- Are there potential consequences/risks to elimination of the Project Coordinator role?

### Key Findings

**Year 1 and Year 2 findings suggest that the Geneva Center online training and PLCs were an effective means of increasing capacity among school personnel to provide school-based ABA supports to students with ASD.** When asked to what extent they had retained the course content, almost half of respondents indicated they had retained all of the content (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8: To what extent have you retained the course content this year?**

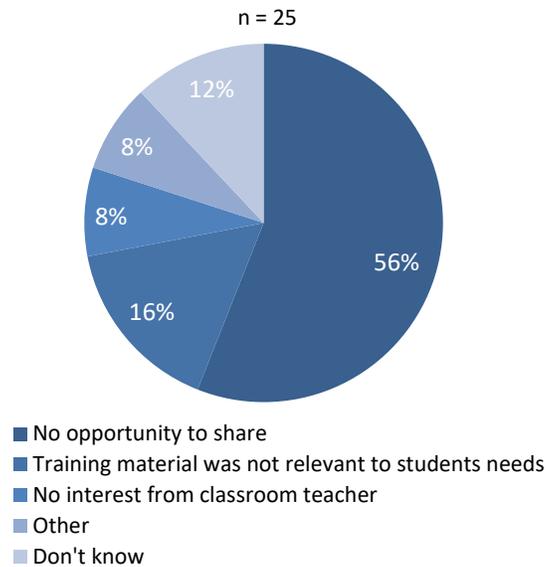


BCBAs or equivalents who were involved in the first year of the Geneva online training followed up in Year 2 with those EAs who took the training in Year 1 of the pilot. They reported that these EAs were applying the strategies they had learned and were using appropriate reinforcement procedures with their ASD students<sup>10</sup>. BCBAs or equivalents participating in focus groups conducted in Year 2 reported that the Geneva online training had a positive effect on EAs' understanding and use of ABA practices. The BCBAs or equivalents noted that the training helped the EAs improve how they worked with their students. For example, EAs reported changing how they prompted their students by using more visual gestures rather than verbal cues. The EAs also reported to the BCBAs or equivalents that, through the training, they gained a greater knowledge of what can trigger certain behaviours and learned more appropriate ways to respond to these behaviours.

In Year 1, many EAs reported that there was not sufficient time while they were in the classroom for effective transfer of knowledge. Some EAs reported that they were unable to implement the training they had received because the classroom teacher was unfamiliar with ASD and/or ABA, or the classroom teacher felt that the approaches they were currently using were already effective. Representatives from other jurisdictions with school supports for students with ASD in British Columbia and in St. Amant, Manitoba also mentioned that classroom teachers who do not understand or disagree with the principles of ABA can make it challenging to implement procedures within the classroom setting. In Year 2, findings suggest that EAs are increasingly sharing their knowledge: 75% of EAs (n=152) report that they shared what they learned during the online training with the student's classroom teacher and 68% of EAs who participate in student(s) IEP development/review (n=59) reported that they contribute their learning from training to the IEP process. Figure 9 illustrates the reasons EAs did not share their learning with the classroom teacher.

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted, however, that one of the BCBA or equivalents who observed the EAs was only able to do so by observing them in after school programs and not during classroom time. They did not provide details regarding why they could not observe EAs during classroom time.

**Figure 9: Reasons EAs did not share course learning with classroom teacher**



In Year 1 of the pilot, school personnel reported significantly higher levels of confidence in their competencies and skills when providing support to students with autism in a classroom setting after the training than before. Findings were similar in Year 2 (see Figure 10). **EAs' confidence in their skills and ability to provide effective supports to students with ASD increased following training in Year 2; the majority of respondents felt that they could better support students with ASD in the classroom after they completed the training.** The training also increased EAs' appreciation of how long it can take to see changes in their students' behaviours, which increased the likelihood that they would persevere with a strategy. A total of 79% of EAs agreed (i.e., rating of 7 or greater on a scale of 1 to 10) that they were able to implement ABA principles with their students and 78% agreed that the PLC helped them to better implement ABA practices with students with ASD.

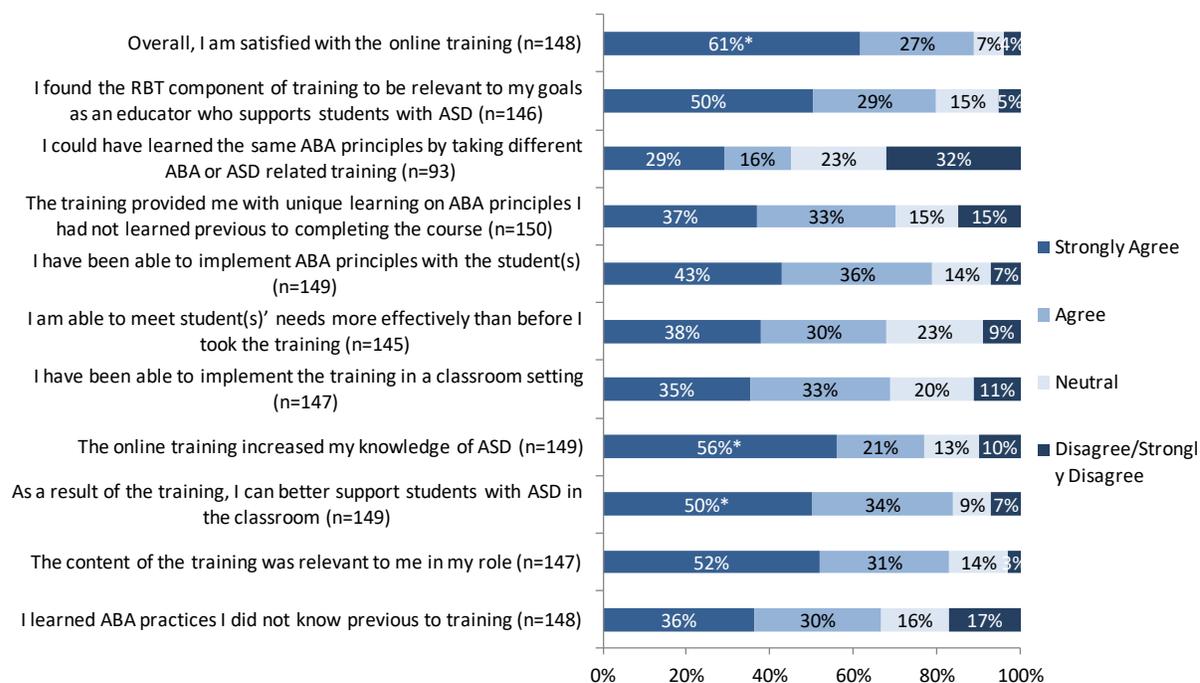
One BCBA or equivalent reported seeing a change in the terminology used by EAs when speaking with the BCBA or equivalent; EAs were using the language of behaviour analysis as opposed to using subjective terms. They also reported that EAs were asking more informed questions of the BCBA or equivalent. The BCBA or equivalent also indicated that the EAs were reaching out to them more often and collaborating with other EAs and teachers regarding the strategies they had tried and found to be successful with a particular student. However, it should be noted that there are risks associated with sharing strategies across students since protocols are based on each student's individual assessment data.

When EAs were asked if they had tracked or recorded student(s) behaviours before completing the training, 61% responded that they had tracked or recorded behaviour. However, when EAs were asked if they were tracking or recording student(s) behaviours after completing the training, respondents doing so only marginally increased to 62%. Slightly fewer than half of EAs (48%) reported that the way they formally track/record student(s) behaviour changed after the training, while 22% reported no change and 21% reported no change but that they had increased the frequency of tracking.

*The biggest one [change] for my group is becoming more confident, in our board ABA in the past has received a bit of negative feel with those 3 letters, now that accountability is stressed, data collection and forming decisions is important, a lot of EAs are feeling like they have the skills, and*

*also a lot of them report that their colleagues are coming up to them for advice. They are looking at things from a different lens, and seeing how ABA can support not just children with autism but students that don't have autism, and they are kind of spreading that. – Project Coordinator/BCBA or equivalent*

**Figure 10: Aspects of the Geneva Online Training**



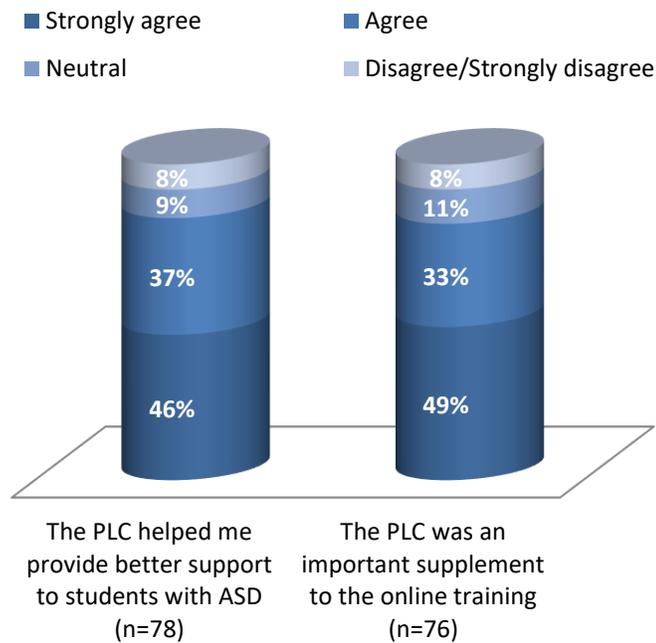
\* Indicates statistical significance

In Year 1, three quarters (76%) of those who had participated in a PLC agreed that “the PLC was well organized and structured” and that “the PLC was an important supplement to the online training” (74%). When asked how important the PLC was in increasing their skills and competencies in supporting students with autism in a classroom setting, three quarters (76%) agreed compared to 3% disagreeing. Analysis of the Year 1 qualitative data supported these findings. In Year 2, 83% of those who had participated in a PLC agreed (i.e., rating of 7 or greater on a scale of 1 to 10) that the PLC helped them to better understand ABA practices. The same proportion (83%) agreed the PLC helped them provide better support to students with ASD (see Figure 11).

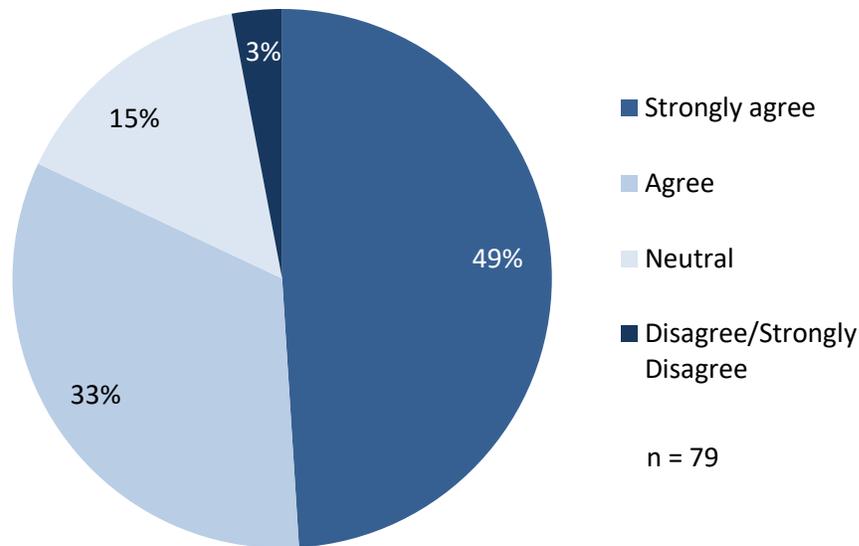
One Project Coordinator noted that the focus of their PLCs was to develop acquisition plans for the students the EAs were currently supporting in the classroom. Feedback from the EAs suggested that this focus on skill acquisition had progressed from a “goal” to an “objective”, which increased their focus on fully grasping the concepts and then developing a teaching plan. The focus on acquisition skills in Year 2 represented a modification to the Year 1 PLC model, and was based on EAs’ feedback that they needed to understand how to teach students a skill since they are often the staff member responsible for this work.

**The majority of EAs who participated in the online survey indicated that the PLCs were relevant to their role working with students with ASD, helped staff provide better support to students, and felt the PLC was an important supplement to the online training** (Figure 11 and Figure 12). When asked if they were satisfied with the PLCs overall, 58% of survey respondents reported that they “strongly agreed,” 28% “agreed,” 9% were “neutral” and 5% “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed.”

**Figure 11: Aspects of the PLCs**



**Figure 12: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the PLC material or board support of your online learning was relevant to your role working with students with ASD**

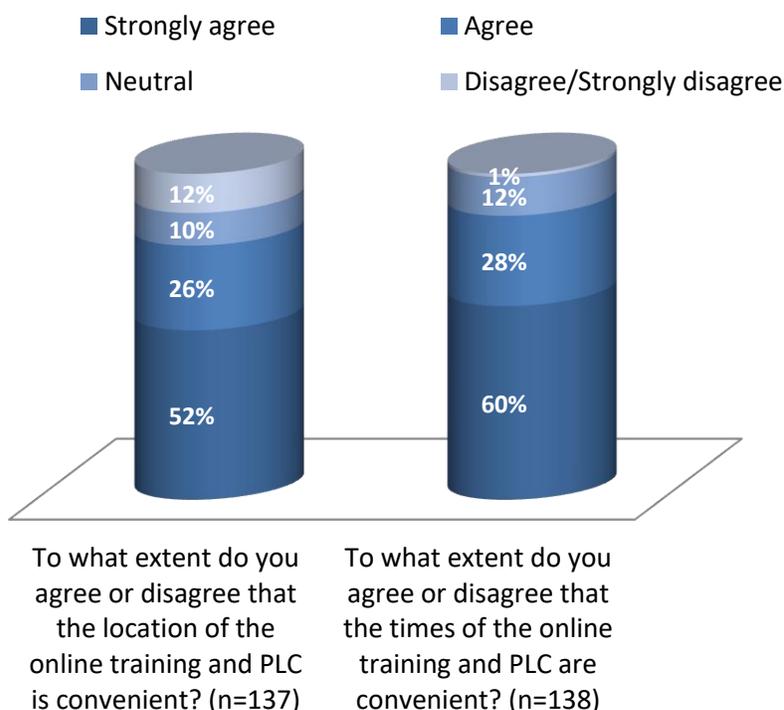


**All school boards noted that the combination of Geneva online training and PLCs was effective and that the PLCs are a critical component of the training.** The PLCs provided the opportunity for the BCBA or equivalent to more fully explain or review concepts, work on case studies, offer hands-on role playing opportunities, and provided an opportunity for participants to share their learning, challenges and questions. The PLCs afforded EAs a practical way to implement the strategies they learned, giving them confidence to practice them in the classroom.

*I think you need that combination, but I also think it's imperative that you have that—like, a case study or some application process. So, I would say the Geneva Centre training, with its glitches and everything, does offer some valid information. I think it's a little overwhelming at some times for EAs, but without the other components of a PLC where we review key concepts and do activities as well as the case study, I think it wouldn't be enough. So, I think you need those other components. – Project Coordinator*

When asked if the location and time of the PLCs were convenient, over half of respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they were (Figure 13).

**Figure 13: Time and Location of PLCs**



Most EAs and support staff had completed some training specific to ASD and ASD students before completing the Geneva Online course and PLCs. Some school boards selected EAs to complete the Geneva online course based on their previous training in the areas of ASD or ABA practices. In addition to the Geneva online training, 14 out of 18 school boards offered professional development training to EAs, support staff and teachers specific to ASD. This provided EAs with additional training on ASD and ABA practices which helped them better understand the concepts taught during the Geneva Center online training. Table 8 outlines which school boards provided additional training to EAs before completing the Geneva online course.

**Table 8: Previous ASD or ABA Training**

Toronto DSB	Some have completed courses on their own time.
Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB	Not provided
Toronto Catholic DSB	PD days
St.Clair Catholic DSB	ASD specific training
Ottawa-Carleton DSB	Ongoing training
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB	PD days
Thunder Bay Catholic DSB	PD days, Behavioural Management Training

Algoma DSB	PD days
CSDCEO	Crisis Intervention Training
CEPCO	None discussed
Hamilton-Wentworth DSB	All EAs who completed the Geneva training have completed courses/training in ASD.
Wellington Catholic DSB	PD days
Rainy River DSB	PD days
Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic DSB	Most EAs have some training in Autism and Behavioural Science or Behaviour Science Technician
CS catholique de district des Grandes Rivières	Internal board training
Durham Catholic DSB	PD days, voluntary ASD and ABA courses through the school board
Northeastern Catholic DSB	Unsure
Thames Valley DSB	PD days

When asked if the Geneva online course and PLC combination worked well for training EAs in ABA practices and whether there is different training EAs should complete instead of or in addition to the Geneva course, school boards did not suggest specific courses as an alternative to the Geneva training. Most school boards were satisfied with the Geneva online training; however, they did note a few areas where the course could be improved, including:

- They felt that some of the course material was irrelevant to EAs /support staff in a school setting;
- The online course requires a practical application portion to be most effective (PLC); and
- Ongoing technical problems made completion of the online training challenging for some participants.

In addition, school boards mentioned that EAs who are interested in completing their Registered Behaviour Technician (RBT) certification must do so on their own time without assistance from the school board. This was not a goal of the Geneva online training but has gained interest from a few EAs completing the training. School board representatives did not comment on the expansion of this interest, but acknowledged that it was considered the next step for staff who felt the RBT certification would benefit their careers. To receive this training, two EAs left their employment with the school board and found positions with service providers where they were able to obtain their RBT certification.

The Behavior Analyst Certification Board recognizes practitioners at four different levels; the Registered Behaviour Technician™ (RBT), Board Certified Assistant Behaviour Analyst® (BCaBA), Board Certified Behaviour Analyst® (BCBA), and Board Certified Behaviour Analyst - Doctoral™ (BCBA-D). RBTs must be supervised by a, BCaBA, BCBA or BCBA-D<sup>11</sup>. EA certification as an RBT was not included in the scope of the pilot.

Less than half (44%) of EA survey respondents indicated that they could have learned the same ABA practices by taking different ABA or ASD related training; 35% of EAs responded they “don’t know”. More than three-quarters of EA respondents (78%) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the training

<sup>11</sup> The Behavior Analyst Certification Board: Applied Behavior Analysis Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder: Practice Guidelines for Healthcare Funders and Managers. 2014. Behavior Analyst Certification Board, Inc. Retrieved from [https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/ABA\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_ASD.pdf](https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/ABA_Guidelines_for_ASD.pdf)

provided them with unique learning on ABA practices. As illustrated in Table 9, EAs suggested a variety of improvements to the PLCs.

**Table 9: Suggestions on how the online training and/or the Professional Learning Community could be improved**

Suggestions	n=67
Course not aligned with classroom application	7%
Participants allowed to share information with coworkers	4%
Need practicum, in class experience, team planning	28%
More guidance/support/time for PLC/PD, online resources	25%
Offer training to other staff/teachers	12%
Additional courses/opportunities, full RBT certification	3%
Did not learn from course/material poorly presented online	10%
Other	10%
No suggestions/satisfied with course	22%

As in Year 1, feedback in Year 2 continued to support the hybrid model of online and in-person training.

When asked if the Geneva online training and PLC provided better value for money than other PD opportunities, school boards had difficulty responding with confidence. There was consensus among school boards that the Geneva online training and PLCs provided effective training for EAs and support staff, and they reported that they were satisfied with the course overall. School boards indicated that they are looking to expand course capacity in future so more staff can take the training, but are waiting on confirmation of funding from the Ministry before proceeding with plans.

Results of this study suggest that the online training and PLCs were an effective means of increasing capacity among school personnel to provide school-based supports to students with ASD. Among non-pilot Ontario school boards, there was consensus that online training is a convenient and cost-effective way of training a large number of school personnel, but many felt that in-person training is more effective for many of the concepts that need to be taught. Non-pilot Ontario school board representatives felt that interactive group training, one-on-one training and/or supervised training were much more effective methods for ensuring ABA skills are understood and correctly implemented.

School boards agreed that school staff require ongoing training to build the skills and experience they need to work with students with exceptionalities, including ASD. As in Year 1, seven Project Coordinators and Superintendents in Year 2 reported that interest in the Geneva online training exceeded the number of spaces available. One school board reported that over 100 staff members were interested in completing the course, but they could accept only 25 as a result of pilot funding parameters. Results of both the quantitative and qualitative research indicate that the training should be offered not only to EAs but to other staff; specifically, teachers. A total of 85% of school personnel who participated in the Year 1 online survey agreed that others should be invited to

participate in the training and among this group, 88% suggested that Special Education teachers should be invited to receive the training and 48% thought that classroom teachers should be invited. In addition, teachers, Principals and Project Coordinators who participated in the qualitative interviews in Year 1 and 2 expressed interest in the online learning and noted teachers and additional school staff such as librarians, French teachers and music teachers would benefit from taking the Geneva Centre training.

*“They love it. They absolutely love it. It’s been fantastic for our SSPs. I think we only had space for 15 but I think we had over 40 applications. So there’s a huge amount of interest in that course.” - Superintendent*

## 5.2 Feasibility and Sustainability of the Geneva online training and PLC

If online training were made more widely available to EAs across the province, the funding required from the Ministry would considerably increase unless the Ministry sourced training through the public sector (e.g., universities or colleges), which could also be tied to research. Additional funds would also be required to cover the costs associated with developing and implementing PLC opportunities for EAs, and to cover the 40 hours of release time for EAs and support staff to participate in the Geneva online training course as outlined in the Transfer Payment Agreement<sup>12</sup>. Offering the training to additional roles within the school board would further increase the amount of funding required from the Ministry to cover costs associated with the online training.

The most significant challenge faced by school boards would be finding supply staff to cover training participants’ time out of the classroom. All school board representatives reported this as a considerable challenge of expanding the training to include a greater number of staff. Principals noted that this challenge already exists within schools outside of the pilot.

*No, everyone that’s taken the course has been really happy with that material. I know lots of people, lots of EAs, wish that they could participate as well, so maybe not a different opportunity but more access to that opportunity. – Project Coordinator*

<sup>12</sup> Ontario Transfer Payment Agreement between the Minister of Education (the “Province”) and District School Board. Autism Pilot Project, 2017-18 TP Agreement.

## SECTION 6: KEY FINDINGS: BCBA OR EQUIVALENT

### Introduction to Section

Results in this section answer the evaluation question, “To what extent has the school board hired BCBA/BCBA equivalent component been effective in helping to achieve the intended outcomes of the pilot?”

#### 6.1 Extent to which BCBA or Equivalent Role (as Currently Performed) is Essential to the Program

Year 1 findings suggested that the BCBA/equivalent provides significant support to EAs and contributes to the success of the program. Although perceptions of the extent to which the BCBA/equivalent provided effective supports was assessed in Year 1, the extent to which their role could be fulfilled by someone without their qualifications and expertise was not explored. In addition, the extent to which their role could be performed in a more cost effective manner was not addressed in Year 1. To explore these areas in Year 2, Malatest developed the following evaluation question which will be addressed in the following subsection:

- Is the BCBA/equivalent perceived as essential to the success of the program?
- Could the BCBA/equivalent perform any tasks in a more cost effective manner?
- Could the role of the BCBA/equivalent be expanded?
- Could any/all of the BCBA/equivalent’s activities be conducted by someone with less expertise?
- Can the current role of the BCBA/equivalent be sustained province-wide?

### Key Findings

**In both Year 1 and Year 2, Project Coordinators and Principals participating in the pilot felt that having a BCBA or equivalent was a significant advantage due to the high and growing population of students with ASD in their school boards.** The BCBA or equivalent’s familiarity with ABA practices and ASD was identified as a key benefit. **The majority (10 of 11) of Project Coordinators and Principals reported that BCBA or equivalents are “crucial” to providing effective supports to both ASD students and school staff.** Survey responses also reflected this, as 84% of EAs agreed (i.e., rating of 7 or greater on a scale of 1 to 10) that the BCBA or equivalent is critical to the success of the pilot. Most Superintendents and Principals noted that even if the pilot does not continue, they are looking for ways to continue the role of the BCBA or equivalents in the school board, and are seeking to hire more BCBA in the future. The majority of pilot schools’ Superintendents and Principals are currently working with their school board to secure funding for the position.

*I cannot emphasize enough how integral someone with those qualifications is to a part of a school team. You could not have solely a therapist without the partnership and collaboration of what happens in a school, because they are very different models. A child who is receiving IBI treatment and therapy from a BCBA that does not happen in our system even though there may be some direct support for a child, the BCBA and the ASD they are modeling for their school teams to take over and deliver strategies and behavioral assessment. So the expertise that is outside of an educational component – is completely invaluable, absolutely essential. Our BCBA has different knowledge and it’s the complementary together that really make it work and support children and staff. –*

### *Superintendent*

**BCBAs or equivalents brought expert understanding of ABA Principals to the Geneva Online training and PLCs.** School boards felt that their contributions to the Geneva online training and PLCs would be difficult to replicate through another role, such as the Project Coordinator. Six Project Coordinators, Principals and Superintendents reported that BCBAs or equivalents were able to bring the benefits of the therapeutic setting in the external service providers to the school setting, as their familiarity with both allowed the BCBAs or equivalents to act as a liaison between the teams in order to identify appropriate solutions for the student. These BCBAs or equivalents were familiar with the students accessing ABA therapy in the dedicated space and how to transfer skills learned outside the clinical setting into the school setting. However, it was reported that not all BCBAs or equivalents were familiar with the school setting and in these cases, the Project Coordinator could help the BCBAs or equivalents understand school policies and protocols (discussed in the next section). One school board highlighted that the standards to which BCBAs or equivalents adhere are important for finding appropriate solutions to situations with students. For example, the BCBA or equivalent promotes reinforcement methods instead of punitive methods, such as punishing language or keeping students in for recess. Instead, the BCBAs or equivalents are able to maintain a positive reinforcing approach with students.

*And sometimes those BCBAs don't understand what a school environment may need, and the difference between what can happen in therapy, in a therapeutic environment, to what can happen in a school environment. So, the BCBA or equivalent has been able to help bridge that gap and help to ensure that when this discussion's at the tables from the private therapist who is recommending things, for example, like avoidance for a student, that we can explain how adults can maybe avoid and not respond to behaviours, but it's very difficult in the school environment to have children avoid paying attention to undesirable behaviours. – Project Coordinator*

Year 1 findings suggested that all BCBAs or equivalents with BCBA certification hired specifically for the pilot performed their duties as outlined in the TPA. The BCBAs who were existing employees of their school boards noted that they already performed many duties similar to those listed in the TPA and were able to take on the additional duties of providing support for the online training and working with the Project Coordinator to liaise with external behavior therapists. For the school boards who hired an individual who was not BCBA certified, the BCBA's or equivalent's duties were limited to supporting the Project Coordinator in overseeing the online training and conducting the PLCs. In addition to assisting with online training, BCBAs or equivalents assisted Project Coordinators by providing consultation to school staff, and liaising with school staff, parents and the external behaviour therapists.

The responsibilities of the BCBAs or equivalents increased in Year 2 of the pilot. All BCBAs or equivalents reported that they were responsible for numerous tasks within the scope of the pilot, including: responding to crisis situations with a student; observing student behaviour and creating behaviour plans; collecting and sharing data regarding the student with service providers; and supporting school staff. Detailed responsibilities of the BCBAs or equivalents are outlined in Table 10.

**Table 10: BCBA or Equivalent Detailed Pilot Responsibilities**

Working with school board's Project Coordinator to liaise with external ABA practitioners who utilize the dedicated space
Supporting EAs as they complete the 40 hour ABA training module

Helping to coordinate student transitions to and from dedicated spaces; coordinating with external ABA providers to support better alignment of supports and programs provided in school settings with those provided in dedicated space
Providing school-based behavioural consultation and/or assessment regarding behavioural strategies and interventions for individual students with ASD
Providing ABA professional development for classroom teachers, EAs, special education teachers and Student Services staff to extend their awareness and use of ABA strategies and the effective use of related resources to support students with ASD
Working with school board's Project Coordinator to help build ABA capacity within school boards
Class and school consultations, Connections for Students, delivering workshops throughout the year
I provide professional development to the system, sit on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Peterborough, provide consultations to schools, complete functional behaviour assessment and functional analysis linked to ABA procedures and interventions that are student specific. I am also supporting the RBT training, building of a new school board project to help support the influx of students coming in.
Behavioural consultation and assessments and professional development across the board
ABA referrals (intensive ABA direct support to schools), ABA PD Training & Building Capacity, ASD Pilot - Extension of Dedicated Space, Participation in Department Heads Meetings, BCBA Supervision for staff in After-School Skills Development Program, Supervision/Programming support for After-School Skills Development Program
I provide support and consultation to all children, school teams and outside agencies enrolled in OAP within our School Board (26 children). I also support children in their classrooms who have been diagnosed with ASD but who are not currently receiving services through OAP due to extensive wait lists.
Non-behavioural/ABA program support (logistics)
Collaborate with the school board's BCBA to ensure consistency between supports offered to pilot schools and to other schools supported by the ABA Support Team, including team training and document development
Consultation, PD for the board, multidisciplinary meetings, Case conferences

When asked how the BCBA or equivalent role could be made more efficient, there was consensus among school boards that, although remote or distance based information sharing (e.g., email/teleconference/video conferencing) might be less expensive, BCBAs or equivalents could not perform their role effectively in this manner. School boards noted that it would be difficult to make the BCBA or equivalent position remote due to the observation and in-person consultation services they provide in the school setting.

In Year 1, having a BCBA or equivalent available to school staff was perceived as necessary by non-pilot Ontario school board representatives. Non-pilot Ontario school board representatives reported that they generally deploy BCBAs in an oversight or managerial role. BCBAs in non-pilot boards supervise and train frontline staff. BCBAs are responsible for supporting and overseeing EAs and are a resource to SERTs and other teaching staff as well as training EAs and teachers. In addition, they provide recommendations to front-line staff on how best to work with ASD students in classroom settings. Some non-pilot boards also indicated that they have board-hired BCBAs who can supervise

the work of RBTs and others who implement behavior-analytic interventions. Two Project Coordinators interviewed in Year 2 reported they did not feel BCBA or equivalent credentials were required and reiterated that Behaviour Therapists or equivalents were appropriate substitutes for a BCBA in a school setting. However, many of those who were filing the role of BCBA or equivalent but did not have the BCBA credential felt that even though they had significant experience working with students on the spectrum they could not perform the role as well as someone with the BCBA credential. It should be noted that Behaviour Therapists/equivalents do not have the necessary skills to design or implement programs effectively, and would require BCBA supervision.

While school board representatives felt that administrative tasks could be performed by someone other than the BCBA or equivalent, the BCBA or equivalent themselves did not indicate that they were performing these types of tasks. As Table 10 above illustrates, BCBA or equivalents were involved in tasks that require their expertise such as consultations, program development and professional development. Suggested changes to increase their effectiveness include:

- Provide an opportunity for professional dialogue with other BCBA's;
- Increase the number of BCBA's or equivalents to cover a greater geographical distance between schools; and
- Create an IBI or ABA specific classroom where RBTs could obtain clinical supervision and be assigned to students with ASD in the class supported by the BCBA or equivalent.<sup>13</sup>

BCBA's or equivalents were readily available via text messages, emails and phone calls. School boards used all types of communication to maintain continuous and open communication with the BCBA or equivalent and the student support team members. In Year 1, some EAs reported that they did not have the opportunity to speak directly with the BCBA or equivalent or that they wanted more in person contact with the BCBA or equivalent. This was not observed in Year 2. In Year 2, BCBA's or equivalents had largely taken on more responsibilities within the school and were working with a greater number of school staff to support students, including EAs. In addition, 45% of EAs who responded to the online survey agreed that the communication between themselves and the BCBA or equivalent was effective (i.e., rating of 7 or greater on a scale of 1 to 10).

**Overall, the number of BCBA's or equivalents hired for the pilot increased in Year 2 compared to Year 1** as illustrated in Table 11. In Year 2, five schools boards did not have a BCBA or equivalent or equivalent on staff at the time of reporting: Hamilton-Wentworth DSB, Toronto Catholic DSB, Thunder Bay Catholic DSB, Rainy River DSB, and Northeastern Catholic DSB. **School boards noted that the main challenge around hiring a BCBA or equivalent was the shortage of qualified professionals, the short-term contract and the lower salary they were able to offer in comparison to private sector wages.** The shortage of qualified professionals was especially challenging for

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<sup>13</sup> St.Amant is a training facility that provides supervision to those who completed their course work or who are working towards completing their bachelor, Masters, and doctoral level course work. BCBA's and the Lead Autism Consultants (BCBA-Ds) provide supervision and training to the Autism Consultants who are working towards their board certification. Achieving BCBA certification is a job requirement for the Autism Consultant role; however, there is a shortage of BCBA's in the province so St.Amant also provides training and supervision to meet that need. No certification is received in connection with the in-house training provided to the role of Autism Tutor (note that this role is not associated with school-age service delivery). Autism Tutors work in the Early Learning Program and are only required to have a high school education. St.Amant provides three weeks of intensive training including orientation, in-house behavioural training, and hands-on training. Autism Tutors are provided with ongoing supervision and monthly overlaps from a Senior Tutor to ensure their professional development continues within their role. (Year 1 School Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder Final Report, R.A. Malatest & Associates, 2018)

Francophone school boards due to the additional requirement that they be fluent in French. Similar challenges to hiring a BCBA or equivalent were noted by Superintendents and Principals in Year 2 in school boards who experienced challenges recruiting a qualified individual.

**Table 11: BCBA or Equivalents across 18 Pilot Schools**

Year 1	Year 2
8 BCBA or equivalents	13 BCBA or equivalents

In Year 2, findings suggest that Northern schools had more difficulties recruiting for the BCBA or equivalent position as there are very few individuals with BCBA credentials in northern regions. When asked if offering a full-time position would increase the likelihood of recruiting a certified BCBA, respondents believed it was the geography that made recruitment difficult, not the position itself. Northeastern Catholic DSB obtained permission to reallocate funding intended to hire one full-time BCBA or equivalent for the purposes of the pilot to, instead, hire two part-time BCBA who are currently working as CBAs full-time outside the school board. They were hired on contract to complete the 10 hours of the Geneva online course with EAs. Thunder Bay Catholic DSB and Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB noted they have reposted for the position.

School boards did not comment on the cost-effectiveness of BCBA or equivalents but, as previously noted in Section 5.2, most stressed how “crucial” BCBA or equivalents are to supporting students and school staff within the school setting.

*I mean I work in an office that's not generally a good news office and it was a great support to be able to call her (BCBA or equivalent) up and say, "I need you to get out to this situation and figure out what our next best steps might be," using her expertise and her methodological approach to determining functions of behaviour and developing strategies to fade or extinguish that behaviour. She went into some of the most challenging situations and was able to bring everybody to a better place: Parents, teachers and most importantly, the student. – Superintendent*

Principals and Superintendents indicated that a BCBA or an equivalent behaviour therapist was needed in schools (note that the two roles are not equivalent in terms of qualifications, skills or expertise). **Sixteen of the eighteen pilot school board representatives indicated that the BCBA/equivalent was valuable to students and staff, and could not be conducted by an individual in a different role.** According to respondents, BCBA or equivalent behaviour therapists bring ABA and ASD specific expertise that no other position could fulfill. As previously discussed, school boards are looking for ways to continue hiring BCBA, even if the pilot funding does not continue, to provide additional support to students and school staff.

Representatives in jurisdictions outside Ontario agreed that having an individual with BCBA qualification is a best practice. However, all representatives acknowledged that the demand for BCBA outstrips the supply. Other jurisdictions are using training to increase the capacity of school personnel to provide effective supports to students with ASD, but these training programs do not replace the need for a BCBA. BCBA in other jurisdictions typically provide RBT training to cohorts of EAs and other school staff, and provide consultations to school teams, recommendations regarding service plans, advice regarding ways to reduce challenging behaviours, and in some cases, they provide input into the student's IEP.

## 6.2 Feasibility of the BCBA or Equivalent Role

Year 1 and 2 findings suggested that a BCBA or equivalent is perceived as essential to the success of the program. BCBAs or equivalents are an important source of knowledge and experience in ABA practices and ASD for school staff. All but one of the school boards that had a BCBA or equivalent working in the pilot school (13 school boards) noted that there is no other role that could replace the expertise that BCBA or equivalent behaviour therapists bring to the school and students.

### Sustainability

When asked if the BCBA's or equivalent's role could be expanded to include more than one school, most school boards reported that their BCBA or equivalent was already supporting more than one school. BCBAs or equivalents felt they could continue to support multiple schools, but their ability to do this would depend on the number of students with ASD requiring their support and the distance the BCBAs or equivalents would have to travel between schools.

*Well, we have four or five schools participating and it really depends on the EAs who are in the pilot project and the support they need. There's definitely pockets of schools where I feel like I could spend most of my time, but it definitely—I think it's feasible to support multiple schools. – Project Coordinator*

School boards felt there would be two major challenges to expanding the role of the BCBA or equivalent province-wide: lack of funding to hire these individuals and a shortage of certified individuals (BCBAs®, BCBA-Ds™). A few school boards specifically stated that school boards do not currently have the funding to support the ongoing hiring of BCBAs or equivalents. The difficulty of hiring a BCBA certified individual had been a challenge for some school boards, particularly in Northern Ontario, due to the small number of individuals certified as a BCBA or deemed by the school board to have equivalent qualifications.

*I think they can handle multiple schools. I'm not sure—like we have schools with 170 kids and the thought of putting a 1 BCBA into a school like that, while they could be productively used, is not, in my opinion, an efficient use of the resource. But I don't know, like we have superintendencies of about 25 schools. Would it be reasonable to have one BCBA per superintendency? – Superintendent*

## SECTION 7: KEY FINDINGS: FEASIBILITY OF PROVINCE-WIDE ROLLOUT

### Introduction to Section

Results in this section answer the evaluation question, “To what extent is province-wide rollout feasible using the current delivery model?”

#### 7.1 Feasibility of Increased Dedicated Spaces

Year 1 findings suggested that the majority of participating school boards were able to acquire and retrofit space within selected schools in order to provide a dedicated space to adequately meet the users’ needs. However, some schools experienced construction delays and/or delays in delivery of equipment and materials which delayed start times thus reducing the number of days in which the dedicated space was available for use. Four of the participating pilot schools were unable to begin using their dedicated space prior to the data collection period. Evidence also suggested that the dedicated spaces were underutilized with only one student accessing the dedicated space in approximately half of the 11 pilot schools. Although some schools had only one space available within their pilot school, some school Principals reported that additional rooms were also available in their school and could be used as another dedicated space for students with ASD.

In Year 2, Malatest explored the extent to which use of the dedicated could be expanded to include more students, and the extent to which schools that did not have a dedicated space in Year 1 could set one up in Year 2. The subsection that follows will address the following evaluation questions:

- Can schools with a dedicated space accommodate more ASD students?
- Can schools that do not currently have a dedicated space set up a dedicated space?

#### Key Findings

**All school boards noted that a dedicated space could not be added to all/a high number of schools in the board because appropriate spaces are simply not available. However, school boards’ Superintendents were keen to find spaces in the schools in their board, even if the space was not a classroom.**

**Table 12: Available space to expand dedicated spaces into additional schools**

	Toronto DSB	Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB	Toronto Catholic DSB	St.Clair Catholic DSB	Ottawa-Carleton DSB	Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB	Thunder Bay Catholic DSB	Algoma DSB	Hamilton-Wentworth DSB	CSDCEO	CEPEO
Available space to expand dedicated spaces into additional schools	Yes	Yes, approximately 20% of schools	Unsure, lack of spaces	Yes	Yes	Yes, less than 50% of schools	Unsure	Yes	Unsure	Yes	Yes

The limited amount of available space was a concern shared by all pilot schools that do not currently have a dedicated space, especially Thames Valley DSB. However, three of seven pilot school boards without a dedicated space reported that there would be available space in at least some schools in

the board to set one up (see Table 12 and Table 13). If the pilot is rolled out more broadly across the province, it may be important to consider the supply of dedicated spaces available within each school board and balance the demand for the spaces to avoid underutilization. In addition, to ensure that different service providers can access the spaces more quickly, the Ministry could develop an MOU template for school boards. This would reduce the MOU development/negotiation process which can be lengthy.

At the time of reporting, Rainy River DSB had existing agreements in place with external service providers to deliver services in the school, such as ABA therapy, physiotherapy and speech therapy. This agreement was developed because the remote location of the school board and lack of service centers make it difficult for students to access services. The school board noted that it is unnecessary to set up a dedicated space in the schools for provision of therapy since therapy is already taking place in the school. Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) is an approach that a student's parents, teachers and support staff can use to encourage the student to behave in appropriate ways and is used in the natural environments where behaviour occurs, such as a classroom. PBS plans are implemented in the student's natural environment so there is no cost in implementing the plan.<sup>14</sup> Based on PBS, ABA therapy can occur in the classroom or the student's natural environment rather than a specifically designated space, which would avoid the costs associated with retrofitting a specific space for ABA therapy.

*We don't have space in all our building – even if we wanted to put dedicated space in more buildings we would have to ensure that there would be a dedicated space – it needs some kind of space so that is the challenge in our board. – Superintendent*

**Table 13: Pilot schools without dedicated spaces ability to identify a dedicated space**

	Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic DSB	Durham Catholic DSB	Northeastern Catholic DSB	Rainy River DSB	Thames Valley DSB	Wellington Catholic DSB	CS catholique de district des Grandes Rivières
Available space to add dedicated spaces into schools	Yes	Yes	Yes	External service providers already permitted in schools, do not need a dedicated space	Unsure, limited available space	Data not provided	Lack of service providers to set-up dedicated space.

*I just would find it. I am very creative in terms of finding a space. We do have several rooms, like little rooms that are available. There's also areas in my library, I have a classroom this year that unfortunately, one of my kindergartens did not open so, I also have another classroom. I'm pretty lucky. – Principal*

<sup>14</sup> Positive Behaviour Support (PBS): Therapy at a Glance. The Australian Parenting Website. Retrieved from <https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/therapies-guide/pbs>

*Many schools are at capacity, right; they don't necessarily have classrooms. The other thing that becomes a reality is, I can't imagine there would be funding to put designated spaces in every school. I mean, there are a lot of schools in the province of Ontario. So, really, what we would have to look at is probably having a designated space in a school in the different regions of the Board, and the idea of providing transportation to children whose families wanted them to participate in the program to those schools. – Principal of Special Education*

## 7.2 Feasibility of Continuing the Project Coordinator Role

Year 1 findings suggested that advance notice and sufficient time were required to ensure appropriate selection and design of the dedicated space as well as to inform potential participants about the use of the dedicated space and available training. If the pilot were to continue, the role of the Project Coordinator may disappear. Based on this, Malatest developed the following evaluation question for Year 2 which will be answered in the following subsection:

- Are there potential consequences/risks to the elimination of the Project Coordinator roll if the program is rolled out province-wide?

Six of the participating school boards believed that the pilot did require a full time Project Coordinator; while four Superintendents or Principals specified that the BCBA or equivalent or school board level staff member could fulfill the responsibilities assigned to the Project Coordinator role. **However, it was reiterated that anyone who took on the responsibilities of the Project Coordinator would need knowledge and experience with students with ASD in a school setting.** It was noted by a few school boards that the Project Coordinator was important for the initial set up of the project, and if the program expanded, Project Coordinators would be needed to oversee the expansion and implementation in a greater number of schools. One Principal noted that another role would not be able to take on the responsibilities of the Project Coordinator due to union restrictions. The union restricts roles from being taken on by another individual who does not share that same role.

When asked if a different role within the school could fulfill the role of the Project Coordinator, three schools believed it was feasible for someone other than the BCBA or equivalent to take on the responsibilities of the Project Coordinator (e.g., Special Education teacher) but specified that the individual would need to understand ASD and ABA. Four school boards felt their BCBA or equivalent was already working at full capacity. Feedback from school boards suggests that the BCBA or equivalent's ability to take on additional tasks not requiring their expertise (e.g., administrative work) would depend on their workload. Most school boards also felt that asking the BCBA qualified BCBA or equivalent to conduct the administrative tasks of the Project Coordinator would be an inefficient and ineffective use of their expertise.

**It was generally felt that the workload carried by the Project Coordinator was significant due to the logistics of scheduling and coordinating all of the service providers accessing the space and all of the students accessing the space** (the amount of time Project Coordinators spent on the responsibilities outlined in the 2017-2018 TPA is detailed in Table 14, below). The magnitude of this work would increase exponentially if the pilot were rolled out more broadly across the province. Principals and Superintendents reported that they would not be able to take on the responsibilities of the Project Coordinator as their workload is already heavy, and others who believed the Project Coordinator role should continue felt that existing school staff already carry too heavy a workload to take on the work of the Project Coordinator.

*You definitely need an expert or someone who has some background in this field to coordinate and*

*also to train the teachers and the EAs. –Principal*

*Well, she (BCBAs or equivalent) could take it on (Project Coordinator responsibilities). It would mean less support directly for kids and less utilization of her highly skilled knowledge and experience. So, while she could, I think it's an expensive person to pay to do some of the administrative tasks that the ABA coordinator could be doing, in terms of coordinating schedules and organizing some of the things on a district level. So, my preference would be to keep both, in that I don't think I need a master's level person tracking, or managing registrations for RBT training. – Superintendent*

*No, I don't. There are way too many meetings, there's too much monitoring, there's too much back and forth between the school and the service provider, and no. You need someone to liaise and to facilitate all of that. It's way too much. And you know what, the special education teachers right now are absolutely overwhelmed with students on the spectrum but also not on the spectrum. They're overwhelmed with mental health issues and you know, safety plans and violent incident reports. And no. I would really, really be hesitant to put that on the plate of somebody else. - Superintendent*

**Table 14: Time Spent on Responsibilities by Project Coordinators**

	Toronto DSB	Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB	Toronto Catholic DSB	St.Clair Catholic DSB	Ottawa-Carleton DSB	Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB	Thunder Bay Catholic DSB	CEPEO	CSDECO
Oversee the dedicated space	Varies, overseeing multiple locations	2 hours/week	1.5 days /week	2.5 days/week	Daily, sometimes full days	Varies	N/A	2 days since my arrival	1 hour/week
Coordinate schedules of external ABA practitioners	N/A	1 hour/week	2 hours /month as required	30 minutes per week	1 day to several days per month	Ongoing, up to 3-4 times/week	Ongoing daily	Has not started	Completed at beginning of year
Support the development of the student's transition plan between the dedicated space and classroom	N/A	1 hour/week	2 hours /month as required	.5 days per week	Continual	varies	N/A	Has not started	2 hours/week
Liaise with school principal/parents/ABA service providers	Varies as we are running pilot in multiple locations	3 hours/week	.5 day /week	1 day per week	Continual, can be weekly	On-going (one hour per week for each student)	Ongoing daily	Sporadic discussions	2 hours/week
Coordinate EA training and substitute where needed	15 plus days	3 hours/week	1 day /week	1 day per week	Few times per month	3 hours weeknights, 7.5 hour weekends	PLC's, school support weekly	15 minutes per day	2 hours/week
Work with BCBA to facilitate PLC	6 full days presenting, 4-5 days	Daily- I am lead	N/A	1 day per week	As needed	2-5 hours	Not present!	Weekly discus-	42 hours/year

	creating PLC, 3-4 days prepping for PLC						y	sions	
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**Table 15: Additional Project Coordinator Responsibilities**

School board	Other responsibilities	Time spent on activity per specified length
Toronto DSB	Running computer labs for EAs to complete the Geneva online training modules Ordering equipment and supplies, managing supply costs Room bookings Filling out ministry reports and other reports for our board Liaising with other school board Pilot Project Coordinators	16 days Varies Varies 6 plus days Varies
Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB	Supply orders Technology needs	1 hour 1 hour
Toronto Catholic DSB	RBT Training Sessions RBT Training Sessions (Planning/Preparation) Professional Learning Communities Professional Learning Communities (Planning/Preparation) Initial Set-Up of Dedicated Space (ordering materials, furniture, coordinating with facilities)	24 days 1 day/week 9 days 1 day/week 10 days
St. Clair Catholic DSB	Program development and data collection	.5 days per week
	Program implementation, modeling and classroom support	.5 days per week
Ottawa-Carleton DSB	Follow up support in the classroom for Trained EA's	.5 days per week
	ASD Training and awareness for school teams	.25 days per week
	Sourcing/purchasing items for dedicated space	2 days a few times per year
	Representative for board at Regional ABA meetings/Community liaison meetings	1- 2 days per month
	ABA training/resource development for school staff throughout the district	5 days per month
	New initiatives/pilot projects After schools skills pilot project-training and support	1-2 days per month 2-3 days per month to 2-3 days per week
Thunder Bay Catholic DSB	Support and Consultation to ASD Team/senior staff	Daily
	ASD Team database creation/management	monthly
	Autism Awareness Initiatives across the District	4 days per month
	Communications with service providers to establish a Memorandum of Understanding	Not provided
	Commission material for the local organization Discussion with the service management about the project	
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB	Supervise EA Training Module	4 Sessions of 3 hours, 4 Sessions of 7.5 hours
	Supervise Catholic PLC	1 session of 3 hours, 1 session of 7.5 hours
	Complete narrative reports for the Ministry of Educ.	15 hours per week

	<p>Complete the Expenditure Statement Claim for the Ministry of Educ Submit work hours of EAs taking the training to finance dept.</p> <p>With the BCBA and other ABA Resource Teacher, we run a social skills program for 2 student groups when the dedicated space is not in use Prepare lessons and materials needed for our social skills groups</p>	<p>20-30 hours per report 30 minutes after each training session 80 minutes 2 times per week 2 hours per week</p>
CSDECO	<p>Provide the criminal history of employees of the external agency that provides services to the CSDCEO Health and safety training for employees of the external agency Prepare and reconcile the budget Fix the memoranda of understanding (English version versus French version) Preparation of memos/schedule for CAP (x3 CAP) Communication with principal CAP preparation: CAP schedule, room booking, CAP room preparation, meals and snacks, materials, training package, questionnaire development and survey, Google layout review, translation and document verification, drafting of CAP reports Revision of documents for the project Follow-up communication with training participants (email) Communication with the ministry Develop a list with the students' names and contact information and contact them by phone to obtain the following information: is the student on the waiting list, if he is not on the list? Waiting list, provide information to parents to register. Consent Form: to be completed for each student and family to give permission to contact POSA (for the waiting list), Write an explanatory letter to families. Report writing for the ministry</p>	<p>5 hours/year  5 hours/year 30 hours/year 20 hours/year  14 hours/year  130 hours/year  25 hours/year 8 hours/year 8 hours/year 180 hours/year  20 hours/year</p>

## SECTION 8: RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on findings from Year 1 and Year 2 of the evaluation. Recommendations pertain to the perceived value of each component of the pilot and consider the implications if that component are expanded into more school boards across the province. They are listed in no specific order of priority.

1. Implement a slow, targeted provincial roll out of the program

Expansion of the pilot program should be slow and targeted to schools with an appropriately sized or needs-appropriate population of students with ASD that are currently or will be receiving ABA services. Rolling the program out slowly may allow schools time to find and prepare an appropriate dedicated space, having staff complete the Geneva online course or alternative ABA or ASD courses, MOUs to be developed and finalized, and build partnerships between service providers and school boards. This approach may allow for greater efficiency in funding schools that have a need for a greater amount of training or capital improvements, avoid delays due to MOU negotiations, miscommunication between school boards and service providers and miscommunication among school staff regarding the program, as experienced by some schools in Year 1.

2. “The dedicated spaces should be maintained but Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) training should be considered – particularly for schools without space available”

The evaluation revealed that the dedicated space is an appropriate area for students to receive ABA services; however as discussed in Section 7.1, ABA therapy does not require a designated space to be delivered affectively as ABA therapy and PBS can be effectively applied in a students’ natural environment such as a classroom. Schools are increasing the number of students accessing the space and allowing simultaneous access where appropriate. Continuing to increase the number of students accessing the space and seeking opportunities for students to access the space at the same time would increase the capacity at which the space is used. Project Coordinators and BCBAs or equivalents would be able to support increasing the number of students accessing the space as they are familiar with the students and their needs. Note that 4 out of 11 schools did not require construction or retrofits so this budget could be reallocated to other things (e.g., funding for more staff to participate in the online training). If rolled out more broadly, schools that already have an appropriate space available should be included so that funds are not required to set up the dedicated space. Additionally, an implication of expanding the space may include increasing pressure on schools that already have limited available space by requesting an empty space such as a classroom that may be needed in future as the school population changes.

3. Allocate capital improvement funds only to schools that require it

To ensure funds are utilized efficiently and distributed effectively, consider reviewing the extent to which capital improvements are actually required. If school boards are required to provide a clear rationale for capital improvements or purchases for the dedicated space this may increase cost efficiencies and ensure funds are allocated where they are needed most. Service providers and BCBAs or equivalents may be able to provide insight into where and how funds should be spent.

4. As more schools add dedicated spaces, ongoing monitoring of the extent to which the dedicated spaces are utilized is required to ensure their use is maximized

The utilization of a dedicated space is solely dependent on the number of service providers granted access to the space and the number of students accessing those service providers. Due to the changes in the Ontario Autism Program funding structure, as discussed in Section 3.3, school boards are uncertain of what the consistency and scheduling of the space will be in the 2019/2020 school year. Ongoing monitoring of the spaces will be important to track usage and demand as new funding changes are implemented. When considering which schools to select for a dedicated space, factors from the Year 1 selection process should be considered, including: population of students with ASD; availability of dedicated space within the school; number of students who are on the waitlist or currently receiving ASD services; and the location of the school (centrally located schools were chosen for the pilot as they are more accessible for students and service providers). If the pilot is rolled out more broadly across the province, consider the supply of dedicated spaces available within each school board and balance the demand for the spaces to avoid underutilized dedicated spaces. However, to ensure that the process for selecting the schools that will allow service providers to implement ABA is equitable, the decision should not consider space alone; the needs of students with ASD should also be prioritized.

5. Using an external committee, establish guidelines and standards for service providers accessing the dedicated space

In response to the changes to the Ontario Autism Program funding structure, no service centers/ individuals are private. To vet service providers and ensure quality services are being provided to students in the school environment, a committee of external specialists such as senior BCBA's and other allied professionals (e.g., psychologists who have behaviour analytic training), could help ensure that standards are being met. Guidelines and standards should be developed in collaboration with the committee, BCBA's or equivalents, and school boards to ensure new service providers are properly qualified.

6. Support capacity building of EAs, support staff and teachers through cost-efficient training program

Providing effective supports to ASD students in the school environment is wholly dependent on the abilities of the staff members who provide this support. The evaluation revealed that the Geneva online course builds capacity and exposure to ABA principles among staff who have consistent interactions with students with ASD. Continuing to build capacity and exposure will increase confidence among staff as they work with different students and encounter different behaviours and situations. This does not replace the expertise or knowledge that experts such as BCBA's provide; however, building awareness and a good foundation for staff will increase the amount of supports for students overall. If the pilot is expanded across the province, the number of funded spaces in the course will also expand as more EAs, support staff and teachers from newly added schools enroll in the course. This expansion will require Ministry investment in the Geneva online training (or a similar training) to cover both the cost of the course and staff coverage in the classroom. However, the findings of this evaluation have illustrated that the benefits of increasing the number of staff who receive training are: increased supports for students; a greater awareness of ASD in schools; and increased confidence in staff working with students.

7. Consider expanding training program spaces in current pilot schools and new schools if program is expanded provincially

Interview participants indicated that school boards are seeking to include additional staff, such as classroom teachers, in future years of the Geneva training. To expand the number of

- participants per board requires financial consideration by the Ministry. Each participant currently costs \$500. As discussed in Recommendation 6, if the pilot is expanded, a greater number of staff from new schools will require ABA training through the Geneva online course or alternative courses. Pilot school boards have an increasing demand for spaces in the course to build awareness and capacity in classrooms to support students with ASD. Expanding the course in existing pilot schools and potential new schools will continue this growth.
8. Continue the online training and PLC combination  
School board representatives agreed that the online training and PLC combination is effective in providing participants with material and hands-on opportunities to discuss and explore the material further. EAs, BCBAAs and Project Coordinators agreed that the PLC was an important supplement to the online training. If the pilot is expanded, consider continuing to structure the training as a combination of the Geneva online course and PLCs. This would require continued funding for the Geneva online course enrollment, completion hours and 10 hours for the PLC, per participant. If an alternative training course replaces the Geneva online course, the PLC could continue to compliment the online learning to ensure participants gain a more comprehensive understanding of ABA practices and ABA, thus continuing to build capacity among EAs, support staff and teachers.
  9. Investigate other ABA training programs and costs  
Alternative training programs should be investigated to determine if other mechanisms exist for providing training to a large group of staff at a reduced cost. A comprehensive review of the cost and effectiveness of education and training programs in other jurisdictions could reveal cost efficient alternatives to the Geneva online course. In addition, the Ministry could consider sourcing training through the public sector (e.g., universities or colleges) to reduce costs.
  10. BCBAAs or equivalent should continue supporting the pilot in a full-time capacity  
The majority of school boards considered the BCBA or equivalent to be a “crucial” component of the pilot and supporting students with ASD. Principals and Superintendents believed that the BCBA or equivalent cannot be replicated by another role, as the standards and knowledge are unique to a BCBA. The BCBAAs or equivalents are effectively supporting students and staff in the school environment and school boards see the benefit of continuing the position in schools with students. Expanding the BCBA or equivalent position to a full-time board position would require Ministry funding. The TPA outlines budget for this project would cover the “salary of additional full-time BCBA or equivalent with board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA) certification/individuals working towards BCBA certification/equivalent<sup>15</sup>.” A cost analysis review of the BCBA position would reveal the implications for the Ministry to provide this funding on an ongoing and growing basis if the pilot expands across the province.
  11. Develop strategies to address BCBA shortages in some areas of the province to support BCBA recruitment in school boards to support the pilot

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<sup>15</sup> Ontario Transfer Payment Agreement between the Minister of Education (the “Province”) and District School Board. Autism Pilot Project, 2017-18 TP Agreement.

Hiring BCBAAs can be challenging for some school boards, especially those in the North and Francophone school boards. The importance of BCBAAs as part of the student's support team was noted by many school board representatives; however, there is a shortage of BCBAAs. To address this issue, consider a long-term strategy to increase the number of BCBAAs in provincial school boards through investment in post-secondary education programs, promotion of BCBA programs, and increased offering of ASD specific post-secondary courses for teachers, EAs, and other education specialists.

Increasing the number of ASD specific post-secondary courses for teachers, EAs and other education specialists could increase the knowledge and awareness of ASD and ABA before educators enter a school setting. Building capacity among educators would not rely solely on specialty courses such as the Geneva online course, as educators would already have a background in ASD.

Investment in ABA post-secondary programs, French education, and education and training would also begin building capacity before educators and service providers begin working in a school setting with students. This would build a stronger foundation of individuals educated in ABA Principals, ASD, supporting students in a school setting, and goal setting within the school setting.

Promotion of the BCBA certification may increase awareness and interest in obtaining the certification. The three pathways to BCBA certification can be applied through various degrees, coursework and supervision options<sup>16</sup>. Promoting this in the behaviour analysis, education and psychology programs at post-secondary institutions could increase interest in certification, resulting in a higher number of BCBAAs available to work within school boards. If this was also supported through a partnership with school boards, it may attract students looking for employment after completing the certification. In addition, ABA courses could be made available in Education programs since some students come from an Education background.

#### 12. Develop MOUs for multiple service providers

School boards developed MOUs with service providers which, in most cases, already had an established relationship with the schools. To avoid delays for students who would benefit from accessing the dedicated space, MOUs that are adaptable to different service providers may assist new approved service providers accessing the dedicated space in a timely manner. The Ministry could consider developing a template to facilitate this process.

#### 13. Continue Project Coordinator Role

The interviews revealed that school board Principals, BCBAAs or equivalents and Superintendents consider the Project Coordinator role to be beneficial to the pilot and believe it should continue, especially if the pilot is to expand in future. To eliminate the Project Coordinator role would likely increase the amount of work for the BCBA or equivalent or Principal, both of whom have heavy workloads. The Project Coordinator often works collaboratively with the BCBA or equivalent to bridge the gap between the clinical expertise of the BCBA or equivalent and the school environment. Project Coordinators'

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<sup>16</sup> BCBA Requirements. Behaviour Analyst Certification Board. Retrieved from <https://www.bacb.com/bcba/bcba-requirements/>

responsibilities should be administrative and support the BCBA or equivalent. Where skills exist, the Project Coordinator could assist the BCBA or equivalent in appropriate ways as seen fit by the BCBA or equivalent. The Project Coordinator role should be tailored to each pilot school and to each individual's set of skills.

To continue the Project Coordinator role, funding would require continuation and growth as the pilot expands to more schools. Each new school would require a Project Coordinator. It may be deemed appropriate for one Project Coordinator to oversee multiple schools when the number of students involved in the pilot, number of service providers and complexity of the pilot in a school is considered. This would also be dependent on geographic location as one Project Coordinator may not be able to cover multiple schools which are separated by a larger distance.

14. Monitor direct outcomes of students with the data that staff and service providers are collecting and develop a provincial database of students' progress.

Over half of EAs surveyed for the study reported tracking or recording behaviour of the student(s) they support. BCBAs or equivalents also expressed their familiarity with each student's progress in the pilot through data collection. By utilizing the data reported by school staff and external service providers, direct outcomes of students can be used to develop a provincial database of students' progress as it relates to the pilot. This would assist in monitoring outcomes of the students involved in the pilot if it were to expand across the province, especially as more students would be accessing the dedicated space and receiving in-school ABA therapy.



## APPENDIX A: PILOT SCHOOL BOARDS

Pilot school boards with dedicated spaces:

- Algoma District School Board
- CS de district catholique de L'Est ontarien
- CS des ecoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario
- Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
- Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
- Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
- Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
- St. Clair Catholic District School Board
- Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board
- Toronto Catholic District School Board
- Toronto District School Board

Pilot school boards without dedicated spaces:

- Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board
- CS Catholique de district des Grandes Rivieres
- Durham Catholic District School Board
- Northeastern Catholic District School Board
- Rainy River District School Board
- Thames Valley District School Board
- Wellington Catholic District School Board

Ethics approval received from the following school boards:

- Algoma District School Board
- CS de district catholique de L'Est ontarien
- CS des ecoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario
- Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
- Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
- Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
- Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
- St. Clair Catholic District School Board

- Thames Valley District School Board
- Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board
- Toronto Catholic District School Board
- Toronto District School Board

#### Year 1 Jurisdictional Scan Interviews

##### Jurisdictions Outside of Ontario

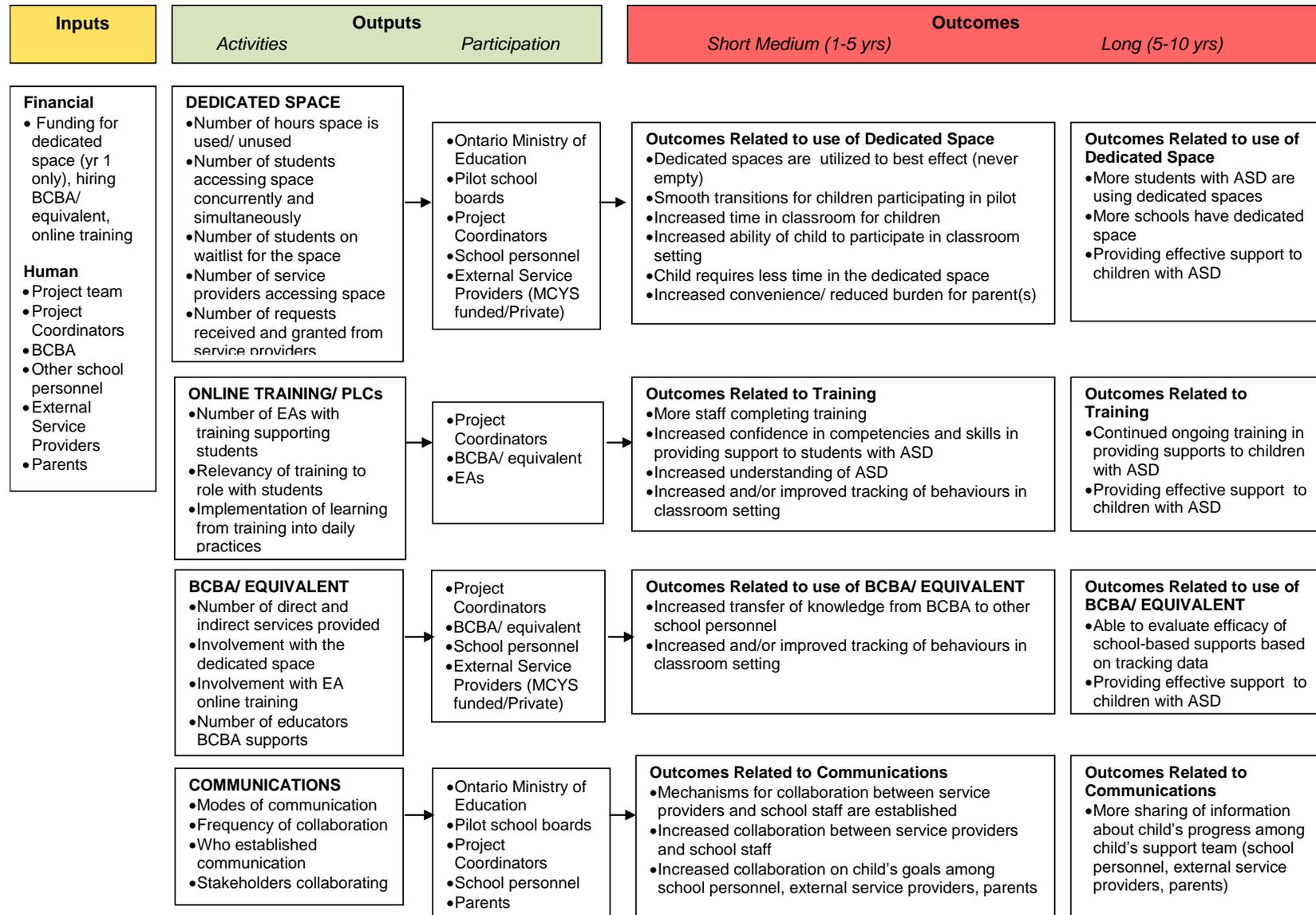
- British Columbia (two representatives of Surrey School District participating in one interview, and a representative of Capilano University who also provides consultative services to school districts participating in another);
- Manitoba (a representative of St. Amant);
- New Brunswick (a representative of the Department of Education); and
- Northern California (a BCBA-D).

##### Non-pilot Ontario School Boards

- Conseil scolaire public du Grand Nord de l'Ontario;
- Grand Erie District School Board;
- Northwest Catholic District School Board;
- Rainbow District School Board;
- York Catholic District School Board; and
- York Region District School Board.

**APPENDIX B: LOGIC MODEL AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

**Pilot to Improve School-Based Supports for Children with ASD Year 2 Logic Model: Pilot and Future Provincial Implementation**



Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Data ID	Indicator	Data Source	Data Collection Instrument & Question #
1. To what extent is the dedicated space improving in-school supports for students with ASD?	Is the dedicated space being utilized all day, every day?	1.1	Number of hours per day and days per week space is in use	Project Coordinator template	Included in PC/principal template
	Is current demand for the space being met?	1.2	Number of students with ASD in the school vs. number of students accessing the space/maximum capacity of the space	Project Coordinator template Principal interviews	Included in PC/principal template Q24 Principal interviews
	Are multiple students using the space simultaneously?	1.3	Number of students accessing the space simultaneously	Project Coordinator template Principal interviews	Included in PC/principal template
	To what extent are therapists from different service providers delivering therapy in the space simultaneously/concurrently?	1.4	Number of different service providers are accessing the space simultaneously or concurrently	Project Coordinator template/interviews Principal interviews BCBA interviews	Included in PC/principal template Q10 BCBA interviews
	Does collocation improve communication/collaboration among members of the student's support team?	1.5	Proportion reporting that collocation improves ability to communicate and collaborate	Project Coordinator interviews Principal interviews BCBA interviews EA online survey	Q22 Principal interviews Q24 BCBA interviews Qstudent4 EA survey

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Data ID	Indicator	Data Source	Data Collection Instrument & Question #
	Are students experiencing reduced transitions?	1.6	Number of transitions per day	EA survey Project Coordinator template/interviews Principal interviews	Included in PC/principal template Qstudent1 EA survey
	Do students have greater attendance in school?	1.7	Number of school days absent	Parent Survey Project Coordinator template/interviews Principal interviews	Q14 parent survey Included in PC/principal template
	Are students more active in the school community?	1.8	Number of extra-curricular activities	Parent Survey	Q15 parent survey
			Number of school activities attended (field trips, assemblies, events)	Parent Survey Project Coordinator template/interviews Principal interviews	Q16 parent survey Included in PC/principal template
	Are parents satisfied that the supports their child(ren) receive while in school have improved as a result of the pilot?	1.9	Parents' perceptions that the supports child(ren) receive while in school have improved as a result of the pilot	Parent Survey	Q1 parent survey
	Are parents experiencing increased convenience/	1.10	Number of hours spent traveling daily before child	Parent Survey	Q10k parent survey

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Data ID	Indicator	Data Source	Data Collection Instrument & Question #
	reduced burden?		involved in program and since child has been using dedicated space		
2. Is the online training/PLC component providing value for money?	Are the Geneva Center online training and PLCs increasing EAs' ability to support students with ASD in the classroom setting?	2.1	Proportion of EAs who have taken the training reporting increased confidence/skills	EA online survey	Q9,10,11 EA survey
			Proportion of EAs who took training in yr 1 reporting retention and use of training in yr 2	EA online survey	Q6 EA survey
			Proportion of EAs who took training assigned to a student with ASD	EA online survey	Q7a,b,c EA survey
			Proportion of EAs who took training implementing learning into daily practices	EA online survey	Q9,10 EA survey
			Proportion of parents reporting that their child is receiving better in-class supports	Parent online survey	
			Proportion of EAs who formally track/record student(s) behaviours	EA online survey	Q15,16a,b,c EA survey

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Data ID	Indicator	Data Source	Data Collection Instrument & Question #
			before and after taking the training		
			Perceptions that training/PLCs has increased EAs understanding of ASD and ability to implement	BCBA interviews	Q12,17 BCBA interview
	Do the Geneva Center online training and PLCs provide more effective training than other ASD PD opportunities?	2.2	Proportion of EAs who have taken other ASD training reporting that Geneva training/PLCs is more relevant and useful to them in their role	EA online survey	Qstudent5, Qstudent6 EA survey
	Do the Geneva Center training and PLCs provide better value for money than other ASD PD opportunities?	2.3	Perceptions that Geneva online training and PLCs offer better value for money than other ASD PD opportunities	BCBA interviews Project Coordinator interviews Principal interviews	
			Evidence Geneva Center online training and PLCs can be delivered more cost effectively than other ASD PD opportunities		Q17b,c Principal interviews

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Data ID	Indicator	Data Source	Data Collection Instrument & Question #
	Is the Geneva online training and PLC delivery model sustainable?	2.4	Perceptions that the locations/times of the online training/PLCs are convenient	EA online survey BCBA interviews Project Coordinator interviews	Q35, Q36 EA survey Q19 BCBA interview
			Evidence of ongoing need/demand for training	Principal interviews	Q19 Principal interview
3. To what extent has the school board hired BCBA/BCBA equivalent component been effective in helping to achieve the intended outcomes of the pilot?	Is the BCBA/equivalent perceived as essential to the success of the program?	3.1	Perceptions that the BCBA/equivalent qualification is critical to the success of the program	EA online survey Project Coordinator interviews Principal interviews School Board Superintendent interviews	Qstudent7 EA survey Q15b Principal interview
	Could any/all of the BCBA/equivalent's activities be conducted by someone with less expertise?	3.2	Extent to which BCBA/equivalent expertise is required for each activity	BCBA interviews Project Coordinator interviews Principal interviews School Board Superintendent interviews	Q4,5 BCBA interview Q15a Principal interview

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Data ID	Indicator	Data Source	Data Collection Instrument & Question #
	Is another individual available to fulfill part/all of the BCBA/equivalent's role?	3.3	Length of time currently spent performing each task	BCBA interviews Project Coordinator interviews	Q5c BCBA interview
			Perceptions that another individual would be available/qualified to conduct tasks	Principal interviews School Board Superintendent interviews	Q15b Principal interview
	Could the BCBA/equivalent perform any tasks in a more cost effective manner?	3.4	Perceptions that tasks could be performed more efficiently (e.g., online/phone vs. in person)	Project Coordinator interviews Principal interviews BCBA interviews	Q25 BCBA interview Q17 Principal interview
	Could the role of the BCBA/equivalent be expanded?	3.5	Perceptions that BCBA/equivalent could fulfill their role at more than one school	Project Coordinator interviews Principal interviews BCBA interviews	Q15c Principal interview
			Perceptions that BCBA/equivalent could perform additional tasks/provide additional supports	School Board Superintendent interviews	Q26,27 BCBA interview
	4. To what extent is province-wide rollout	Can schools with a dedicated space accommodate more	4.1	Proportion reporting that more students can be	Project Coordinator

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Data ID	Indicator	Data Source	Data Collection Instrument & Question #
feasible using the current delivery model?	ASD students?		accommodated in the dedicated space	interviews Principal interviews School Board Superintendent interviews	interview
	Can schools that do not currently have a dedicated space set up a dedicated space?	4.2	Proportion reporting that a dedicated space could be made available	Project Coordinator interviews Principal interviews School Board Superintendent interviews	Q27 Principal interview
	Are there barriers/challenges to securing agreements with external service providers?	4.3	Types of challenges and extent to which each challenge could pose a barrier to province-wide implementation	Project Coordinator interviews Principal interviews School Board Superintendent interviews	Q28a Principal interview
	Are there barriers/challenges to offering the Geneva Center online training/PLCs that should be considered?	4.4	Types of challenges and extent to which each challenge could pose a barrier to province-wide	Project Coordinator interviews Principal interviews School Board	Q29 Principal interview

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Data ID	Indicator	Data Source	Data Collection Instrument & Question #
			implementation	Superintendent interviews	
	Can the current role of the BCBA/equivalent be sustained province-wide?	4.5	Types of challenges and extent to which each challenge could pose a barrier to province-wide implementation	Project Coordinator interviews BCBA interviews School Board Superintendent interviews	Q27 BCBA interview
	Are there potential consequences/risks to the elimination of the Project Coordinator roll if the program is rolled out province-wide?	4.6	Types of challenges and extent to which each challenge could pose a barrier to province-wide implementation	Project Coordinator interviews Principal interviews BCBA interviews School Board Superintendent interviews	Q30 Principal interview Q28,28a BCBA interview



## APPENDIX C: DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

## GENEVA TRAINING FEEDBACK SURVEY

### **Purpose of the Survey:**

Thank you for your participation. You were selected for this survey because you completed the Geneva Centre for Autism (Geneva) Online Training Course during the 2017/2018 or 2018/2019 school year. R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. (Malatest) is conducting research on the second year of the Pilot to Improve School Based Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and would like your feedback about the course to assess the extent to which the course increased your ability to provide support to students with ASD and how the training has impacted your practices with students.

The 40-hour online training was designed to provide training on a set of basic behaviour analytic competencies and skills based on the Registered Behaviour Technician (RBT) Task List which provides internationally recognized standards of best practice for supporting change in behaviour in students with ASD as set forth by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB).

The Ministry of Education has commissioned Malatest to administer this survey which will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

If you do not have time to complete the entire survey, you can save your responses and come back to finish at a later date. The data you have already entered will be saved. **For data security reasons, you will need to enter your secure access code.**

**To access the survey, simply copy this link into your browser or click here:**

autismstudy.malatest.net

If this is your first time visiting the survey, please click below to receive an access code that will allow you to complete the survey in multiple sessions. Please write down your access code so you will have it available when you return to the survey.

If you started the survey earlier and are returning now, please enter the access code you were given previously and then click the enter button

If you don't have an access code, please click here

Enter

=

---

**Your access code is [Insert code].**

Write it out to be able to access your answers in the future.

[Insert code]

**Statement of Confidentiality:**

Enter

All of the information you share will remain anonymous and confidential. Only researchers at Malatest will have access to your answers and responses will be reported to the Ministry of Education only in aggregate. More information about Malatest's privacy policy can be found on our website at <http://www.malatest.com/Privacy.htm>

**Questions:**

If you have any trouble accessing this survey please email [enquiries@malatest.com](mailto:enquiries@malatest.com) or call Malatest toll free at 1-855-688-1134

11. Do you consent to participate in this survey?

Yes [CONTINUE]      No [TERMINATE: Thank you for your time. EXIT TO MALATEST HOME PAGE]

## ABOUT YOU

1. What is your professional title?
  - a. Education Assistant (EA)
  - b. Classroom Teacher
  - c. Special Education Teacher
  - d. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Prefer not to answer **[Skip to Q3]**
  
2. How long have you been a/an **[INSERT Q1 RESPONSE]**?
  - a. Less than one year
  - b. 1 to less than 5 years
  - c. 5 to less than 10 years
  - d. 10 to less than 15 years
  - e. Over 15 years
  - f. Prefer not to answer
  
3. Have you completed a post-secondary program (certificate, diploma or degree)? Select all that apply.
  - a. Early Childhood Education (ECE)
  - b. Child and Youth Worker (CYW)
  - c. Autism and Behavioral Sciences Certificate or similar
  - d. University degree
  - e. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. None **[exclusive]**
  - g. Prefer not to answer **[exclusive]**
  
4. How many students identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) do you work with in the school?
  - a. No students with ASD
  - b. One student
  - c. Two students
  - d. Three or more students
  - e. Prefer not to answer
  
5. When did you take the Geneva Centre for Autism Online Training Course and Professional Learning Community (PLC)? **[Programming: mouse over Professional Learning Community: Professional Learning Community or similar is a component associated with the training that could involve group discussion, learning activities and/or in-class coaching.]** Please select all that apply.
  - a. I completed the training in the 2017/2018 school year **[if selected, can only select 5 c,d,e. Cannot = 5b]**
  - b. I completed the training in the 2018/2019 school year **[if selected, can only select 5 c,d,e. Cannot = 5a]**
  - c. I participated in the PLC in the 2017/2018 school year

- d. I participated in the PLC in the 2018/2019 school year
- e. I have not completed the PLC

Error message: **You cannot select both options 1 and 2 for this question. Please pick the year you completed your PLC training in.**

- f. I have not completed training but I support a student with ASD using the dedicated space **[If selected: SKIP TO Q24] [exclusive]**
- g. Started the online training but decided not to complete it **[exclusive]**
- h. Prefer not to answer

**[If Q5=g, ask:]**

AQtraining5. Why did you not complete the online training? **[max. 500 characters]**

---

a. prefer not to answer

**[If Q5=f OR Q5=g, SKIP TO Q7]**

6. To what extent have you retained the course content this year?

None of the content							All of the content				
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>DK</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>											

7. Has the number of students with ASD you support changed since you started or completed the Geneva Centre for Autism Online Training Course?

- a. No change, I am still with the same student(s) **[If selected, proceed to AQ7c]**
- b. No change in number of student(s), but I have different student(s) **[If selected, proceed to AQ7c]**
- c. Yes, I now support more students with ASD **[If selected, proceed to AQ7a and AQ7b and AQ7c]**
- d. Yes, I now support fewer students with ASD **[If selected, proceed to AQ7a and AQ7b and AQ7c]**
- e. Don't know **[Skip to Q8]**
- f. Prefer not to answer **[Skip to Q8]**

AQ7a: How many students before training: \_\_\_\_\_ **[Allow number, limit of 10]**

AQ7b: How many students after training: \_\_\_\_\_ **[Allow number, limit of 10]**

AQ7c: How many students do you support: \_\_\_\_\_ **[Allow number, limit of 10]**

---

#### **YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF THE ONLINE TRAINING**

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the course material was relevant to the work you do with students with ASD? ("DK" means "don't know.")

Disagree

Agree



I am better able to support the student outside of the classroom  
as a result of the training (i.e. recess, assemblies, school events)....

11. Now that you've started or completed the training, how confident do you feel about your competencies and skills when providing support to students with ASD in a classroom setting? ("DK" means "don't know.")

Not at all confident										Very confident	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK	
<input type="checkbox"/>											

**[SKIP TO Q14 if Q1=B]**

12. Have you shared what you learned during the online training with the student's classroom teacher?
- Yes **[If Q12=YES, skip to Q14]**
  - No **[If Q12= NO, proceed to Q13]**
  - Prefer not to answer **[If selected, skip to Q14]**
13. Why did you not share what you learned during the online training with the student's classroom teacher?
- No opportunity to share
  - Training material was not relevant to the student's needs
  - No interest
- AQ13: Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to answer

14. Do you participate in the student(s) IEP development/review?
- Yes **[Proceed to Q14b]**
  - No **[Skip to Q15]**
  - Don't know **[Skip to Q15]**
  - Prefer not to answer **[Skip to Q15]**

- 14b. Did you contribute your learning from training to the IEP process?
- Yes
  - No
  - Don't know
  - Prefer not to answer

15. Did you formally track/record student(s) behaviours before the training?
- Yes
  - No
  - Don't know
  - Prefer not to answer

16. Are you formally tracking/recording student(s) behaviours after the training?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know
- d. Prefer not to answer

AQ16a. **[If Q16=a]** How are you tracking/recording student(s) behaviours?

\_\_\_\_\_ **[max. 1000 characters]**

- a. Prefer not to answer

16b. **[If Q15=a AND Q16=a]** Has the way in which you track/record behaviour changed?

- a. Yes, it has changed
- b. No change
- c. No change in the way behaviours are tracked/recorded but increased frequency of tracking/recording
- d. Prefer not to answer

AQ16b. Other (please explain): \_\_\_\_\_ **[max. 200 words]**

16c. **[if Q16b=a]** Is this way of tracking/recording behaviour more efficient than the previous tracking method used?

- a. Yes, it is more efficient
- b. No, it is not more efficient
- c. Don't know
- d. Prefer not to answer

#### **YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY (PLC)**

17. Have you participated in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) or received other board support of your online learning?

- a. Yes **[CONTINUE AT Q18]**
- b. No **[SKIP TO Q24]**
- c. Don't know **[CONTINUE AT Q18]**
- d. Prefer not to answer **[SKIP TO Q24]**

18. What was involved in the PLC or board support of your online learning? (select all that apply)

**[Allow for multiple selection]**

- a. Group discussion
- b. Individual work
- c. Case studies
- d. Role playing
- e. Scenarios
- f. Printed material
- g. Videos

- h. In-class coaching
- i. Review of the course material
- j. Don't know
- k. Prefer not to answer

AQ16: Other \_\_\_\_\_

19. How was the PLC or board support of your online learning implemented? Select all that apply.  
**[allow for multiple selection]**

- a. It was a planned component of the ABA online course
- b. It was a planned component with a schedule of activities/learning that was followed
- c. It was a planned component with a schedule of activities/learning that evolved over the course of the sessions to support our learning
- d. It was not a planned component but was implemented to support the online learning  
**[Exclusive]**
- e. Don't know/prefer not to answer **[Exclusive]**

AQ19: Other \_\_\_\_\_

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the PLC material or board support of your online learning was relevant to **your role** working with students with ASD?

Disagree strongly										Agree strongly	DK
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
<input type="checkbox"/>											

21. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding the PLC or board support of your online learning. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement using a 10 point scale where 10 means you agree strongly and 1 means you disagree strongly. ("DK" means "don't know.")

	Disagree strongly										Agree strongly	DK
<b>[RANDOMIZE]</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
The goals of the PLC were clearly explained .....	<input type="checkbox"/>											
The PLC was well organized and structured .....	<input type="checkbox"/>											
The PLC helped to operationalize/practice the learning from the online course .....	<input type="checkbox"/>											
The PLC was an important supplement to the online training .....	<input type="checkbox"/>											
The PLC helped me provide better support to students with ASD....	<input type="checkbox"/>											
The PLC helped me to better understand ABA practices .....	<input type="checkbox"/>											
The PLC helped me to better implement ABA practices with students with ASD.....	<input type="checkbox"/>											
<b>[anchor]</b> Overall, I was satisfied with the PLC.....	<input type="checkbox"/>											

22. [If Q5=c, proceed to Q23] [If Q5=d OR Q5=e, skip to Q24] Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below using a 10 point scale where 10 means you agree strongly and 1 means you disagree strongly. (“DK” means “don’t know.”)

	Disagree strongly										Agree strongly
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK
[RANDOMIZE]											
I am better able to help the student achieve goals outlined in the IEP in the classroom as a result of the PLC .....	<input type="checkbox"/>										
I am better able to support the student in the classroom as a result of the PLC .....	<input type="checkbox"/>										
I am better able to support the student outside of the classroom as a result of the PLC (i.e. recess, assemblies, school events) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>										

23. Overall, how important was the PLC or board support of your online learning in increasing your skills and competencies in supporting students with autism in a classroom setting? (“DK” represents “don’t know.”)

Not at all important								Extremely important		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK
<input type="checkbox"/>										

#### STUDENT TRANSITION BETWEEN CLASSROOM AND DEDICATED SPACE

24. Do you currently assist a student or multiple students with transitioning between the classroom and dedicated space?
- Yes [If YES, continue at Q25]
  - No [If NO, skip to Q27]
  - Prefer not to answer [If PREFER NOT TO ANSWER, skip to Q27]
25. How many students do you assist with transitioning between the classroom and dedicated space?
- One student
  - Two students
  - Three students or more
  - Prefer not to answer [Skip to Q27]
26. Did the student or students you assist in transitioning to the dedicated space also use the dedicated space?
- Yes
  - No
  - Don’t know
  - Prefer not to answer

27. Does the student or students access the space on a regular basis or regular schedule (i.e. same time of day, same days of the week)?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

28. Have you seen any changes in how the student(s) transitions between the classroom and dedicated space?

**[Allow selection only, no text or numbers]**

	Yes, I have seen changes	No, I have not seen changes	Don't know/prefer not to answer
Student 1			
Student 2 [display only if Q25=b OR d]			
Student 3 [display only if Q25=c or d]			
Student 4 [display only if Q25=c OR d]			
Student 5 [display only if Q25=c OR d]			

Qstudent01. How many transitions does the student(s) make between the dedicated space and classroom per day? **[allow numbers 0-10. Allow student 2-5 to have no answer]**

	Number of transitions	Don't know/prefer not to answer
Student 1		
Student 2 [display only if Q25=b OR d]		
Student 3 [display only if Q25=c OR d]		

Student 4 [display only if Q25=c OR d]		
Student 5 [display only if Q25=c OR d]		

Qstudent02. Have you seen any changes in the student(s) behaviour in the classroom since beginning therapy in school?

- Yes, I have seen a change in behavior
- No, I have not seen any changes in behavior
- I have seen changes in behavior for one student but not other students I work with
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

**[If Qstudent2=a OR Qstudent2=c]**

Qstudent03. What types of behaviour changes have you seen in student(s) in the classroom?

**[Allow a check box.]**

	I have seen positive changes in behaviours	I have seen negative changes in behaviours	Don't know/prefer not to answer <b>[exclusive]</b>
Student 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 2 [display only if Q25=b]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 3 [display only if Q25=c]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 4 [display only if Q25=c]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 5 [display only if Q25=c]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## COMMUNICATION ABOUT THE PILOT

29. Are there processes in place to facilitate communication between yourself and the school-board hired BCBA?

- a. Yes [**Proceed to Q30**]
- b. No [**Skip to Q34a**]
- c. Don't know [**Proceed to Q30**]
- d. Prefer not to answer [**Proceed to Q30**]

30. How do you typically communicate? (select all that apply) [**Allow for multiple selection**]

- a. Email
- b. Scheduled meetings
- c. Informal in-person discussion
- d. Telephone
- e. Prefer not to answer

AQ30: Other \_\_\_\_\_

31. How often do you typically communicate with the BCBA?

- a. Daily
- b. Weekly
- c. Monthly
- d. Once per term
- e. Once per school year
- f. Never
- g. Prefer not to answer

32. To what extent do you agree or disagree that communication between yourself and the BCBA is effective? ("DK" means "don't know.")

Disagree strongly										Agree strongly	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK	
<input type="checkbox"/>											

33. How was communication established? Select all that apply. [**allow for multiple selection**]

- a. I approached the Project Coordinator
- b. I approached the BCBA
- c. I approached colleagues involved
- d. The project coordinator approached me
- e. The BCBA approached me
- f. A colleague approached me

AQ33: Other \_\_\_\_\_

- g. Don't know [**exclusive**]
- h. Prefer Not to answer [**exclusive**]

34 Who led the online training and PLCs?

- a. BCBA
- b. Project Coordinator
- c. Prefer not to answer
- d. Don't know

AQ34. Other \_\_\_\_\_

34a How often did you seek additional guidance and support (beyond what was offered during the PLCs) of the **[enter response from Q34a]** in order to better understand the online training?

- a. Daily
- b. Weekly
- c. Monthly
- d. Once per term
- e. Once per school year
- f. Never
- g. Prefer not to answer

34b **[If Q4 ≠ a]** How often did you seek advice from the **[enter response from Q34a]** so you could better support the student(s) with ASD that you work with in the school?

- a. Daily
- b. Weekly
- c. Monthly
- d. Once per term
- e. Once per school year
- f. Never
- g. Prefer not to answer

34c **[If Q4 ≠ a]** How important has the **[enter response from Q34a]** been in increasing your ability to provide effective support to the student(s) with ASD you work with in the school?

- a. Extremely important
- b. Important
- c. Somewhat important
- d. Not very important
- e. Not important at all
- f. Prefer not to answer

Qstudent04. To what extent do you agree or disagree that collocation with the service providers and school staff involved in the pilot improves the ability to communicate and collaborate? ("DK" means "don't know.")

Disagree strongly					Agree strongly					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK
<input type="checkbox"/>										

### CLOSING COMMENTS

35. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the **location** of the online training and PLC is convenient? (“DK” means “don’t know.”)

Disagree strongly					Agree strongly					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK
<input type="checkbox"/>										

36. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the **times** of the online training and PLC are convenient? (“DK” means “don’t know.”)

Disagree strongly					Agree strongly					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK
<input type="checkbox"/>										

a. Prefer not to answer

Qstudent05: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the training provided you with unique learning on ABA practices you had not learned previous to completing the course?

Strongly disagree					Strongly agree					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK
<input type="checkbox"/>										

a. Prefer not to answer

Qstudent06: To what extent do you agree or disagree that you could have learned the same ABA practices by taking different ABA or ASD related training?

- a. Agree, I could have learned the same ABA practices from taking a different ABA or ASD related course
- b. Somewhat agree, I may have learned the same ABA practices from taking a different ABA or ASD related course
- c. Disagree, I could **not** have learned the same ABA practices from taking a different ABA or ASD related course
- d. Don’t know
- e. Prefer not to answer

Qstudent07: To what extent do you agree or disagree that BCBA/equivalent is critical to the success of the pilot? (“DK” means “don’t know.”)

Disagree strongly					Agree strongly					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK
<input type="checkbox"/>										

a. Prefer not to answer

37. Can you share your suggestions on how the online training and/or the Professional Learning Community could be improved to help you support students with ASD in the classroom?

a. Please respond here: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Prefer not to answer

**[END OF SURVEY]** Thank you for taking the time to participate in the survey! **[EXIT TO MALATEST WEBSITE]**

## PARENT SURVEY

### **Purpose of the Survey:**

Thank you for your participation. The Ontario Ministry of Education is evaluating the “**Pilot to Improve School-Based Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder**”. R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd. (Malatest), a research firm, has been hired to complete this evaluation, and identify the impacts the evaluation has had on students and school staff. As part of this evaluation, Malatest is inviting you to participate in a survey. We want to better understand the perspectives of parents and the effect of the pilot on students in the classroom.

The Ministry of Education has commissioned Malatest to administer this survey which will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

If you do not have time to complete the entire survey, you can save your responses and come back to finish at a later date. The data you have already entered will be saved. **For data security reasons, you will need to enter your secure access code.**

**To access the survey, simply copy this link into your browser or click here:**

autismstudy.malatest.net

If this is your first time visiting the survey, please click below to receive an access code that will allow you to complete the survey in multiple sessions. Please write down your access code so you will have it available when you return to the survey.

If you started the survey earlier and are returning now, please enter the access code you were given previously and then click the enter button

If you don't have an access code, please click here

Enter

Your access code is [Insert code].

Write it out to be able to access your answers in the future.

[Insert code]

Enter

**Statement of Confidentiality:**

All of the information you share will remain anonymous and confidential. Only researchers at Malatest will have access to your answers and responses will be reported to the Ministry of Education only in aggregate. More information about Malatest's privacy policy can be found on our website at <http://www.malatest.com/Privacy.htm>

**Questions:**

If you have any trouble accessing this survey please email [enquiries@malatest.com](mailto:enquiries@malatest.com) or call Malatest toll free at 1-855-688-1133

11. Do you consent to participate in this survey?

Yes [CONTINUE]      No [TERMINATE: Thank you for your time. EXIT TO MALATEST HOME PAGE]

### PRE-PILOT RELATED QUESTIONS

34. Do you have more than one child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) participating in the pilot?

- a. Yes [Proceed to Q1a]
- b. No, only one child [Skip to Q4]
- c. Prefer not to answer [Skip to Q4]

1a. How many?

- a. Two children [Skip to Q2]
- b. Three children [Skip to Q2]
- c. Prefer not to answer [Skip to Q3]

35. How old are your children who are participating in the pilot?

AQ2a. Enter age of one child: \_\_\_\_\_ [allow number 0-18]

AQ2b. Enter age of one child: \_\_\_\_\_ [allow number 0-18] [display only if 1a) a is selected]

AQ2c. Enter age of one child: \_\_\_\_\_ [allow number 0-18] [display only if 1a) b is selected]

- a. Prefer not to answer

36. At what age were your children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)? **[Numbers entered should not be greater than responses in Q2] [Age check error message: You have indicated that one of your children was older at time of diagnosis than their age stated in the previous question. Please revise one of your answers ]**

AQ3a. Age diagnosed: \_\_\_\_\_ [allow number 0-18]

AQ3b. Age diagnosed: \_\_\_\_\_ [allow number 0-18] [display only if 1a) a is selected]

AQ3c. Age diagnosed: \_\_\_\_\_ [allow number 0-18] [display only if 1a) b is selected]

- a. Prefer not to answer

**[SKIP TO Q6]**

37. How old is your child?

AQ4. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ [Allow numbers only 0-18]

- a. Prefer not to answer

38. At what age was your child diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

AQ5. Age diagnosed: \_\_\_\_\_ [allow number 0-18] **[Age check error message: You have indicated that one of your children was older at time of diagnosis than their age stated in the previous question. Please revise one of your answers]**

- a. Prefer not to answer

39. My child or children receive... **[select all that apply]**

- a. Government funded ABA services
- b. Privately purchased services
- c. Prefer not to answer **[Skip to Q10]**

40. How long has your child(ren) been receiving external ABA services?

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3
a. One year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Two years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Three years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Four years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Five or more years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Don't know/prefer not to answer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

41. How many hours per week does your child(ren) receive Government funded ABA services? **[0-168 hours with two decimal places] [ASK ONLY IF Q6=A]**

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3
Number of hours:			

- a. My child/children do not receive Government funded ABA services
- b. Don't know/prefer not to answer **[skip to AQ10d]**

42. How many hours per week does your child(ren) receive privately purchased ABA services? **[0-168 hours with two decimal places] [ASK ONLY IF Q6=B]**

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3
Number of hours:			

- a. My child/children do not receive privately purchased ABA services
- b. Don't know/prefer not to answer **[skip to AQ10d]**

43. How many hours of these services are on-site (in school)? **[[4 characters max, numbers only] [response cannot be greater than Q8 and Q9 combined] [Number error message: “Please review numbers entered for the number of government funded hours and the number of privately purchased services. The answer to the number of hours on-site (in-school) cannot exceed the total number of government funded and privately funded hours combined]**

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3
Number of hours:			

- a. Don't know/prefer not to answer **[skip to AQ10d]**

44. AQ10b. At service centre: **[[4 characters max, numbers only] [response cannot be greater than Q8 and Q9 combined]**

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3
Number of hours:			

- a. Don't know/prefer not to answer **[skip to AQ10d]**

45. AQ10c. At home: **[[4 characters max, numbers only] [response cannot be greater than Q8 and Q9 combined]**

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3
Number of hours:			

- a. Don't know/prefer not to answer

AQ10d. How does your child/children get to the service centre or home to receive therapy? Select all that apply. **[Allow multiple selection]**

- Parent picks them up
- School arranges transport
- Therapy occurs at service centre/home outside of school hours
- External community service transports them
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

AQ10e. How long does it take for your child to be transported from school to the service center/home for therapy? (Just your best guess is fine)

- Less than 15 minutes
- 15 minutes to less than 30 minutes
- 30 minutes to less than 1 hour

- d. 1 hour
- e. Over an hour
- f. Don't know/prefer not to answer

AQ10f\_A. Approximately how far is the service center/your home from your child's/children's school? (Please answer in kilometers, your best guess is fine).

AQ10g\_B. Kilometers from service centre to school: \_\_\_\_\_ **Allow numbers, 0-300]**

- a. Not applicable
- b. prefer not to answer

AQ10h. Kilometers from home to school: \_\_\_\_\_ **[10 characters max, numbers ]**

- a. Not applicable
- b. Don't know/prefer not to answer

Q10i. How many times per day does your child(ren) transition between home and school to receive ABA therapy?

- a. Twice per day (to school and then back home)
- b. Four times per day (to school, home, returned to school, back home)
- c. More than four times per day
- d. Not applicable, my child(ren) does not receive ABA therapy at home
- e. Prefer not to answer

Q10j. How many times per day does your child(ren) transition between school and the service center to receive ABA therapy?

- a. Twice per day (to service centre, then back to school)
- b. Four times per day (to service centre, school, return to service center, and back to school)
- c. More than four times per day
- d. Not applicable, my child(ren) does not receive ABA therapy at a service centre
- e. Prefer not to answer

Q10k. Has the amount of travel time daily for your child(ren) to travel to school and to the service centre/home for therapy changed as a result of your child(ren) accessing ABA therapy at school?

- a. Yes, travel time daily has significantly decreased
- b. Yes, travel time daily has somewhat decreased
- c. No change in travel time daily
- d. Yes, travel time daily has somewhat increased
- e. Yes, travel time daily has significantly increased
- f. Prefer not to answer

Q11. Was (were) your child(ren) receiving ABA therapy at school last year (2017/2018)?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know
- d. Prefer not to answer

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**YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF THE DEDICATED SPACE**


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12 **[ASK Q12 If AQ10b= 1 or more hours]**Is your child receiving ABA services at a service center:

- e. Less often than in the 2017/2018 school year
- f. About the same as in the 2017/2018 school year
- g. More often than in the 2017/2018 school year
- h. Don't know/prefer not to answer

46. **[ASK Q13 If AQ10c= 1 or more hours]**Is your child receiving ABA services at home:

- a. Less often than in the 2017/2018 school year
- b. About the same as in the 2017/2018 school year
- c. More often than in the 2017/2018 school year
- d. Don't know/prefer not to answer

47. On average, how many hours/minutes per week has your child has been absent from school because therapy is provided outside of school and need to bring him/her there?

AQ14: Number of hours/minutes absent: \_\_\_\_\_ **[Allow numbers and decimals, 0-40 hours]**

- a. None
- b. Don't know/prefer not to answer

**Error message if answer is left blank: Please add hours and/or minutes or select another answer.**

**Error message if numbers answered and None/DK/PNA is selected: You cannot answer None or Prefer Not to Answer and also put hours/minutes here.**

48. Has the dedicated space and in-school ABA therapy increased the opportunities for your child/children to participate in extracurricular activities?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know
- d. Prefer not to answer

49. Has the dedicated space and in-school ABA therapy increased the opportunities for your child/children to attend school activities (i.e. field trips, assemblies, school events)?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know
- d. Prefer not to answer

50. Have you had access to the dedicated space to observe your child(ren) this year (2018/2019)?  
**[Mouse-over for “dedicated space”: This is the space in the school where your child receives ABA services”]**
- Yes **[proceed to Q18]**
  - No **[Skip to Q18a]**
  - Prefer not to answer **[proceed to Q18]**
51. **[ASK ONLY IF Q17=YES AND Q11=A]** Did you have access to the dedicated space to observe your child(ren) in the 2017/2018 school year? **[Mouse-over for “dedicated space”: This is the space in the school where your child receives ABA services”]**
- Yes
  - No
  - Prefer not to answer
- 18a. **[ASK ONLY IF Q17=NO]** Why were you not able to access the dedicated space to observe your child? Select all that apply. **[allow for multiple selection]**
- Did not arrange to observe my child **[exclusive]**
  - Not permitted to observe my child in the dedicated space during therapy
  - Attempted to arrange but did not schedule due to time constraints
- AQ18d. Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Don’t know **[exclusive]**
  - Prefer not to answer **[exclusive]**

#### THE IMPACT OF THE DEDICATED SPACE ON YOUR FAMILY

52. Since your child(ren) started therapy in-school, how many hours has your child(ren) received ABA services at:

AQ19a. A service center: \_\_\_\_\_ **[allow number 0-1,000]**

- prefer not to answer

AQ19b. At home: \_\_\_\_\_ **[allow number 0-1,000]**

19c. Has/have your child(ren’s) teacher(s), EAs or support staff communicated any improvements in your child since beginning the therapy in school?

- Yes, I have been notified of improvements in my child(ren)
- No, I have not been notified of any improvements
- Don’t know
- Prefer not to answer

53. Since your child(ren) started receiving therapy in school, has the amount of time you spend doing things on your own such as running errands, going shopping, etc.:

- Increased a lot **[IF SELECTED, SKIP TO Q21]**
- Increased a little **[IF SELECTED, SKIP TO Q21]**
- Stayed the same **[IF SELECTED, SKIP TO Q21]**
- Decreased a little **[IF SELECTED, PROCCED TO AQ20a]**
- Decreased a lot **[IF SELECTED, PROCCED TO AQ20a]**
- Don’t know/Prefer not to answer **[IF SELECTED, SKIP TO Q21]**

AQ20a. Why do you say that? \_\_\_\_\_

- c. Prefer not to answer

54. Since your child(ren) started receiving therapy in school, has the amount of time you spend doing things with your family such as board games, watching a movie, attending events together, etc.:

- Increased a lot **[IF SELECTED, SKIP TO Q22]**
- Increased a little **[IF SELECTED, SKIP TO Q22]**
- Stayed the same **[IF SELECTED, SKIP TO Q22]**
- Decreased a little **[IF SELECTED, PROCCED TO AQ21a]**
- Decreased a lot **[IF SELECTED, PROCCED TO AQ21a]**
- Don't know/Prefer not to answer **[IF SELECTED, SKIP TO Q22]**

AQ21a. Why do you say that? \_\_\_\_\_

- b. prefer not to answer

#### COMMUNICATION ABOUT YOUR CHILD

55. How do you exchange information about your child with your child's **therapist** since your child(ren) began ABA therapy in the dedicated space? Select all that apply. **[allow multiple select]**

- Email
- Scheduled meetings
- Informal in-person discussions
- Telephone
- Prefer not to answer

AQ22: Other \_\_\_\_\_

56. How do you exchange information about your child with your child's **classroom teacher**? Select all that apply. **[allow multiple select]**

- Email
- Scheduled meetings
- Informal in-person discussions
- Telephone
- Prefer not to answer

AQ23: Other \_\_\_\_\_

57. How do you exchange information about your child with the child's **school principal**? Select all that apply. **[allow multiple select]**

- Email

- b. Scheduled meetings
- c. Informal in-person discussions
- d. Telephone
- e. Prefer not to answer

AQ24: Other \_\_\_\_\_

58. Please rate your satisfaction with communication between yourself and your child’s or children’s...

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know/prefer not to answer	Please explain [show only if "somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied" are selected]
Therapist						
Classroom teacher						
School principal						
EA						

**CLOSING COMMENTS**

59. How has receiving therapy in the school impacted you and your family compared to prior to receiving therapy in the school?

- a. Please respond here: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Prefer not to answer

Qparents1: I believe that the supports my child(ren) receives while in school have improved as a result of the pilot.

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know
- d. Prefer not to answer

Qparents2: I believe that my child(ren) has access to evidence based behaviour analytical intervention during the day at school as a result of the pilot.

- 
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Don't know
  - d. Prefer not to answer

60. Would you be willing to be contacted by Malatest for an interview to discuss your feedback in more detail?

- a. Yes **[If selected, proceed to Q28]**
- b. No **[If selected, end and complete survey]**
- c. Don't know/refused **[If selected, terminate survey]**

61. Please provide your name, email address and phone number.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email : \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number (including area code): \_\_\_\_\_

[all 3 options mandatory]

**[END OF SURVEY]** Thank you for taking the time to participate in the survey! **[EXIT TO MALATEST WEBSITE]**

## Focus Group with BCBA's Year 2

Thank you for attending today's focus group. The Ontario Ministry of Education is evaluating the "Pilot to Improve School-Based Supports for Students with Autism". My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I work for R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd. (Malatest), a research firm, that has been hired to complete this evaluation, and identify which aspects are working well, and what can be improved, should the Ministry expand the pilot. We want to better understand the role and perspectives of BCBA's/equivalents involved in the pilot.

The discussion will last approximately 1.5 hours, depending on your answers. We hope to audio record the discussion to ensure that the information provided is documented accurately. The recording will only be heard by the researchers and will be destroyed after the submission of the final report. At no time will anyone participating in today's session be identified by name in the report.

Before we begin, does anyone have any questions?

### Background (5 mins)

The first few questions are about your involvement in the pilot.

1. Were you involved in the pilot last year?
  - a. If no: How did you become involved in the pilot?
2. Are all of you BCBA's or were some of you hired as a BCBA equivalent?
3. Do you work exclusively for the pilot or do you have other responsibilities within the school or school board?

### The Geneva Online Training and PLC (30 mins)

As you are aware, in addition to having a BCBA/equivalent, the pilot involves two other components; the use of a dedicated space in schools for ABA therapy using external service providers, and online Geneva Center Training. Let's first discuss the Geneva online training

4. From your perspective, what effect has the training had on EAs' understanding and use of ABA practices with students with ASD? *Probe for:*
  - a. Specific examples of EAs increased understanding and skills to support students in the classroom
  - b. Challenges in providing support to EAs related to the Geneva online training
5. Do you facilitate the PLC as part of the online training?
  - a. If yes, *Probe for:*
    - i. Model used and any changes in model since 2017/18
    - ii. Activities used in the PLC

- iii. Successes associated with the PLC (including convenience of times and locations)
    - iv. Challenges associated with the PLC
  - b. If no, *Probe for*:
    - i. Reasons why
- 6. Are there any aspects of either the Geneva online course and/or the PLC that you feel should be changed? *Probe for*:
  - a. Additional or alternative training
  - b. Solutions to make training more effective, more convenient

### The Dedicated Space (40 mins)

*The next questions relate to the dedicated space.*

- 7. What have been some of the successes and challenges with respect to supporting teachers and EAs in the classroom as it relates to the pilot program? *Probe for*:
  - a. Effectiveness of communications (modes and frequencies of communication)
  - b. Effectiveness of providing support to teachers and EAs
  - c. Coordination of student transitions to and from dedicated spaces
  - d. Challenges with communications and/or providing support to teachers and EAs
  - e. Potential solutions to any challenges mentioned
- 8. What have been some of the successes and challenges with respect to working with the external ABA therapists and/or ABA service providers in general? *Probe for*:
  - a. Effectiveness of communications (modes and frequencies of communication)
  - b. Alignment of supports and programs provided in school settings with those provided in dedicated space (e.g. ability to collaborate)
  - c. Challenges with communications and/or collaboration
  - d. Potential solutions to any challenges mentioned
- 9. What have been some of the successes and challenges with respect to working with the project coordinator for the pilot? *Probe for*:
  - a. Effectiveness of communications (modes and frequencies of communication)
  - b. Challenges with communications and/or providing support to teachers and EAs
  - c. Potential solutions to any challenges mentioned
- 10. What are the benefits of having the Project Coordinator in the school? *Probe for*:
  - a. Need for a Project Coordinator
  - b. Whether another role (e.g. principal/vice principal, BCBA) could fulfill the responsibilities of the Project Coordinator
  - c. Some BCBA's are already doing the role of Project Coordinator. Probe for challenges with respect to having a dual role

### Final Comments (15 mins)

*We have a few final questions for today about the pilot and your involvement.*

11. Could the tasks you perform for the pilot be performed more efficiently?
  - a. If yes, how? (e.g. phone vs. In-person, online)
  - b. If no, why not?
  
12. Are there any other tasks you think would be useful for you to perform for the pilot? *Probe for:*
  - a. Additional tasks or supports
  - b. Fulfilling role or specific aspects of role at more than one school if the pilot was to expand

*Those are all my questions for you today. Does anyone have any final comments about the pilot? Does anyone have any questions for me?*

*Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me today. Your input is valuable and appreciated, and will help inform the possible expansion of school-based supports for students with Autism in Ontario.*

## Interviews with BCBA's Year 2

The Ontario Ministry of Education is evaluating the “Pilot to Improve School-Based Supports for Students with Autism”. R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd. (Malatest), a research firm, has been hired to complete this evaluation, and identify which aspects are working well, and what can be improved, should the Ministry expand the pilot. As part of this evaluation, Malatest is inviting you to participate in an interview. We want to better understand the perspectives of BCBA's/equivalent.

The discussion will last approximately 30 minutes, depending on your answers. We hope to audio record the discussion to ensure that the information provided is documented accurately. The recording will only be heard by the researchers and will be destroyed after the submission of the final report.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:	All of the information that you share during the interview will remain anonymous for reporting purposes. This means that only researchers at R. A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. will have access to identifying information in connection with interview findings. More information on our privacy policy can be found on our website at <a href="http://www.malatest.com/Privacy.htm">http://www.malatest.com/Privacy.htm</a>
Informed Consent:	Prior to beginning, we will confirm that you have no questions about the objectives of the study or the purpose of the interview, and that we have your permission to begin the interview.
Impartiality:	Malatest is committed to conducting all research in a fair and impartial manner. We are members of the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) and the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA) and follow their ethics and codes of conduct for researchers.
Questions:	<p>If you have any questions about this discussion, please contact Bess Ashby at R.A. Malatest &amp; Associates Ltd., at <a href="mailto:b.ashby@malatest.com">b.ashby@malatest.com</a> or 416-644-0161 x 151 or 1-800-598-0161 (toll-free).</p> <p>If you have any questions about this project, please contact Pamini Sivayogarajah, Ministry of Education, at <a href="mailto:Pamini.Sivayogarajah@ontario.ca">Pamini.Sivayogarajah@ontario.ca</a>.</p>

## Background

13. Before we begin, can you please tell me what your official qualifications are, and your professional title?
14. How long you've been a [INSERT PROFESSIONAL TITLE FROM ABOVE]?
  - 1.
15. Were you involved in the pilot last year?
  - a. If no: How did you become involved in the pilot?
16. Can you please tell me what your role is in the pilot?
17. What other supports do you provide in the school setting outside of the pilot?
  - a. What are your responsibilities? Please provide specific details.
  - b. Who is responsible for managing your responsibilities outside of project tasks? (i.e. the principal, project coordinator)
  - c. Can you provide an estimate of how much time each task takes per week?
- 2.
18. Prior to your involvement in this pilot program, have you ever been involved in a program that provides ABA services in-school or a similar program? If yes, what was the program?
  - 3.

## Your Role in the Pilot

19. Does your school have a dedicated space? (If not, skip to Question 11)
  - 4.
20. Are you involved with the dedicated space (i.e. scheduling of service providers, access for students, etc.)?
  - a. If so, what is your involvement?
21. How many educators do you support:
  - a. In the school?
  - b. In the school board?
22. How many service providers currently access the dedicated space?
  - a. (If more than 1 service provider): How many service providers access the space at the same time?

## The Geneva Online Training and PLC

These questions relate to the Geneva Online Training.

23. What is your role in the online training/PLC?

- a. What are your responsibilities in that role? Please provide specific details.
24. What effect does the training have on EAs' understanding and use of ABA practices with students with ASD?
- a. If yes, why do you think this? What evidence/specific examples can you provide?
- 5.
25. Do you facilitate the PLC as part of the online training?
- a. If yes, can you tell me what is involved in the PLC? How is the time used?
26. What model do you use? Has the model changed since the 2017/2018 school year?
- a. What activities do you use in the PLC?
27. Can you tell me about the successes associated with the PLC?
28. Can you tell me about the challenges associated with the PLC?
29. How important is the PLC to increasing EA skills and competencies in supporting students in the classroom?
30. Does the online RBT course and PLC combination work well for training EAs in ABA practices?
6. Is there different training you think EAs should complete instead or in addition to the training?
31. In your opinion, are the times and locations of the online training and PLCs convenient for EAs?
- a. If not, what could make them more convenient?
- 7.

## Communication

These last few questions relate to collaboration within the school board and with external service providers.

32. What processes are in place to facilitate communication among the EAs and school staff involved in the pilot and yourself?
- a. Do you communicate via email? Phone? Face-to-face?
- b. How often?
- c. Do you feel you are meeting often enough?
- d. Do you meet as a group or separately?
- e. What do you discuss?
- f. Do you feel the meetings are effective?

33. What processes are in place to facilitate communication between the project coordinator and yourself?
- How often do you meet with the Project Coordinator?
  - Do you communicate via email? Phone? Face-to-face?
  - How often?
  - Do you feel you are meeting often enough?
  - Do you meet as a group or separately?
  - What do you discuss?
  - Do you feel the meetings are effective?
- 8.
34. Are there processes in place to facilitate communication between the external ABA service providers and yourself?
- How often do you meet with the service providers?
  - Do you communicate via email? Phone? Face to face?
  - How often?
  - Do you feel you are meeting often enough?
  - Do you meet as a group or separately?
  - What do you discuss?
  - Do you feel the meetings are effective?
- 9.
35. Are you sharing the information you have learned about the student's progress in the dedicated space with school staff (i.e. classroom teachers, EAs)?
- Please describe how you do this?
36. To what extent does collocation with service providers affect the ability to communicate and collaborate?

### Final Comments

37. Could the tasks you perform for the pilot be performed more efficiently?
- If yes, how? (e.g. phone vs. In-person, online)
  - If no, why not?
38. Would you be able to take on additional tasks or provide additional supports considering your current involvement in the pilot?
39. Could you fulfil your role at more than one school if the pilot was to expand to other schools in your school board?
40. What are the benefits of having the Project Coordinator in the school?
- Do you feel a Project Coordinator is required? Could another role fulfill the responsibilities of the Project Coordinator?

10.

Those are all my questions for you today. Is there anything we haven't covered in this discussion that you'd like to share with me about the pilot?

**Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me today. Your input is valuable and appreciated, and will help inform the possible expansion of school-based supports for students with Autism in Ontario.**

## Interviews with Parents/Caregivers Year 2

The Ontario Ministry of Education is evaluating the “Pilot to Improve School-Based Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder”. R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd. (Malatest), a research firm, has been hired to complete this evaluation, and identify which aspects are working well, and what can be improved, should the Ministry expand the pilot. As part of this evaluation, Malatest is inviting you to participate in an interview. We want to better understand the perspectives of parents.

11. The discussion will last approximately 30 minutes, depending on your answers. We hope to audio record the discussion to ensure that the information provided is documented accurately. The recording will only be heard by the researchers and will be destroyed after the submission of the final report.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:	All of the information that you share during the interview will remain anonymous for reporting purposes. This means that only researchers at R. A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. will have access to identifying information in connection with interview findings. More information on our privacy policy can be found on our website at <a href="http://www.malatest.com/Privacy.htm">http://www.malatest.com/Privacy.htm</a>
Informed Consent:	Prior to beginning, we will confirm that you have no questions about the objectives of the study or the purpose of the interview, and that we have your permission to begin the interview.
Impartiality:	Malatest is committed to conducting all research in a fair and impartial manner. We are members of the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) and the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA) and follow their ethics and codes of conduct for researchers.
Questions:	<p>If you have any questions about this discussion, please contact Bess Ashby, Project Manager at R.A. Malatest &amp; Associates Ltd., at <a href="mailto:b.ashby@malatest.com">b.ashby@malatest.com</a> or 416-644-0161 or 1-800-598-0161 (toll-free).</p> <p>If you have any questions about this project, please contact Arkadi Toritsyn, Ministry of Education, at <a href="mailto:Arkadi.Toritsyn@ontario.ca">Arkadi.Toritsyn@ontario.ca</a></p>

## Background

Before we begin, I'd like to ask you a bit about your child.

1. How old is your child?
  - 1.
2. What level of severity of ASD has your child been diagnosed with?
  - a. Has your child been diagnosed with any other co-morbid diagnoses? If so, which one(s)?
  - b. What supports does your child have (this includes all government funded supports/services and privately purchased supports).

## Dedicated Space

These questions relate to the effects of the dedicated space on your child and family.

3. How much travel time have you saved because services are provided in school?
4. Have you seen any benefits or positive effects on you or your family as a result of accessing ABA services at school?
  - a. What positive effects?
  - b. If no, can you explain?
    - 2.
5. Have you seen any benefits or positive effects on your child as a result of accessing ABA services at school that are not related to specific ABA programming they are receiving? (for example, improved socialization with school staff or peers, improved attendance in school, improved engagement in the classroom)
  - a. What positive effects?
  - b. If no, can you explain?
6. Has accessing ABA services on school property come with any challenges for you or your child?
  - a. If yes, please explain

## Communication

These questions relate to the communication between you and the school about your child.

7. How do you currently communicate with school staff involved in the pilot?
  - g. Are you satisfied with the communication?
  - h. What is the role of the service provider in these communications?
  - i. Could anything be improved?
- 3.
8. In your opinion, are communications and collaboration among the school, service provider and you sufficient and effective?

Those are all my questions for you today. Is there anything we haven't covered in this discussion that you'd like to share with me about the pilot?

**Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me today. Your input is valuable and appreciated, and will help inform the possible expansion of school-based supports for students with Autism in Ontario.**

## Interviews with Principals Year 2

The Ontario Ministry of Education is evaluating the “Pilot to Improve School-Based Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder”. R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd. (Malatest), a research firm, has been hired to complete this evaluation, and identify which aspects are working well, and what can be improved, should the Ministry expand the pilot. As part of this evaluation, Malatest is inviting you to participate in an interview. We want to better understand the perspectives of Principals and Vice Principals.

12. The discussion will last approximately 30-40 minutes, depending on your answers. We hope to audio record the discussion to ensure that the information provided is documented accurately. The recording will only be heard by the researchers and will be destroyed after the submission of the final report.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:	All of the information that you share during the interview will remain anonymous for reporting purposes. This means that only researchers at R. A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. will have access to identifying information in connection with interview findings. More information on our privacy policy can be found on our website at <a href="http://www.malatest.com/Privacy.htm">http://www.malatest.com/Privacy.htm</a>
Informed Consent:	Prior to beginning, we will confirm that you have no questions about the objectives of the study or the purpose of the interview, and that we have your permission to begin the interview.
Impartiality:	Malatest is committed to conducting all research in a fair and impartial manner. We are members of the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) and the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA) and follow their ethics and codes of conduct for researchers.
Questions:	<p>If you have any questions about this discussion, please contact Bess Ashby, Project Manager at R.A. Malatest &amp; Associates Ltd., at <a href="mailto:b.ashby@malatest.com">b.ashby@malatest.com</a> or 416-644-0161 x 151 or 1-800-598-0161 (toll-free).</p> <p>If you have any questions about this project, please contact Arkadi Toritsyn, Ministry of Education, at <a href="mailto:Arkadi.Toritsyn@ontario.ca">Arkadi.Toritsyn@ontario.ca</a></p>

## Background

4. Can you briefly describe the supports available to students with ASD in your school?
5. Was the dedicated space available to students in the first year of the pilot (2017-18)?

## Dedicated Learning Space

These questions relate to the dedicated learning space. (Moderator: If Principal/Vice-Principal participated in the first year of the pilot, after each question ask about changes from year 1.)

6. How is your school managing who has access to the dedicated space (school staff, external service providers)?
- 7.
8. How many service providers are currently accessing the dedicated space?
  - a. [If more than one service provider]: Do they work for the same organization?
    - i. Do service providers access the space at the same time?
  - b. Do any students in your school have a different service provider who is not accessing the space?
    - i. If so, why are they not involved in the pilot?
  - c. Are there protocols in place if more than one service provider accesses the space at the same time?
  - d. Is there a limit to how many different service providers can access the space?
    - i. If yes, why?
    - ii. Do you have concerns about more than one service provider accessing the space at the same time? What are your concerns?
9. Can MOUs with other service providers be developed more quickly to increase the number of students accessing the dedicated space?
10. What are the pros and cons of the dedicated space?
11. How do you determine which EAs will be assigned to support student's special education needs in the classroom?
- 12.

## BCBA Hiring

13. Were you involved in hiring the BCBA/BCBA equivalent?
  - a. Is this individual a BCBA? What are their qualifications? What are their qualifications?
14. Is the BCBA/BCBA equivalent who was hired for the pilot in 2017/2018 involved in the pilot this year?
  - a. If no, why not?

15. [If a BCBA was not hired]: What were the reasons for not hiring a BCBA?
16. Outside of the pilot, does your board hire BCBA's?
- If so, how many and how do they support students in your board?
17. What duties does the BCBA/BCBA equivalent perform in the school?
18. What are the benefits of having a BCBA/BCBA equivalent in the school?
- What responsibilities should this individual have to utilize their expertise most effectively?
  - Do you feel a BCBA is required? Could another role fulfill the responsibilities of a BCBA?
  - Could one BCBA fulfill this role for multiple schools within the board?
19. Are the duties of the BCBA/BCBA equivalent being performed efficiently?
- Could the duties of the BCBA/BCBA equivalent be performed more efficiently? (e.g. online, phone vs. in-person)

### Online Training

- 20.
21. Have the EAs received any other training in addition to the Geneva Centre training? If so, which course/training?
- Does it cover the same ABA training material or different material?
  - Is it more/less effective?
  - Is the cost less, similar or more than the Geneva online training?
  - Is the Geneva online course sufficient or do EAs require additional training as well?
  - How could EAs be better trained and prepared to work with students with ASD?
22. Does the online RBT course and PLC combination work well for training EAs in ABA practices?
23. Is there different training you think EAs should complete instead or in addition to the training?
24. Are EAs asking for additional training in regards to working with students with ASD?
- Do you believe additional or ongoing training is needed?

### Communication

These questions relate to communications.

25. What processes are in place to facilitate communication between yourself and the BCBA /BCBA equivalent?
- How often do you meet? Are all meetings face-to-face or do you communicate in other ways as well?
  - How many meetings have taken place since the beginning of the pilot?
  - Are your communication processes effective? Any ways you'd like to see communications improve?

26. What processes are in place to facilitate communication between yourself and the project coordinator?
- How often do you meet? Are all meetings face-to-face or do you communicate in other ways as well?
  - How many meetings have taken place since the beginning of the pilot?
  - Are your communication processes effective? Any ways you'd like to see communications improve?
27. To what extent does collocation with service providers and school staff involved in the pilot affect the ability to communicate and collaborate?
- 28.
29. Can you tell me about the communication process from the Ministry and its effectiveness?
- 30.

### Overall Assessment of the Pilot

31. These last few questions relate to the pilot model.
- 32.
33. What is your opinion of each of the three components of the pilot (i.e. dedicated space, EA online RBT training and hiring a BCBA)? Is the pilot working well in your school?
- Is there a component of the model that should be changed or altered?
  - Why or why not?
34. How high is the demand for school-based ABA therapy for students with ASD?
- How many parents/caregivers have requested it?
  - How many receive it?
  - If demand is higher than supply, how do you determine which students will access the space?
35. If the pilot was expanded, is there enough room at other schools in the school board to include a dedicated space?
36. Are there any challenges to securing agreements with external service providers could pose a barrier to expanding the program province-wide?
- What is the extent of these challenges?
37. Are there any challenges to offering the Geneva Centre online training/PLCs program province-wide that should be considered?
- What is the extent of these challenges?
- 38.
39. If the pilot were to continue, the project coordinator role may not continue and the duties currently performed by the individual in the role would need to be taken on by someone else. Would you be able to take on their current duties as well as the duties you currently perform as Principal/Vice Principal? Could another school staff member take on these duties?
40. Is there anything we haven't covered in this discussion that you'd like to share about the pilot?



**Thank you very much for taking the time to share your views. Your input is valuable and appreciated, and will help inform the possible expansion of school-based supports for students with Autism in Ontario.**

## Interviews with Project Coordinator Year 2

The Ontario Ministry of Education is evaluating the “Pilot to Improve School-Based Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder”. R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd. (Malatest), a research firm, has been hired to complete this evaluation, and identify which aspects are working well, and what can be improved, should the Ministry expand the pilot. As part of this evaluation, Malatest is inviting you to participate in an interview. We want to better understand the perspectives of Project Coordinators.

The discussion will last approximately 30-40 minutes, depending on your answers. We hope to audio record the discussion to ensure that the information provided is documented accurately. The recording will only be heard by the researchers and will be destroyed after the submission of the final report.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:	All of the information that you share during the interview will remain anonymous for reporting purposes. This means that only researchers at R. A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. will have access to identifying information in connection with interview findings. More information on our privacy policy can be found on our website at <a href="http://www.malatest.com/Privacy.htm">http://www.malatest.com/Privacy.htm</a>
Informed Consent:	Prior to beginning, we will confirm that you have no questions about the objectives of the study or the purpose of the interview, and that we have your permission to begin the interview.
Impartiality:	Malatest is committed to conducting all research in a fair and impartial manner. We are members of the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) and the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA) and follow their ethics and codes of conduct for researchers.
Questions:	<p>If you have any questions about this discussion, please contact Bess Ashby, Project Manager at R.A. Malatest &amp; Associates Ltd., at <a href="mailto:b.ashby@malatest.com">b.ashby@malatest.com</a> or 416-644-0161 x 151 or 1-800-598-0161 (toll-free).</p> <p>If you have any questions about this project, please contact Arkadi Toritsyn, Ministry of Education, at <a href="mailto:Arkadi.Toritsyn@ontario.ca">Arkadi.Toritsyn@ontario.ca</a></p>

## Background

1. Can you briefly describe the supports available to students with ASD in your school?
2. Was the dedicated space available to students in the first year of the pilot (2017-18)?

## Dedicated Learning Space

These questions relate to the dedicated learning space. (Moderator: If Project Coordinator participated in the first year of the pilot, after each question ask about changes from year 1.)

3. How is your school managing who has access to the dedicated space (school staff, external service providers)?
4. How many service providers are currently accessing the dedicated space?
  - a. [If more than one service provider]: Do they work for the same organization?
    - i. Do service providers access the space at the same time?
    - ii. If so, how is the space setup to facilitate the use of the space by more than one therapist at a time?
  - b. Do any students in your school have a service provider who is not accessing the dedicated space and are required to leave school for therapy?
    - i. If so, why are they not involved in the pilot?
  - c. Are there protocols in place if more than one service provider accesses the space at the same time?
    - i. If yes, what are they?
  - d. Is there a limit to how many different service providers can access the space?
    - i. If yes, why?
    - ii. Do you have concerns about more than one service provider accessing the space at the same time? What are your concerns?
5. What are the pros and cons of the dedicated space?

## BCBA Hiring

6. Were you involved in hiring the BCBA/BCBA equivalent?
  - a. Is this individual a BCBA or a BCBA equivalent? What are their qualifications?
7. Is the BCBA/BCBA equivalent who was hired for the pilot in 2017/2018 involved in the pilot this year?
  - a. If no, why not?

8. [If a BCBA was not hired]: What were the reasons for not hiring a BCBA?
9. What duties does the BCBA/BCBA equivalent perform in the school?
10. What are the benefits of having a BCBA/BCBA equivalent in the school?
  - a. What responsibilities should this individual have to utilize their expertise most effectively?
  - b. Do you feel a BCBA is required? Could another role fulfill the responsibilities of a BCBA?
  - c. Could one BCBA fulfill this role or specific aspects of the current role for multiple schools within the board?
11. Are the duties of the BCBA/BCBA equivalent being performed efficiently?
  - a. Could the duties of the BCBA/BCBA equivalent be performed more efficiently? (e.g. online, phone vs. in-person)

### Online Training

12. Have the EAs received any other training in addition to the Geneva Centre training? If so, which course/training?
  - a. Does it cover the same ABA training material or different material?
  - b. Is it more/less effective than the Geneva Centre training? Why do you say that?
  - c. Is the cost less, similar or more than the Geneva online training?
  - d. Is the Geneva online course sufficient or do EAs require additional training as well?
  - e. How could EAs be better trained and prepared to work with students with ASD?
13. Does the online RBT course and PLC combination work well for training EAs in ABA practices?  
Is there different training you think EAs should complete instead of or in addition to the training?
14. Are EAs asking for additional training in regards to working with students with ASD?
  - a. Do you believe additional or ongoing training is needed?

### Communication

These questions relate to communications.

15. What processes are in place to facilitate communication between yourself and the BCBA /BCBA equivalent?
  - a. How often do you meet? Are all meetings face-to-face or do you communicate in other ways as well?
  - b. How many meetings have taken place since the beginning of the pilot (year 1 and year 2)?

- c. Are your communication processes effective? Is there anything you'd like to see improve about the communications process?
16. What processes are in place to facilitate communication between yourself and the principal?
- a. How often do you meet? Are all meetings face-to-face or do you communicate in other ways as well?
  - b. How many meetings have taken place since the beginning of the pilot (year 1 and year 2)?
  - c. Are your communication processes effective? Is there anything you'd like to see improve about the communications process?
17. To what extent does collocation with service providers and school staff involved in the pilot affect the ability to communicate and collaborate?
18. Can you tell me about the communication process from the Ministry and its effectiveness?

### Overall Assessment of the Pilot

These last few questions relate to the pilot model.

19. What is your opinion of each of the three components of the pilot (i.e. dedicated space, EA online RBT training and hiring a BCBA)? Is the pilot working well in your school?
- a. Is there a component of the model that should be changed or altered?
    - i. Why or why not?
20. How high is the demand for school-based ABA therapy for students with ASD in your school?
- a. How many parents/caregivers have requested it?
  - b. How many receive it?
  - c. If demand is higher than supply, how do you determine which students will access the space?
21. Is there anything we haven't covered in this discussion that you'd like to share about the pilot?

**Thank you very much for taking the time to share your views. Your input is valuable and appreciated, and will help inform the possible expansion of school-based supports for students with Autism in Ontario.**

## Interviews with Superintendents Year 2

The Ontario Ministry of Education is evaluating the “Pilot to Improve School-Based Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder”. R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd. (Malatest), a research firm, has been hired to complete this evaluation, and identify which aspects are working well, and what can be improved, should the Ministry expand the pilot. As part of this evaluation, Malatest is inviting you to participate in an interview. We want to better understand the perspectives of Superintendents.

The discussion will last approximately 30-40 minutes, depending on your answers. We hope to audio record the discussion to ensure that the information provided is documented accurately. The recording will only be heard by the researchers and will be destroyed after the submission of the final report.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:	All of the information that you share during the interview will remain anonymous for reporting purposes. This means that only researchers at R. A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. will have access to identifying information in connection with interview findings. More information on our privacy policy can be found on our website at <a href="http://www.malatest.com/Privacy.htm">http://www.malatest.com/Privacy.htm</a>
Informed Consent:	Prior to beginning, we will confirm that you have no questions about the objectives of the study or the purpose of the interview, and that we have your permission to begin the interview.
Impartiality:	Malatest is committed to conducting all research in a fair and impartial manner. We are members of the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) and the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA) and follow their ethics and codes of conduct for researchers.
Questions:	<p>If you have any questions about this discussion, please contact Bess Ashby, Project Manager at R.A. Malatest &amp; Associates Ltd., at <a href="mailto:b.ashby@malatest.com">b.ashby@malatest.com</a> or 416-644-0161 x 151 or 1-800-598-0161 (toll-free).</p> <p>If you have any questions about this project, please contact Arkadi Toritsyn, Ministry of Education, at <a href="mailto:Arkadi.Toritsyn@ontario.ca">Arkadi.Toritsyn@ontario.ca</a></p>

## Background

1. Please describe your role as it pertains to supporting children with ASD in the schools within your board.
2. Approximately how many students with ASD do you have within your school board?

## BCBA Hiring

3. Outside of the pilot, does your board hire BCBA's?
  - a. If so, how many?
  - b. How many schools and /or students does each BCBA support?
  - c. How many individuals with a BCBA equivalent does your board have?
  - d. How many schools and /or students does each BCBA equivalent support?
4. What duties does the BCBA/BCBA equivalent perform in the school?
  - a. How do they support staff in schools?
  - b. Do they directly support students and if so, how?
  - c. What other duties do they perform?
5. What are the benefits of having a BCBA/BCBA equivalent in the school?
  - a. What responsibilities should this individual have to utilize their expertise most effectively?
  - b. Do you feel a BCBA is required? Could another role fulfill the responsibilities of a BCBA?
  - c. Could one BCBA fulfill this role or specific aspects of the current role for multiple schools within the board (if not already doing so)?
  - d. Are there specific aspects of the BCBA's role that could be completed by someone else?
  - e. Are there additional duties or responsibilities that a BCBA/equivalent could take on?
 

*[Interviewer: PC duties include: Oversee the dedicated space; Coordinate schedules of external ABA practitioners; Support the development of the student's transition plan between the dedicated space and classroom; Liaise with school principal/parents/ABA service providers; Coordinate EA training and substitute where needed; Work with BCBA to facilitate PLC]*

    - i. Do you feel that the BCBA could also take on the role of the PC?
    - ii. What would be the benefits and/or challenges of combining the duties of the BCBA/equivalent and PC into one role?

## Overall Assessment of the Pilot

These last few questions relate to the pilot model.

6. What is your opinion of each of the three components of the pilot (i.e. dedicated space, EA online RBT training and hiring a BCBA)? Is the pilot working well in your school?
  - a. Is there a component of the model that should be changed or altered?
    - i. Why or why not?
7. How high is the demand for school-based ABA therapy for students with ASD within your school board?
  - a. How many parents/caregivers have requested it?
  - b. How many receive it?
  - c. If demand is higher than supply, how do you determine which students will access the space?
8. If the pilot was expanded, is there enough room at other schools in your school board to include a dedicated space?
  - a. Approximately how many other schools would have space to accommodate a dedicated space?
  - b. Would any of these schools be able to accommodate multiple students in a dedicated space at the same time?
  - c. Would any of these schools be able to accommodate multiple dedicated spaces?
9. Are there any challenges to securing agreements with external service providers that could pose a barrier to expanding the program within your school board?
  - a. What are the challenges?
10. Are there any challenges to offering the Geneva Centre online training/PLCs program if it were to be expanded to include EAs and/or other staff as deemed suitable within your school board that did not participate in this pilot?
  - a. What are the challenges?
11. If the pilot were to continue, the project coordinator role may not continue and the duties currently performed by the individual in this role would need to be taken on by someone else.
  - a. Would Principals/Vice Principals be able to take on the PC duties as well as their current duties?
  - b. Could another school staff member take on these duties?
  - c. Could one project coordinator be responsible for the program in multiple schools? If so, approximately how many schools would be a reasonable amount for one project coordinator?
12. Can you tell me about your communication process with the Ministry and its effectiveness?
13. Is there anything we haven't covered in this discussion that you'd like to share about the pilot?



**Thank you very much for taking the time to share your views. Your input is valuable and appreciated, and will help inform the possible expansion of school-based supports for students with Autism in Ontario.**

### Project Coordinator/Principal/Vice-Principal Pilot Information Template

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the Ministry of Education's School Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder Pilot research. R.A. Malatest & Associates is a research firm currently completing the pilot evaluation research. We are collecting data on your school to best understand the pilot and how it is progressing in your school. Please fill out the questions below. This form is primarily for Project Coordinators; however, if a Project Coordinator is unable to complete a question, please pass the template to the Principal or Vice-Principal. When complete, please return to [e.clark@malatest.com](mailto:e.clark@malatest.com).

1. Your job title:
  
2. Name of the school you currently work at:
  
3. How many years/months have you been working at your current school:
  
4. Number of students accessing the dedicated space simultaneously per day:
  
5. Number of students on waitlist for dedicated space:
  
6. Number of hours per week the dedicated space is used for ABA therapy:
  
7. Number of hours per week the dedicated space is unused or empty:
  
8. Number of service providers currently accessing the dedicated space:
  
9. Number of service providers currently accessing the dedicated space simultaneously:
  
10. Number of students in the school diagnosed with ASD:
  
11. Maximum capacity of space (max. number of students who could use the space):
  
  
12. Responsibilities as a Project Coordinator with the pilot (please answer yes/no to each):

Responsibilities with the pilot:	Y/N	Time spent on activity (minutes/days)
Oversee the dedicated space		
Coordinate schedules of external ABA practitioners		
Support the development of the student's transition plan between the dedicated space and classroom		
Liaise with school principal/parents/ABA service providers		
Coordinate EA training and substitute where needed		
Work with BCBA to facilitate PLC		

13. Other responsibilities as a Project Coordinator with the pilot which are not currently the task of another school administrator and are not listed above:

Responsibilities with the pilot:	Time spent on activity (minutes/days)

14. How many transitions between the dedicated space and classroom does each student involved in the pilot make per day?

Student 1:  
 Student 2:  
 Student 3:  
 Student 4:  
 Student 5:  
 Student 6:

15. How many school days has the student been absent this school year due to attending external ABA therapy?

Student 1:  
 Student 2:  
 Student 3:  
 Student 4:  
 Student 5:  
 Student 6:



**APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORMS AND INFORMATION LETTERS**

## DEBRIEFING FORM

Thank you for participating in an interview with our research team!

Your answers will help shape the future of education in Ontario. In particular, the Ministry of Education is investigating the possibility of expanding the school-based supports for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). To do this, the Ministry wants to hear about your experiences with respect to what works well and what can be improved. That is the reason for the evaluation.

In Year 1, the evaluation focused on the process, or implementation of the pilot at the 18 sites. Year 2 will focus on the impacts and outcomes associated with the dedicated space, EA online training and professional learning communities (PLCs), and school board hired BCBA/BCBA Equivalent. The purpose of this evaluation is to identify what aspects of the pilot are working well, and which aspects should be considered for possible expansion. The evaluation will focus primarily on the progress of the pilot components and where possible examine early outcomes and promising practices.

Please know that the data collected today will always remain **anonymous** and that this research has been vetted to ensure that it meets with appropriate ethics standards.

In participating in this evaluation, you will have heard of our firm, R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. Our company is an independent research company hired by the Ministry of Education to conduct this evaluation. You can learn more about us at [www.malatest.com](http://www.malatest.com).

If you have any additional questions about this evaluation or the research, you may contact any of the following researchers:

- Bess Ashby, R.A. Malatest & Associates, [b.ashby@malatest.com](mailto:b.ashby@malatest.com)
- April Balunda, R.A. Malatest & Associates, [a.balunda@malatest.com](mailto:a.balunda@malatest.com)
- Erika Clark, R.A. Malatest & Associates, [e.clark@malatest.com](mailto:e.clark@malatest.com)
- Andrew Bender, R.A. Malatest & Associates, [a.bender@malatest.com](mailto:a.bender@malatest.com)

To whom it may concern:

The Ontario Ministry of Education is evaluating the “Pilot to Improve School-Based Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.” R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd. (Malatest), a research firm, has been hired to complete this evaluation and identify which aspects of the pilot are working well and which aspects can be improved, should the Ministry expand the pilot.

As part of this evaluation, Malatest is inviting you to participate in a survey about the Geneva Centre for Autism (Geneva) Online Training Course you have completed. Malatest would like your feedback about the course to assess the extent to which the course increased your ability to provide support to students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The research has been approved by your school board ethics committee.

To participate in the 10 minute survey, please go to **[genevafeedback.malatest.net](http://genevafeedback.malatest.net)**. Participation in the survey is voluntary and participants may refuse to answer any question and withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Participants can ask questions prior to making a decision about their participation, please contact Erika should you have any questions.

If you do not have time to complete the entire survey, you can save your responses and come back to finish at a later date. The data you have already entered will be saved. **For data security reasons, you will need to enter your secure access code.**

**Statement of Confidentiality:**

All of the information you share will remain anonymous. Only researchers at Malatest will have access to your answers and responses will be reported to the Ministry of Education only in aggregate. The final report will be the property of the Ontario Ministry of Education. More information about Malatest’s privacy policy can be found on our website at <http://www.malatest.com/Privacy.htm>

Thank you!

**R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.**

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Toronto ON M5B 2E7  
Ph. 416.644.0161 x 163| Fax: 416.644.0164  
Victoria Edmonton Ottawa **Toronto** Halifax

## CONSENT FORM

**Title of Research Project:** Pilot to Improve School-Based Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

**Investigator(s):**

- Bess Ashby, R.A. Malatest & Associates, [b.ashby@malatest.com](mailto:b.ashby@malatest.com)
- April Balunda, R.A. Malatest & Associates, [a.balunda@malatest.com](mailto:a.balunda@malatest.com)
- Erika Clark, R.A. Malatest & Associates, [e.clark@malatest.com](mailto:e.clark@malatest.com)
- Andrew Bender, R.A. Malatest & Associates, [a.bender@malatest.com](mailto:a.bender@malatest.com)

**Purpose of the Research:**

The purpose of this evaluation is to identify early impacts and outcomes associated with the dedicated space, Education Assistant (EA) online training and professional learning communities (PLCs), and school board hired Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA)/BCBA Equivalent.

**Research Approval:**

The External Research and Ethics Review Committee of your school board has granted approval for this study. The school Principal has also given permission for this study to be conducted at your school.

**Description of the Research:**

The Ministry of Education is supporting a pilot project to improve school-based supports for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). One component of the school-based supports is providing a dedicated on-site space for external ABA service providers to conduct their therapy with students with ASD. Another component is offering a voluntary online ABA training for EAs. The third component is hiring a BCBA or an individual with equivalent qualifications

In Year 1, the evaluation focused on the process, or implementation of the pilot at the 18 sites. Year 2 will focus on the impacts and outcomes associated with the dedicated space, EA online training and professional learning communities (PLCs), and school board hired BCBA/BCBA Equivalent. The purpose of this evaluation is to identify what aspects of the pilot are working well, and which aspects should be considered for possible expansion.

**Participation:**

Participation in the evaluation is voluntary. Should you choose not to answer specific questions, there will be no consequence. All your information and answers will be kept confidential. No identifying information will be reported; all results will be reported in aggregate. If at any time during the research you would like to withdraw your answers, you may do so.

**Access to Research Information:**

Only the researchers at R.A. Malatest & Associates will have access to the data collected. All interview data will be stored on a secure server. All recordings will be transcribed and recordings will be destroyed after the final report is submitted.

**Consent:**

Please indicate on the next page that you agree to participate in this study. Your cooperation will be very much appreciated. Please feel free to contact the researchers (contact information provided at the beginning of this form) should you have any questions about this study.

I agree to participate in this evaluation.

**Signature/Name:**

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION AND INVITATION LETTER

### Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Ontario Ministry of Education is completing an evaluation of the *Pilot to Improve School-Based Supports for Students with Autism*. R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. (Malatest) has been hired to conduct this evaluation.

### Purpose of the Research:

The purpose of this evaluation is to identify what aspects of the pilot are working well, and which aspects should be considered for possible expansion. As part of the study, we would like to conduct a 30 minute interview with you, the parent/guardian. We will provide all interviewees with a copy of the interview guide in advance of the interview to allow interviewees time to consider their answers.

### Description of the Research:

In September 2017, 18 school boards received funding to carry out the province's pilot program aimed at improving school-based supports for students with ASD. All boards are implementing two components: a voluntary online ABA training course for EAs (Education Assistants), and hiring a board certified behavioral analyst (BCBA); 11 of the boards are also piloting the implementation of a dedicated space on school-property for students to receive their ABA services provided by an external service provider. The pilot is continuing in 2018/2019 in the 18 school boards.

In order to evaluate the progression of the pilot's actual and potential results, researchers from Malatest will be administering a survey to EAs who completed the online ABA training and parents of students with ASD participating in the pilot. The online survey will take approximately 10 minutes and will be completed at the respondents own convenience. Telephone interviews will be conducted with the school principal, board hired BCBA/BCBA equivalent and parents who have identified through the survey that they are interested in a follow-up interview. It is estimated that interviews will be approximately 30 minutes in length, and will be planned for a date and time that works best for the interviewee.

Malatest will work with the project coordinator at each school to distribute survey information schedule the interviews. At no time will students be directly involved in the research.

### Access to Research Information:

Only the researchers at R.A. Malatest & Associates will have access to the data collected. All survey and student data will be stored on a secure server. All recordings will be transcribed and recordings will be destroyed after the final report is submitted.

### Contact:

Please feel free to contact the researchers (contact information below) should you have any questions about this study. Thank-you for your consideration.

### Investigator(s):

- Bess Ashby, R.A. Malatest & Associates, [b.ashby@malatest.com](mailto:b.ashby@malatest.com)
- April Balunda, R.A. Malatest & Associates, [a.balunda@malatest.com](mailto:a.balunda@malatest.com)
- Erika Clark, R.A. Malatest & Associates, [e.clark@malatest.com](mailto:e.clark@malatest.com)
- Andrew Bender, R.A. Malatest & Associates, [a.bender@malatest.com](mailto:a.bender@malatest.com)

**Dear Parent/Guardian:**

The Ontario Ministry of Education is evaluating the *Pilot to Improve School-Based Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder*. R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd. (Malatest), a research firm, has been hired to complete this evaluation and identify which aspects of the pilot are working well and which aspects can be improved, should the Ministry expand the pilot.

As part of this evaluation, Malatest is inviting you to participate in a survey about your child’s participation in the pilot. Malatest would like your feedback about the program and its impact on your child’s ABA therapy support in a school setting. The research has been approved by your child’s school board ethics committee.

To participate in the 10 minute survey, please go to [autismstudy.malatest.net](http://autismstudy.malatest.net). Participation in the survey is voluntary. **If you participate, you will be asked to enter a response for each question in the survey. You cannot skip a question. You will have the option to select “I prefer not to answer” if you wish; however, some questions will be mandatory because they guide the other questions you will be asked.** You can withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Erika Clark at [e.clark@malatest.com](mailto:e.clark@malatest.com).

If you do not have time to complete the entire survey, you can save your responses and come back to finish at a later date. The data you have already entered will be saved. **For data security reasons, you will need to enter your secure access code.** Your access code will be given to you when you first start the survey. **Please write down your access code so you will have it available should you need to return to the survey.**

**Statement of Confidentiality:**

All of the information you share will remain anonymous for reporting purposes. This means that only researchers at Malatest will have access to your answers. Your answers will be grouped with the answers of others who fill out the survey and responses will be reported to the Ministry of Education only in aggregate. You will only be asked to provide your email address and phone number if you would like to participate in future discussions about your child’s participation in the pilot. More information about Malatest’s privacy policy can be found on our website at <http://www.malatest.com/Privacy.htm>. The final report will be the property of the Ontario Ministry of Education which makes the decision whether or not results of the evaluation are made public.

Thank you!

**R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.**

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 Toronto ON M5B 2E7  
 Ph. 416.644.0161 x 163| Fax: 416.644.0164  
 Victoria Edmonton Ottawa **Toronto** Halifax

## PRINCIPAL/FEDERATION REPRESENTATIVE INFORMATION AND INVITATION LETTER

### Dear Principal/Federation Representative,

The Ontario Ministry of Education is completing an evaluation of the *Pilot to Improve School-Based Supports for Students with Autism*. R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. (Malatest) has been hired to conduct this evaluation.

### Purpose of the Research:

The Ministry of Education is supporting a pilot project to improve school-based supports for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). One component of the school-based supports is providing a dedicated on-site space for external Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) practitioners to conduct their therapy with students with ASD. Another component is offering a voluntary online ABA training for education assistants (EAs).

The purpose of this evaluation is to identify what aspects of the pilot are working well, and which aspects should be considered for possible expansion. The evaluation will focus primarily on the process/implementation of the pilot initiatives (the online ABA training, dedicated space, and BCBA role), and where possible examine early outcomes and promising practices.

### Description of the Research:

In September 2017, 18 school boards received funding to carry out the province's pilot program aimed at improving school-based supports for students with ASD. All boards are implementing two components: a voluntary online ABA training course for EAs (Education Assistants), and hiring a board certified behavioural analyst (BCBA); 11 of the boards are also piloting the implementation of a dedicated space on school-property for students to receive their ABA services. The pilot is continuing in 2018/2019 in the 18 school boards.

In order to evaluate the progression of the pilot, researchers from Malatest will be administering a survey to EAs who completed the online ABA training and parents of students with ASD participating in the pilot. The online survey will take approximately 10 minutes and will be completed at the respondents own convenience. Telephone interviews will be conducted with the school principal, board hired BCBA/BCBA equivalent, Project Coordinator, school-board Superintendents and parents who have identified through the survey that they are interested in a follow-up interview. It is estimated that the It is estimated that interviews will be approximately 30 minutes in length, and will be planned for a date and time that works best for the interviewee.

Malatest will work with the project coordinator at each school to distribute survey information schedule the interviews. At no time will students be directly involved in the research.

### Research Approval:

The External Research Review Committee of your school board has granted approval for this study.

### Access to Research Information:

Only the researchers at R.A. Malatest & Associates will have access to the data collected. All interview and student data will be stored on a secure server. All recordings will be transcribed and recordings will be destroyed after the final report is submitted.

### Contact:

Please feel free to contact the researchers (contact information below) should you have any questions about this study. Thank you for your consideration.

**Investigator(s):**

- Bess Ashby, R.A. Malatest & Associates, [b.ashby@malatest.com](mailto:b.ashby@malatest.com)
- April Balunda, R.A. Malatest & Associates, [a.balunda@malatest.com](mailto:a.balunda@malatest.com)
- Erika Clark, R.A. Malatest & Associates, [e.clark@malatest.com](mailto:e.clark@malatest.com)
- Andrew Bender, R.A. Malatest & Associates, [a.bender@malatest.com](mailto:a.bender@malatest.com)