

## NEWS RELEASE



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### **Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board Uses *AutismPro* to Manage Increasing Number of Students with Autism**

*Technology provides educators with effective communication and case management tools for teaching students with autism*

DENVER (Mar. 9, 2010) – Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board (TBCDSB) has adopted *AutismPro* to provide its frontline educators, special education staff and administrators the relevant training and useful tracking tools needed to effectively manage and teach the increasing number of students with autism in their district. Through *AutismPro*, TBCDSB educators can access a variety of training resources and an interactive, easy-to-use communications solution that helps capture, manage and leverage critical development and intervention data for each student's case file.

Over the last year, TBCDSB in Ontario, Canada, has seen a 16-17 percent increase in students with autism (from 52 to 62 students) among its more than 8,000 students, and predicts a total of 80 students to be identified in the upcoming school year. For the 2009-2010 school year, TBCDSB was tasked with finding an innovative solution to manage its growing number of students with autism.

“We had a mandate to find alternative ways to build district-wide capacity for these incoming students,” said Joel Godecki, ASD project consultant for Thunder Bay. “The district also had to consider a cost-effective way to train our teachers and staff. *AutismPro*'s web-based solution saved the district thousands of dollars by using a method different from our traditional training.”

Providing close to 50 hours of online training content, *AutismPro Workshops* provides video and illustrated case examples that demonstrate behaviors and relevant interventions as identified by experts in the field of autism intervention. *AutismPro Workshops* was designed to help districts supply the right training material to build educators' competency and capability, while optimizing reduced or limited training time.

“After our first year of using *AutismPro*, the education staff is more knowledgeable and has a greater understanding of the variety of methodologies and teaching strategies for students with ASD and other developmental needs, allowing staff members to collaborate with parents confidently,” continued Godecki. “This year, we are ensuring that *AutismPro Workshops* is

available to all educators and assistants district-wide. We also can set training goals for each educator and monitor their progress to establish if continued learning is needed.”

In addition to training, *AutismPro* enables TBCDSB’s frontline educators, paraprofessionals, special education staff, administrators, and parents to collaborate daily, track student progress and generate progress reports for individual students, creating a customized intervention program using one system. The anytime, anywhere access to a student’s developmental data provides intervention team members with access to a centralized communication portal to understand a student’s progress and the likelihood that goals and objectives set within a student’s individual education plan can be achieved.

“Working with AutismPro has allowed all stakeholders involved to speak the same language which is critical to the success of each student’s learning environment,” Godecki concluded. “Encouraging collaboration among educators, administrators and parents ensures everyone is on the same page about the student’s progress. This is a huge step forward and away from the traditional method of managing cases in a three-ring binder.”

“Students with autism require individualized attention, continuity and stability,” said Kevin Custer, CEO of AutismPro. “With more than 80 percent of children with autism spending part of their day in general education classrooms, it is critical these frontline educators are well trained and prepared to teach students with autism. In partnering with TBCDSB, we are able to help develop a specialized intervention program that best suits the district and its growing number of students with autism.”

For more information about *AutismPro*, visit [www.AutismPro.com](http://www.AutismPro.com).

### **About AutismPro**

AutismPro, provider of a 21st century response to educating students with autism, works with school districts, early intervention providers, and governments to supplement quality programs. The company’s suite of products enables administrators to build district-wide staff competency and capability, and helps educators to improve outcomes for students with autism. AutismPro has offices in Denver, Colo., and Fredericton, New Brunswick. For more information, visit <http://www.AutismPro.com/Media>.

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