

9. Moving Forward

This School Health Support Services Review aims to build on the successes of the program since its inception over 25 years ago, address some of its challenges, and support the province in a critical first step toward improving the program. The findings and recommendations of this Review outline steps toward change to improve the program, align services across sectors and with other programs, and enable SHSS to better serve children and families.

Given the many stakeholders involved in the SHSS program across Ontario, the recommendations coming from this Review will require a collaborative commitment and effort across all relevant sectors, involving stakeholders at both the provincial and local levels. Leadership and commitment are needed from both levels for the different recommendations, to ensure that strategies implemented are effective and sustainable.

The following table summarizes the recommendations from this review with their associated intended outcomes. Additional sub-recommendations are identified in Sections 5 – 8 of this report, which support each of the recommendations and outcomes summarized below. Through continued commitment and involvement at the provincial and local levels, the recommendations from this review can enhance SHSS throughout the province.

Recommendations	Proposed Outcomes
Mandate and Accountability	
Recommendation 1: Clarify the scope of services delivered under the mandate of the SHSS program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a common understanding of SHSS program purpose and objectives across stakeholders for more consistency in service delivery across the province • Clarification of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities across stakeholders to deliver SHSS • Optimal use of speech and language resources that are coordinated to meet the needs of children requiring them • Examination of legislation that will identify appropriate policies required to support the program mandate and scope of services delivered
Recommendation 2: Under the SHSS mandate, enhance cross-sector collaboration to deliver SHSS that optimizes expertise and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in establishing a common understanding of the SHSS program • Facilitate working relationships, service delivery, planning and coordination among local area stakeholders • Define program accountability, roles and responsibilities and performance expectations that relate to child and family focused outcomes • Promote innovative service delivery models that optimize the use of available resources

Recommendations	Proposed Outcomes
Access and Equity	
Recommendation 3: Develop access guidelines and tools to guide service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable equity of SHSS program access across the province • Enhance collaboration across sectors and SHSS stakeholders to meet the needs of the population • Create mechanisms to share information across stakeholder groups to help inform program planning • Determine how to address challenges of program planning among competing initiatives by aligning population needs and sector changes with resource capacity
Recommendation 4: Develop formal forums and processes for proactive service planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance collaboration across sectors and SHSS stakeholders to meet the needs of the population • Create mechanisms to share information across stakeholder groups to help inform program planning • Determine how to address challenges of program planning among competing initiatives by aligning population needs and sector changes with resource capacity
Recommendation 5: Establish alternative models of service delivery across the province to improve access and wait times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing optimization of finite resources with the introduction of alternate health professionals, which aligns with leading practice • Increasing access to specialized expertise to better support children's needs in a timely manner
Recommendation 6: Increase awareness of the SHSS program provincially and locally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase ability for families, educators, and other stakeholders to identify and refer children to appropriate supports • Offer relevant information to families in ways that resonate with them and enhance their understanding of the network of services available • Reduce confusion for families in navigating the system through a single point of access

Recommendations	Proposed Outcomes
Coordination	
Recommendation 7: Develop and implement common guidelines to achieve a “shared care and service plan” for each child that engages appropriate stakeholder groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate shared planning across stakeholder groups for relevant clients • Reduce service fragmentation • Enable CCAC, providers, educators and families with up-to-date information on a child’s progress within the SHSS program
Recommendation 8: Assess effectiveness of case management services across all student population types to determine appropriate case management models to deploy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce administrative efforts and minimize potential service duplication • Limit potential communication delays, and thereby, reduce wait times for service • Optimize SHSS roles to enable stakeholders to increase time spent on direct client service delivery
Recommendation 9: Develop common protocols for SHSS transition processes across a child’s life stages and across organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable seamless coordination and knowledge sharing to facilitate smooth transitions for children between key life stages and across jurisdictions, which may increase their likelihood for successful development • Enhance appropriate community programs, vocations, or residences for youths upon graduation from SHSS, which can allow SHSS students to maintain functional abilities in their next life stage
Recommendation 10: Establish navigation support to assist families in better understanding and navigating the services available for children requiring SHSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower families to understand the breadth of health support services available and make informed decisions about their child’s care • Disseminate relevant information to assist case managers/care coordinators, educators and providers to focus on direct client support
Recommendation 11: Assess, develop and implement mechanisms required to enhance knowledge transfer among stakeholders in service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build capacity within the system to not only support the needs of children, but also apply relevant strategies to other students with similar challenges • Reduce the reliance on specialized clinicians and therapists to deliver certain types of support services, and enable them to address students with more complex support needs

Recommendations	Proposed Outcomes
Quality	
Recommendation 12: Assess SHSS program outcomes in achieving its mandate, with defined indicators and measurement processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the effectiveness of SHSS program and models in achieving its mandate and objectives • Support accountability of the program with indicators that assess whether the program mandate, objectives, roles and responsibilities are being met • Determine changes required to the program to enhance its effectiveness • Promote child and family-centred approaches by examining client outcomes and directly linking them to quality improvement plans • Determine appropriate SHSS program outcomes and indicators that are meaningful to each of the ministries/sectors and system goals • Set accountability structures to measure, monitor and act on results of the program outcomes • Establish province-wide standards for outcome measurement tools and data reporting
Recommendation 13: Establish a provincial mechanism that objectively reviews SHSS models and clinical leading practices on an ongoing basis, and integrates results into the program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote child and family-centred goals and outcomes by incorporating practices that lead to improved client outcomes • Address needs of providers and educators in supporting goal achievement • Build a base of evidence and leading practices research to support SHSS • Enhance application of leading practices into service delivery
Recommendation 14: Establish tools to determine weighting or required intensity of services for SHSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in projecting future client population service demand and resource requirements • Facilitate proactive program planning for SHSS by developing strategies to allocate and optimize available resources to meet current and future service demands
Recommendation 15: Establish initial and ongoing SHSS professional development requirements for stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity building across sectors • Update stakeholders on leading practices to be deployed in service delivery and help to build an understanding of the impact to their own practices.