

A Parent's Guide to Special Education



Northeastern Catholic District School Board

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We believe:

- ★ every student is a valued and welcomed member of our Catholic learning community.
- ★ all children and youth can succeed given the necessary support, services, and access to quality programs.
- ★ parents play an important role in their children's academic, social, and personal success.
- ★ all students should be empowered to become independent, active members of their community, a place where every person contributes and benefits from living and learning together.

THE IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT, AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC)

WHO IS IDENTIFIED AS AN EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT?

An "exceptional student" means a student whose behavioural, communication, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered by the school board's Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) to benefit from a placement in a special education program and/or services.

WHAT IS AN IPRC?

Regulation 181/98 requires that all school boards set up one or more IPRC. An IPRC is a group made up of at least three people. For our school board, we normally lead an IPRC with a principal, classroom teacher, and resource teacher.

Parents are invited and strongly encouraged to attend the IPRC meeting. Along with this group of people, there are also others who may attend:

- other resource people, at the discretion of the principal (such as special education staff, board support staff, or an agency representative who may provide further information or clarification;
- a representative for the parents - that is, a person who may support the student or the parents, or speak on their behalf.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE IPRC?

The committee will:

- decide whether or not your child should be identified as exceptional.
- identify the areas of your child's exceptionality, according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education.
- decide an appropriate placement for your child.
- review the identification and placement at least once in each school year.

WHAT HAPPENS AT AN IPRC MEETING?

- ▶ The principal, who acts as the chair of the meeting, will introduce everyone and explain the purpose of the meeting. The principal will review your child's educational history.
- ▶ The IPRC will review all available information about your child: reports that have been received by a professional, notes on progress made in class and intervention programs, identify areas of strengths and continued areas of need; discuss any specialized transportation or equipment that may be necessary.
- ▶ Once these details have been discussed, a recommendation for an identification and placement will be made.
- ▶ Before the IPRC can consider placing your child in a special education class, it must consider whether placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services will meet your child's needs and be consistent with your preferences.
- ▶ A summary of the discussions is recorded on the "Statement of Decision".
- ▶ An IPRC review meeting will be held at least once per year to decide if there are changes to a student's identification and placement. A parent may request this review any time after the student has been in a special education program/placement for 3 months.

OTHER IMPORTANT DETAILS OF THE IPRC:

- ▶ Students are referred to an IPRC by the school principal, with written notice to the parent, based on the results of an assessment conducted by a qualified, registered professional.
- ▶ A parent may request an IPRC to the principal in writing. The principal is then required to make the referral to the Superintendent of Education.
- ▶ Before considering a student for referral to the IPRC, the principal must ensure that the student's case has been carefully reviewed and the necessary interventions have been put in place prior to the referral. When a student is referred to the IPRC, it is an indication that all other resources at the school level have been exhausted and that additional programs and/or services are required to meet the needs of the student.
- ▶ The IPRC may find:
 - ✓ that the student is an exceptional student, or
 - ✓ that the student is NOT an exceptional student.
- ▶ If the committee decides the student is exceptional, it will then:
 - ✓ identify the strengths and needs of the student;
 - ✓ determine the category of exceptionality based on the Ministry of Education and school board criteria;
 - ✓ recommend a placement for the student and provide a reason for the choice.
- ▶ If you are unable to attend the scheduled meeting, the principal will send the statement of decision to you for your consideration and signature.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE IPRC HAS MADE ITS DECISION?

- ✓ If you **AGREE** with the IPRC decision, you will be asked to indicate, by signing your name, that you agree with the identification and placement decisions made by the IPRC. The principal will then ensure that an IEP is developed for your child.
- ✘ If you **DO NOT AGREE** with either the identification or the placement decision made by the IPRC, you may request (within 15 days of receipt of the decision) that the IPRC hold a second meeting to discuss your concerns; or within 30 days of receipt of the decision, file a notice of appeal with the Director of Education. If you do not agree with the decision after the second meeting, you may file a notice of appeal within 15 days of receiving the decision. If you do not consent to the IPRC decision but you do not appeal it, the board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

HOW DOES THE APPEAL PROCESS WORK?

If you disagree with the IPRC's identification of your child as exceptional or with the placement decision of the IPRC you may, within 30 days of receipt of the original decision or within 15 days of receipt of the decision from the second meeting as described above, give written notification of your intention to appeal the decision to the Director of Education, Northeastern Catholic District School Board, 101 Spruce Street North, Timmins, Ontario, P4N 6M9. The notice of appeal must indicate the decision with which you disagree and include a statement that sets out your reason for disagreeing.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE APPEAL PROCESS?

- The board will establish a special education appeal board to hear your appeal. The appeal board will be composed of three persons who have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal, one of whom is to be selected by you, the parent.
- The chair of the appeal board will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but no later than 30 days after he or she has been selected (unless parents and board provide written consent to a later date).
- The appeal board will receive the material reviewed by the IPRC and may interview any persons who may be able to contribute information about the matter under appeal.
- You, the parent, and your child (if he/she is 16 years or older) are entitled to be present at, and to participate in, all discussions.
- The appeal board must make its recommendation within 3 days of the meeting's ending. It may agree with the IPRC and recommend that the decision be upheld or disagree with the IPRC and make a recommendation to the board about your child's identification or placement or both.

The Appeal Process continued...

- The appeal board will report its recommendations in writing, to you and to the school board, providing the reasons for its recommendations.
- Within 30 days of receiving the appeal board's written statement, the school board will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations. Boards are not required to follow the appeal board recommendation.
- You may accept the decision of the school board or you may appeal to a Special Education Tribunal. You may request a hearing by writing to the secretary of the Special Education Tribunal. Information about making an application to the tribunal will be included with the appeal board's decision.

WHAT IS A SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM?

A special education program is defined as an educational program that is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation. It includes an Individual Education Plan containing specific objective and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the student.

WHAT ARE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES?

Special education services are the facilities and resources, including equipment and support personnel needed to create a special education program.

WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)?

An IEP must be developed for your child, in consultation with you. It must include:

- specific educational expectations,
- an outline of the special education program and services that will be received,
- a statement about the methods by which your child's progress will be reviewed,
- for students 14 years and older (except for those students identified as gifted), a plan for transition to appropriate postsecondary school activities (work, further education, and community living).

The IEP must be completed within 30 days after your child has been placed in the program, and the principal must ensure that you receive a copy of the IEP.

PLACEMENT OPTIONS	
Regular Class Resource Assistance	The student is placed in a regular class for most or all of the day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified special education teacher or support staff.
Regular Class Withdrawal Assistance	The student is placed in a regular class and receives instruction outside the classroom, for less than 50% of the school day from a qualified special education teacher.
Regular Class Indirect Support	The student is placed in a regular class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialized consultative services.
Special Education Partial Integration	The student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class for at least 50% of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.
Special Education Fully Self-Contained	The student is placed in a special education class for the entire school day.

PROVINCIAL AND DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS

The ministry operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools throughout Ontario for deaf, blind, deaf-blind, and severely learning disabled students, as well as those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Residential programs are offered at the schools Monday to Friday, for students who live too far from school to travel daily.

Demonstration Schools for English-speaking students with severe learning disabilities, including learning disabilities with ADHD

AMETHYST SCHOOL

London, Ontario (519)453-4400

SAGANASKA DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL

Belleville, Ontario (613)967-2830

TRILLIUM SCHOOL

Milton, Ontario (905)878-2851

Schools for the Deaf / Blind and Blind-Deaf

ERNEST C. DRURY SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

Milton, Ontario (905)878-2851

ROBARTS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

London, Ontario (519) 453-4400

SIR JAMES WHITNEY SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

Belleville, Ontario (613)967-2823

W. ROSS MACDONALD SCHOOL (Deaf/Deaf-Blind)

Brantford, Ontario (519)759-0730

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)

Regulation 464/97 under the Education Act requires each school board in Ontario to establish a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) which is composed of trustees, members from local associations and local agencies. We are pleased to have membership from the following organizations and agencies:

- * Child and Family Services
- * Lord's Kitchen
- * Canadian National Institute for the Blind
- * Community Living - Timmins
- * Cochrane Temiskaming Resource Centre
- * Canadian Mental Health Association
- * Children's Treatment Centre

For more information you are encouraged to visit our website at:

www.ncdsb.on.ca

You may also find it helpful to contact your local community Catholic School:

NCDSB ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Aileen Wright English Catholic School (Cochrane)	Bishop Belleau School (Moosonee)
English Catholic Central School (New Liskeard)	Holy Family School (Englehart)
O'Gorman Intermediate Catholic School (Timmins)	Sacred Heart Catholic School (Kirkland Lake)
Sacred Heart School (Timmins)	St. Anne English Catholic School (Iroquois Falls)
St. Jerome School (Kirkland Lake)	St. Joseph School (South Porcupine)
St. Patrick School (Cobalt)	St. Patrick School (Kapusksing)
St. Paul School (Timmins)	

NCDSB SECONDARY SCHOOL

O'Gorman High School (Timmins)

CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS OF EXCEPTIONALITIES

BEHAVIOUR

Behaviour	<p>A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance, and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships; • excessive fears or anxieties; • a tendency to compulsive reaction; • an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination.
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COMMUNICATION

Autism	<p>A severe learning disability that is characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disturbances in rate of educational development, ability to relate to the environment, mobility, perception, speech, and language; • lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language.
Deaf & Hard of Hearing	<p>An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.</p>
Language Impairment	<p>A learning disorder characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or the use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; • includes a language delay, dysfluency, and/or voice articulation development.
Speech Impairment	<p>A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages, and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm, and stress.</p>
Learning Disability	<p>A learning disorder evident in both academic and social situations that involves one or more of the processes necessary for the proper use of spoken language or the symbols of communication, and that is characterized by a condition that:</p> <p>is not primarily the result of:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">impairment of vision, impairment of hearing, physical disability, developmental disability, primary emotional disturbance, cultural difference;</p> <p>results in a significant discrepancy between academic achievement and assessed intellectual ability, with deficits in one or more of the following:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">receptive language (listening, reading), language processing (thinking, conceptualizing, integrating), expressive language (talking, spelling, writing), mathematical computations;</p> <p>may be associated with one or more conditions diagnosed as:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a perceptual handicap, a brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, developmental aphasia.</p>

INTELLECTUAL	
Giftedness	An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.
Mild Intellectual Disability	A learning disorder characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and supportive service, • an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development, • a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.
Developmental Disability	A severe learning disorder characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development, • an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development, • a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self support.
PHYSICAL	
Physical Disability	A condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of pupils without exceptionalities who are of the same age or developmental level.
Blind and Low Vision	A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.
MULTIPLE	
Multiple Exceptionalities	A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities, that is of such nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.

Making a difference...
One child at a time.

