




DRAFT

Special Education in Ontario

Kindergarten to Grade 12

Policy and Resource Guide

2017



support every child
reach every student



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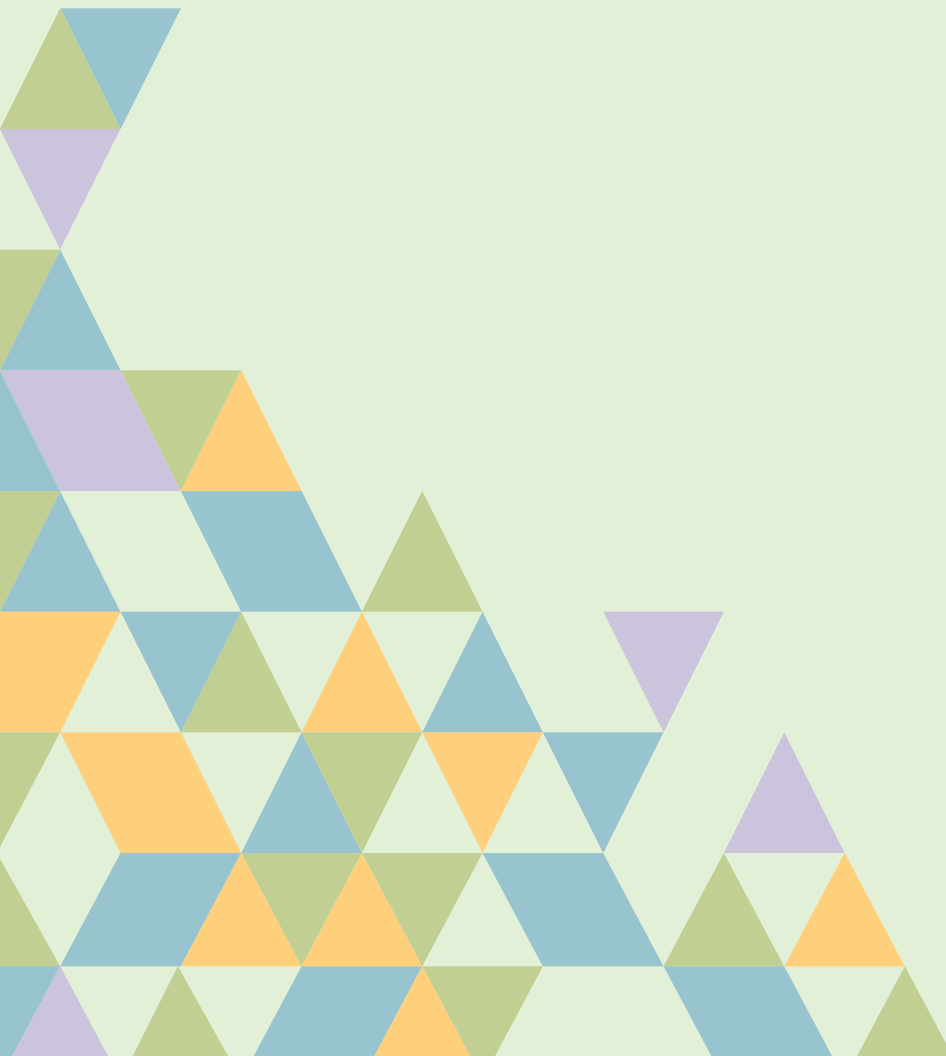
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Introduction

This document supersedes *Special Education: A Guide for Educators* (2001). It also supersedes the following policy and resource documents that have been released by the Ministry of Education to support educators in the implementation of effective programs and/or services for students with special education needs:

- *Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans* (2000)
- *Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation* (2000)
- *Transition Planning: A Resource Guide* (2002)
- *The Individual Education Plan (IEP): A Resource Guide* (2004)

Note that while this document supersedes the two standards documents – *Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans* and *Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation* – the standards described in both documents remain unchanged and are reflected in this guide.

Background

The Ontario government is committed to enabling all students to reach their potential, and to succeed. With the release of the Ministry of Education document *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario (2014)*, expectations have been raised both for the education system and for the development of the potential of Ontario's children. The ministry recognizes that every student is unique and that each must have opportunities to achieve success according to his or her own interests, abilities, and goals. It also recognizes that among children and youth who are at risk of not succeeding are those with special education needs.¹ To ensure that these students have every opportunity to succeed, the vision for special education in Ontario continues to be refined and, in the process, achievement gaps are being narrowed.²

The current provincial education priorities are defined in *Achieving Excellence*:

- achieving excellence
- ensuring equity
- promoting well-being
- enhancing public confidence

These four goals are all fundamental to special education programs. Of particular importance, however, is the goal of ensuring equity, with its focus on providing the best possible learning opportunities and supports for students who may be at risk of not succeeding. Everyone in our publicly funded education system – regardless of background or personal circumstance – must feel engaged and included. Ontario's diversity is one of the province's greatest assets. Embracing this diversity and moving beyond tolerance and celebration to inclusivity and respect will help us reach our goal of making Ontario's education system the most equitable in the world. The fundamental principle driving this work is that every student has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of ancestry, culture,

1. For the purposes of this document, the term *students with special education needs* includes all students who are receiving special education programs and services, whether or not they have been identified as exceptional.

2. *Achieving Excellence* notes that the "achievement gap between boys and girls is narrowing, as is the gap between elementary students with special education needs and elementary students generally" (p. 2). (emphasis added)

ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or other factors.

Ontario has come far in closing gaps for many learners, yet more work needs to be done for those students who struggle most. *Special Education in Ontario, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Resource Guide* (2017) is designed to aid those committed to helping children in Kindergarten and students from Grades 1 to 12 achieve their full potential in life.

This document has benefited from feedback and input from a wide variety of organizations and individuals.

The Purpose of This Guide

The purpose of this document is to support school boards³ and schools in their effective delivery of programs and services for students with special education needs.

Special Education in Ontario, Kindergarten to Grade 12 provides comprehensive and current information about special education legislation, regulation, and policy, and is aligned with current Ministry of Education directions for special education programs and services.

Intended Audience

This document is intended primarily for the use of administrators, special education professionals, teachers, and special education advisory committees (SEACs). It is intended for educators at all publicly funded elementary and secondary English-language schools in Ontario. Parents⁴ of students with special education needs may also find this document useful.

3. The terms *school board* and *board* are used in this document to refer to district school boards and school authorities.

4. In this document, *parent(s)* refers to both parent(s) and guardian(s). It may also be taken to include caregivers or close family members who are responsible for raising the child.

The Role of the Ministry

The Ministry of Education of Ontario is committed to ensuring that all learners have the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to succeed in a rapidly changing society and that they are provided with the learning opportunities and supports they require. In order to do this, the ministry establishes policies and programs regarding the governance, funding, and delivery of education.

The Education Act⁵ and the regulations made under its authority are the main source of the legal responsibilities pertaining to special education. They provide comprehensive procedures for the identification of exceptional students, for the placement of those students in educational settings where the special education programs and services appropriate to students' needs can be delivered, and for the review of the identification of exceptional students and their placement. Many of these programs and services are also applicable to students who have not been identified as exceptional but who have special education needs, as identified by both their parents and the school board.

5. The Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, as amended, referred to hereafter as the Education Act, or the Act.

Our Shared Beliefs

Special education reform can provoke positive change across the entire system. For example, the guiding principles and key themes outlined in *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (2013, p. 7) were first described in *Education for All: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students With Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6* (2005). All educators need to consider these principles in their program planning.

The guiding principles are:

- All students can succeed.
- Each student has his or her own unique patterns of learning.
- Successful instructional practices are founded on evidence-based research, tempered by experience.
- Universal design and differentiated instruction are effective and interconnected means of meeting the learning or productivity needs of any group of students.
- Classroom teachers are the key educators for a student's literacy and numeracy development.
- Classroom teachers need the support of the larger community to create a learning environment that supports all students.
- Fairness is not sameness.

The Organization of This Document

This guide is divided into the following sections:

- **Part A: Legislation, Policy, and Funding** describes the legislative and policy framework for special education programs and services, including funding for special education.
- **Part B: Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans** reproduces in full the text portion of the policy document *Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans* (2000), which describes the province-wide standards that school boards must meet when developing their special education plans.
- **Part C: Early Identification, Assessment, and Transition Planning** describes the steps that should be taken to ensure effective program planning for students with special education needs.
- **Part D: The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process** describes the IPRC and appeals processes as set out in Regulation 181/98.
- **Part E: The Individual Education Plan (IEP)** provides a guide to the development of an IEP, including a transition plan, according to province-wide standards and recent policy/program memoranda.
- **Part F: Other Programs and Services** focuses on special education programs and services offered by institutions other than school boards and by ministries other than but related to the Ministry of Education.
- The **Glossary** contains definitions of frequently used terminology in special education.

Most sections in *Special Education in Ontario, Kindergarten to Grade 12* include electronic links to the Education Act, regulations, policy documents, and policy/program memoranda. References to support documents and resources are also included. Active links to related sections or items within the *Special Education in Ontario, Kindergarten to Grade 12* document itself are also provided.

Special education programs and services in Ontario are constantly evolving in order to ensure that students with special education needs have every opportunity to succeed. This guide will be updated as required.

PART A

Legislation, Policy, and Funding

Introduction

The provision of special education programs and services for students of the province is governed by the Education Act, the regulations made under the Act, policy/program memoranda, and ministry policy documents. The legal framework provides the comprehensive procedures for the identification of exceptional students, for the placement of those students in educational settings where the special education programs and services appropriate to their needs can be delivered, and for the review of the identification of exceptional students and their placement. In addition to providing an overview of the legal framework and guiding policies for special education in Ontario, this chapter provides information about special education funding.

Legislation and Policy/Program Memoranda Pertaining to Students with Special Education Needs

► The Education Act

The Education Act requires the Minister of Education to ensure that appropriate special education programs and services are provided for exceptional pupils in accordance with the Act and the regulations.

Subsection 8(3) states:

The Minister shall ensure that all exceptional children in Ontario have available to them, in accordance with this Act and the regulations, appropriate special education programs and services without payment of fees by parents or guardians resident in Ontario, and shall provide for the parents or guardians to appeal the appropriateness of the special education placement. . . .

This section of the Act requires “school boards to implement procedures for early and ongoing identification of the learning abilities and needs” of students. It also gives the right to the Minister to review the categories and definitions of exceptionalities, which are described in the [Categories of Exceptionalities section](#).

It is mandatory for all school boards to provide, or purchase from another board, special education programs and services for their exceptional students. Subsection 170(1) states:

Every board shall . . . provide or enter into an agreement with another board to provide in accordance with the regulations special education programs and special education services for its exceptional pupils.

Subsection 1(1) defines *exceptional pupil*, *special education program*, and *special education services* as follows.

An **exceptional pupil** is:

a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a special education program by a committee, established under subparagraph iii of paragraph 5 of subsection 11(1), of the board,

- (a) of which the pupil is a resident pupil,
- (b) that admits or enrolls the pupil other than pursuant to an agreement with another board for the provision of education, or
- (c) to which the cost of education in respect of the pupil is payable by the Minister.

A **special education program** for an exceptional pupil is:

an educational program that is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation and that includes a plan containing special objectives and an outline of educational services that meets the needs of the exceptional pupil.

Special education services are:

facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.

► Regulations

The following chart lists and provides links to the regulations made under the Education Act that support special education programs and services for exceptional students.

Regulation Number	Title	Description
181/98	Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils	<p>Governs the establishment and conduct of the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), and sets out the procedures involved in identifying a student as exceptional, deciding the student’s placement, or appealing such decisions when the parent does not agree with the IPRC. (The requirements of the regulation for the IPRC are described in detail in Part D of this guide.)</p> <p>Governs the establishment of the Individual Education Plan (IEP). (The requirements of the IEP are described in detail in Part E of this guide.) For more information on categories and definitions of exceptionality, see the Categories of Exceptionalities section in this part of the guide.</p>
296	Ontario Schools for the Blind and the Deaf	Relates to the operation of the Ontario Schools for the Blind and the Deaf and sets out the requirements with respect to admissions, fees, and transportation, as well as the duties of students, teachers, residence counsellors, parents, and the superintendent.

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Regulation Number	Title	Description
298	Operation of Schools – General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsection 3(3) permits a reduction in the length of the instructional program for exceptional students to less than the required 5 hours per day. • Section 11 sets out the duties of principals with respect to exceptional students, in addition to those in the Act. • Section 19 sets out the qualifications teachers must hold to be placed in charge of or to teach in a special education program. • Section 26 describes the supervisory relationship between principals and professional support staff, including psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers, where such persons are performing duties in a school. • Section 30 provides for special education programs for preschool children who are Deaf or hard of hearing. • Section 31 sets out maximum enrolment for special education classes. • Section 32 sets out the use of sign language in the classroom and as a language of instruction and in communications in regards to student discipline and management of the school.
306	Special Education Programs and Services	Requires each school board to maintain and regularly review a special education plan. (The requirements taken from <i>Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans</i> (2000) are described in detail in Part B of this guide.)
464/97	Special Education Advisory Committees	Governs the appointment to and operation of Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs). (The requirements of Special Education Advisory Committees are described in detail in the Advisory Committees on Special Education section in this part of the guide.)

► Policy/Program Memoranda

Policy/program memoranda (PPMs) are official statements of policy issued by the Ministry of Education and directed to school boards and schools. PPMs serve a number of functions, including:

- setting out requirements regarding the application of a regulation, a section of the Education Act, or other legislation;
- setting out a standard that boards are expected to meet or a directive with which they must comply;
- providing an interpretation of legislation or regulations that may significantly affect board practice.

The following chart lists and provides links to PPMs that pertain exclusively or in part to students with special education needs.

PPM Number	Title	Year
1	Ontario Schools for the Blind and Deaf as Resource Centres	1986
8	Identification of and Program Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities	2014
11	Early Identification of Children’s Learning Needs	1982
59	Psychological Testing and Assessment of Pupils	1982
76C	Alternative Educational Programs and Services for Deaf, Blind, and Deaf-Blind Exceptional Pupils	1991
81	Provision of Health Support Services in School Settings	1984
89	The Residential Demonstration Schools for Students with Learning Disabilities: General Information and Details of the Referral Process	1990
119	Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools	2013
138	Daily Physical Activity in Elementary Schools, Grades 1–8	2005
140	Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)	2007

(continued)

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PPM Number	Title	Year
141	School Board Programs for Students on Long-Term Suspension	2012
142	School Board Programs for Expelled Students	2012
144	Bullying Prevention and Intervention	2012
145	Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour	2012
149	Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies for Provision of Services by Regulated Health Professionals, Regulated Social Service Professionals, and Paraprofessionals	2009
151	Professional Activity Days Devoted to Provincial Education Priorities	2011
153	Applications for Temporary Letters of Approval	2010
155	Diagnostic Assessment in Support of Student Learning	2013
156	Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs	2013
159	Collaborative Professionalism	2016
160	Protected Time for Daily Mathematics Instruction, Grades 1 to 8	2016

A Summary of Requirements of School Boards under the Education Act and the Regulations

Under the Education Act and the regulations made under the Act, a school board is required to do the following:

- implement procedures for early and ongoing identification of children’s learning needs (Education Act, s. 8(3)(a); detailed procedures are outlined in PPM No. 11)
- provide, or enter into an agreement with another board to provide, special education programs and services for its exceptional students (Education Act, s. 170(1))
- establish Identification, Placement, and Review Committees (IPRCs); follow specified processes in the identification and placement of exceptional students; and provide a mechanism whereby parents can appeal decisions of the IPRCs (Ontario Regulation [O. Reg.] 181/98)
- provide Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for children identified as exceptional (O. Reg. 181/98, ss. 6 and 7)
- establish a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) (Education Act, s. 57.1(1); O. Reg. 464/97)
- create, maintain, and review special education plans, and prepare reports on special education programs and services (Reg. 306)
- not exceed the maximum enrolments established for self-contained classes for students with different types of exceptionalities (Reg. 298, s. 31) (See the box below for details on special education class sizes and the section below for the [categories of exceptionalities](#).)
- provide for a shortened school day for exceptional students in a special education program (Reg. 298, s. 3(3))
- employ teachers with the appropriate qualifications (Reg. 298, s. 19(4))

According to [Regulation 298, section 31](#), the maximum enrolment in a special education class shall depend upon the extent of the exceptionalities of the students in the class and the special education services that are available to the teacher, but in no case shall the enrolment in a self-contained class exceed:

- 8 in a class for students who are emotionally disturbed or socially maladjusted, have severe learning disabilities, or are below compulsory school age and have impaired hearing
- 10 in a class for students who are blind, are Deaf, or have developmental disabilities or speech and language disorders
- 12 in a class for students who are hard of hearing, have low vision, or have orthopaedic or other physical disabilities
- 12 in a class for students in the primary division who have mild intellectual disabilities, and 16 in a class for students in the junior and intermediate divisions who have mild intellectual disabilities
- Regarding gifted students in elementary school:
 - ✧ 20 in a class if it consists only of students in the primary division
 - ✧ 23 in a class if it includes at least 1 student in the primary division and at least 1 in the junior or intermediate division
 - ✧ 25 in a class if it consists only of students in the junior or intermediate division
- 6 in a class for aphasic or autistic students, or for students with multiple disabilities for whom no one disability is dominant
- 16 in a class of exceptional students consisting of students with different exceptionalities

Roles and Responsibilities in Special Education

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities are an essential part of delivering special education programs and services. The roles and responsibilities within special education are outlined below.

The Ministry of Education:

- sets out, through the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda, the legal obligations of school boards regarding the provision of special education programs and services;
- prescribes the categories and definitions of exceptionality;
- requires through the Education Act that school boards provide appropriate special education programs and services for their exceptional students;
- establishes the funding for special education through the structure of the funding model;
- requires school boards to report on their expenditures for special education through the budget process;
- sets province-wide standards for curriculum and reporting of achievement;
- requires through regulation that school boards maintain special education plans, review them annually, and submit amendments to the ministry;
- requires through the Education Act and through regulation that school boards establish Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs);
- establishes a Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education to advise the Minister of Education on matters related to special education programs and services;
- operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, who are blind or have low vision, who are deafblind, or who have severe learning disabilities.

The school board:

- establishes school board policy and practices that comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda;

- monitors school compliance with the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda;
- requires staff to comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda;
- provides appropriately qualified staff for programs and services for the exceptional students of the board;
- plans and reports on the expenditures for special education;
- develops and maintains a special education plan that is amended from time to time to meet the current needs of the exceptional students of the board;
- reviews the plan annually and submits amendments to the Minister of Education;
- provides statistical reports to the ministry as required;
- prepares a parent guide to provide parents with information about special education programs, services, and procedures;
- establishes one or more Identification, Placement, and Review Committees (IPRCs) to identify exceptional students and determine appropriate placements for them;
- establishes a SEAC;
- provides professional development to staff on special education;
- adheres to all applicable legislation.

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC):

- makes recommendations to the board with respect to any matter affecting the establishment, development, and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional students of the board;
- participates in the board's annual review of its special education plan;
- participates in the board's annual budget process as it relates to special education;
- reviews the financial statements of the board as they relate to special education.

The school principal:

- carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda, and board policies;
- communicates Ministry of Education and school board expectations to staff;
- ensures that appropriately qualified staff are assigned to teach special education classes;

- communicates board policies and procedures about special education to staff, students, and parents;
- ensures that the identification and placement of exceptional students, through an IPRC, is done according to the procedures outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and board policies;
- consults with school board staff to determine the most appropriate programs for exceptional students;
- ensures the development, implementation, and review of a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), including a transition plan;¹
- ensures that parents are consulted in the development of their child's IEP and that they are provided with a copy of the IEP;
- ensures that the program is delivered as set out in the IEP;
- ensures that appropriate assessments are requested and that, if necessary, parental consent is obtained for these assessments.

The teacher:

- carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda;
- follows board policies and procedures regarding special education;
- works with the special education teacher to acquire and maintain up-to-date knowledge of special education practices;
- works with special education staff and parents to develop the IEP for an exceptional student;
- where appropriate, works with other school board staff to review and update the student's IEP;
- provides the program for the exceptional student in the regular class, as outlined in the IEP;
- communicates the student's progress to parents.

The special education teacher:

The special education teacher, in addition to the responsibilities listed above under "The teacher":

- holds qualifications, in accordance with the regulations under the Education Act, to teach special education;
- monitors the student's progress with references to the IEP and modifies the program as necessary;
- assists in providing educational assessments for exceptional students.

1. For a more detailed discussion of the IEP, including the transition plan, see [Part E](#) of this guide.

The early childhood educator:

The early childhood educator, in coordination and cooperation with the classroom teacher:

- plans for and provides education to children in Kindergarten;
- observes, monitors, and assesses the development of Kindergarten children;
- maintains a healthy physical, emotional, and social learning environment in the classroom;
- communicates with families;
- performs duties assigned by the principal with respect to the Kindergarten program.

The parent:

- is familiar with and informed about board policies and procedures in areas that affect the child;
- participates in IPRCs, parent-teacher conferences, and other relevant school activities;
- participates in the development of the IEP;
- is acquainted with the school staff working with the student;
- supports the student at home;
- works with the school principal and educators to solve problems;
- is responsible for the student's attendance at school.

The student:

- complies with the requirements as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda;
- complies with board policies and procedures;
- participates in IPRCs, parent-teacher conferences, and other activities, as appropriate.

Categories of Exceptionalities

The Education Act identifies five categories of exceptionalities for exceptional students: behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical, and multiple. These broad categories are designed to address the wide range of conditions that may affect a student's ability to learn, and are meant to be inclusive of all medical conditions, whether diagnosed or not, that can lead to particular types of learning difficulties.

The five categories are a useful tool for the identification of students with special education needs. However, a student may present learning needs in many ways in the school setting and may be identified as exceptional within one or more of the categories. The determining factor for the provision of special education programs or services is not any specific diagnosed or undiagnosed medical condition, but rather the need of the individual student based on an individual assessment of strengths and needs.

The definitions accepted by the Ministry of Education for the five categories of exceptionalities and their subcategories are provided in the chart below. Note that the ministry's definition of the term *learning disability* was revised, in Policy/Program Memorandum No. 8, "Identification of and Program Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities" (2014); the new definition is provided below.

Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities

BEHAVIOURAL

- **Behavioural Exceptionality:** 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:
 - a. an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships;
 - b. excessive fears or anxieties;
 - c. a tendency to compulsive reaction;
 - d. an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination thereof.

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COMMUNICATIONAL

- **Autism:** A severe learning disorder that is characterized by:
 - a. disturbances in: rate of educational development; ability to relate to the environment; mobility; perception, speech, and language;
 - b. lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language.
- **Deaf and Hard of Hearing:** An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.
- **Language Impairment:** 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:
 - a. involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; and
 - b. include one or more of: language delay; dysfluency; voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based.
- **Speech Impairment:** 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.
- **Learning Disability:** One of a number of neurodevelopmental disorders that persistently and significantly has an impact on the ability to learn and use academic and other skills and that:
 - ✧ affects the ability to perceive or process verbal or non-verbal information in an effective and accurate manner in students who have assessed intellectual abilities that are *at least* in the average range;
 - ✧ results in (a) academic underachievement that is inconsistent with the intellectual abilities of the student (which are at least in the average range), and/or (b) academic achievement that can be maintained by the student only with extremely high levels of effort and/or with additional support;
 - ✧ results in difficulties in the development and use of skills in one or more of the following areas: reading, writing, mathematics, and work habits and learning skills;
 - ✧ may typically be associated with difficulties in one or more cognitive processes, such as phonological processing; memory and attention; processing speed; perceptual-motor processing; visual-spatial processing; executive functions (e.g., self-regulation of behaviour and emotions, planning, organizing of thoughts and activities, prioritizing, decision making);
 - ✧ may be associated with difficulties in social interaction (e.g., difficulty in understanding social norms or the point of view of others); with various other conditions or disorders, diagnosed or undiagnosed; or with other exceptionalities;

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- ✧ is *not* the result of a lack of acuity in hearing and/or vision that has not been corrected; intellectual disabilities; socio-economic factors; cultural differences; lack of proficiency in the language of instruction; lack of motivation or effort; gaps in school attendance or inadequate opportunity to benefit from instruction.

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:
 - a. an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and support services;
 - b. an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development;
 - c. a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.
- **Developmental Disability:** A severe learning disorder characterized by:
 - a. an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development;
 - b. an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development;
 - c. 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 students without exceptionalities who are of the same age or development 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 a 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.

Advisory Committees on Special Education

An advisory committee is a group of volunteers that meets regularly on a long-term basis to provide advice and/or support to an institution or organization. The following advisory committees, as required by legislation, support the delivery of special education programs and services for students with special education needs.

The Minister’s Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE):

Established by Order-in-Council, the MACSE advises the Minister of Education on any matter related to the establishment and provision of special education programs and special education services for exceptional students, including the identification and provision of early intervention programs for students with special needs. (See [Appendix A-1](#), for information about representation on the MACSE).

Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs): Subsection 57.1(1) of the Education Act requires every district school board to establish a Special Education Advisory Committee. For a detailed list of the responsibilities of SEACs, see the [Roles and Responsibilities in Special Education section](#) above.

The Provincial Parent Association Advisory Committee on Special Education Advisory Committees (PAAC on SEAC): The PAAC on SEAC was established to provide a forum for parent associations to share ideas and strategies and to address common concerns related to SEACs throughout the province. The PAAC on SEAC provides information and resources to parent associations and promotes successful practices for SEACs.

Other Legislation Relevant to the Education of Students with Special Education Needs

In addition to the Education Act, other legislation is relevant to the education of students with special education needs.

- **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).** This act allows the government to develop specific standards for accessibility and to enforce them. The goal of the act is to create an accessible Ontario by 2025 so that people of all abilities can work, play, and participate in all aspects of daily living.
- **Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Act.** This act authorizes a regulation that: requires that informed consent be obtained before service is initiated; stipulates that only certified members of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists can call themselves audiologists, speech-language pathologists, or speech therapists; and deals with the availability of records and reports.
- **Bill 168: The Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Act (Violence and Harassment in the Workplace), which amends the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA).** This act imposes new duties on employers to devise workplace violence and harassment policies; develop programs to implement such policies; and engage in assessments to measure the risk of workplace violence. In addition, work refusal rights and the duties of employers and supervisors under the OHSA have both been clarified to specifically apply to workplace violence.
- **Early Childhood Educators Act.** This act established the College of Early Childhood Educators. The regulations and by-laws made under the act define the roles, responsibilities, and requirements for those using the title “early childhood educator” or “registered early childhood educator”.
- **Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act.** This act requires 15 non-health professions and 22 compulsory trades to have registration practices that are fair and transparent. Under this legislation, the Office of the Fairness Commissioner ensures that regulated professions, including the Ontario College of Teachers, comply with the law.
- **Freedom of information legislation. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)** governs the collection, use,

and disclosure of personal information. **The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)** governs the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information at publicly funded school boards and schools.

- **Health Care Consent Act.** This act sets out the elements of valid consent with respect to any medical treatment, noting that valid consent must be obtained by the health care professional before any treatment is provided. If the patient is not capable of giving consent, a substitute decision-maker must provide consent on the patient's behalf.
- **Home Care and Community Services Act (HCCSA).** This act governs the provision of government-funded community services by approved agencies and service providers. The community services governed under this legislation are community support services, homemaking services, personal support services, and professional services.
- **Ontario College of Teachers Act.** This act established the Ontario College of Teachers, which licenses, governs, and regulates the profession of teaching in Ontario. Under this act, the College has a duty to serve and protect the public interest.
- **Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act.** This act established the Ontario College of Trades, a regulatory body designed to modernize Ontario's apprenticeship and skilled trades system. The regulations under the act also outline College registration and membership information.
- **Ontario Human Rights Code.** Under the code, people have the right to equal treatment with respect to services and to treatment without discrimination on the basis of a number of grounds, including disability. Education is considered to be a service under the code, and service providers have an obligation to accommodate a person's needs, unless doing so causes "undue hardship" for the provider, "considering the cost, outside sources of funding, if any, and health and safety requirements, if any" (s. 17(2)).
- **Personal Health Information Protection Act.** This act sets out rules for the collection, use, and sharing of patients' personal health information and records across the health system. The act applies to individuals and organizations in the health care sector, or "health information custodians" as referred to in the act.
- **Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act.** This act sets out rules for the collection, use, or disclosure of personal information from private sector organizations in the course of commercial activities. The act is intended to support and promote electronic commerce.

- **Psychology Act.** This act established the College of Psychologists of Ontario to regulate the practice of psychology and sets the standards of practice for the profession. The college is responsible to the public and the profession.
- **Regulated Health Professions Act.** This act and associated health profession acts set out the governing framework for the regulated health professions in Ontario. This act regulates, among other activities, the activities of health professionals who work with students, including students with special needs, and who train and supervise school staff to carry out certain health-related tasks.
- **Social Work and Social Service Work Act.** This act established the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers to regulate the delivery of services provided by social workers and social service workers. The purpose of the legislation is to monitor and support high standards of practice to protect the public interest.
- **Youth Criminal Justice Act.** This act governs the prosecution for criminal offences committed by young people aged 12 to 17. It establishes that the youth justice system is different from the adult system and recognizes the needs of young people.

Key Ministry Policy and Resource Documents Pertaining to Students with Special Education Needs

The following ministry **policy documents** outline program requirements for all elementary and secondary schools, and all students, including students with special education needs, in Ontario.

- *Creating Pathways to Success: An Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Ontario Schools – Policy and Program Requirements, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2013)* sets out the career development policy for Ontario schools, which involves the implementation of a comprehensive Kindergarten to Grade 12 education and career/life planning program designed to help students achieve their personal goals and become competent, successful, and contributing members of society.
- *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements (2016)* sets out the requirements that govern the policies and programs of publicly funded elementary and secondary schools

throughout Ontario. Section 3.3 (“Students with Special Education Needs”), section 3.4 (“Provincial and Demonstration Schools”), section 3.5 (“Education Programs for Students in Care and/or Treatment, Custody, and Correctional Facilities”), and section 7.4 (“Alternative [Non-Credit] Courses”) are of particular relevance to educators working with exceptional students, but the policies outlined throughout the document are relevant to all students, including students with special education needs. Other sections of particular interest are as follows:

- ◇ Section 6.1.3 (“The Secondary School Literacy Graduation Requirement”), along with Appendix 3 (“The Secondary School Literacy Graduation Requirement – Accommodations, Special Provisions, Deferrals, and Exemptions”), Sections 1, 3, and 4. (The policies outlined in PPM No. 127, “The Secondary School Literacy Graduation Requirement”, 2009, are incorporated here.)
- ◇ Section 6.4, “The Certificate of Accomplishment”
- ◇ Section 7.2.5, “Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)”
- ◇ Section 10.1, “E-Learning”
- The Ontario curriculum policy documents for the various subjects and disciplines provide grade-by-grade expectations for students in elementary and secondary schools in Ontario. In each of the **elementary** and **secondary curriculum policy documents**, there is a section summarizing policies and approaches related to planning programs for students with special education needs, including those who require accommodations only and those who require modified expectations as well as accommodations.
- *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools – First Edition, Covering Grades 1 to 12 (2010)* sets out policies and practices related to assessment, evaluation, and reporting in all schools and for all students. Chapter 6 (“Reporting Student Achievement”) and Chapter 7 (“Students with Special Education Needs: Modifications, Accommodations, and Alternative Programs”) outline policies and practices for assessment, evaluation, and reporting that are specific to students with special education needs. In conjunction with the release of *The Kindergarten Program (2016)*, the ministry has released the policy document *Growing Success – The Kindergarten Addendum: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools (2016)*.
- *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework (2007)* provides the strategic policy context within which the Ministry of Education, school boards, and schools will work together to improve the academic achievement of Indigenous students.

The following ministry **resource documents** also contain information relevant to special education.

- *Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario: Supporting Students with Special Education Needs Through Progressive Discipline, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2010)* sets out a framework that system and school leaders may use to strengthen schools' ability to provide a caring and safe environment, in which responses to behaviour issues are shaped by informed consideration of students' needs and circumstances.
- *Effective Educational Practices for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Resource Guide (2007)* is designed to support educators in elementary and secondary schools in planning and implementing effective instructional programs for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). It contains information, strategies, and practices that can be put to use in the school and the classroom.
- *Foundations for a Healthy School: Promoting Well-Being Is Part of Ontario's Achieving Excellence Vision (2014)* is designed to help contribute to a learning environment that promotes and supports child and student well-being. This goal emphasizes the need to focus not just on academic success, but also on the whole child and student – their cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development.
- *Including Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Language Programs: A Guide for Ontario Schools (2015)* builds on one of the guiding principles of *A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2013)*, which is that “FSL programs are for all students”. An examination of current research literature, data, policies, and school board practices highlights the benefits of second-language learning for students with special education needs and supports the engagement of stakeholders in decision making that reflects inclusive FSL programs and case-by-case decision making in the best interests of individual students.
- *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2013)* outlines an integrated process of assessment and instruction designed to improve student learning at both the elementary and secondary levels.
- *Shared Solutions: A Guide to Preventing and Resolving Conflicts Regarding Programs and Services for Students with Special Education Needs (2007)* is designed to help parents, educators, and students with special education needs address conflicts.

- *Supporting Bias-Free Progressive Discipline in Schools: A Resource Guide for School and System Leaders (2013)* was developed jointly by the Ministry of Education and the Ontario Human Rights Commission. The document is intended to guide school and system leaders in fostering a bias-free approach to progressive discipline, prevention, and early intervention practices to support positive student behaviour among all students.
- *Supporting Minds: An Educator's Guide to Promoting Students' Mental Health and Well-being (Draft Version, 2013)* provides educators with the information they need to support students with mental health and addiction problems through early recognition and effective classroom strategies.
- *Education Funding: A Guide to the Special Education Grant* provides an overview of special education funding in Ontario. The purpose of the guide is to provide a clear explanation of the funding model for parents, the public, and other partners in education.

Education Funding

The Ministry of Education provides the bulk of operating funding to Ontario's seventy-two district school boards through the annual Grants for Student Needs (GSN), which are determined according to a series of formulas collectively known as "the funding formula". These grants are described in detail in a regulation made annually under the Education Act. GSN funding can be broadly categorized as providing support in four areas: classroom needs, including the cost of educators and materials, resources, and tools to support learning; school leadership and operations; specific student-related priorities; and local management by school boards.

Education funding consists of foundation grants – a Pupil Foundation Grant and a School Foundation Grant – and a number of special purpose grants. Foundation grants and special purpose grants each account for about half of a school board's GSN funding. The grants are distinguished as follows:

- **foundation grants** support the elements of a classroom education that are common to all students;
- **special purpose grants** address the unique needs of the students and the schools of the board based on school location, specific programs offered, and demographic profile.

The total GSN allocation for each school board is determined by the funding formula. The allocation consists of (1) funds from the education levy on property tax that is collected by the municipality and calculated using a rate set by the provincial Ministry of Finance, and (2) funds from the province to make up the difference between the property tax collected and the total allocation.

Formulas used to determine education funding are applied equitably to all boards and are designed to respond to the unique requirements of individual students and individual boards. While the Ministry of Education is responsible for the funding policy that directs the allocation of funds to school boards, each school board is responsible for allocating resources to schools, programs, and services according to their local needs and priorities.

► Funding for Special Education

In addition to foundation grants, the ministry provides funding to school boards for students with special education needs through the Special Education Grant (SEG), one of the GSN's special purpose grants. The SEG supports the incremental costs of the additional programs, services, and equipment required to meet the educational needs of these students and to support positive outcomes for them. In this way, it ensures equity for all students with special education needs.

School boards have the authority to use their total GSN funding allocation – the SEG and other GSN grants – to meet their responsibility to provide programs and/or services for students who have special education needs. SEG funding, however, can be used *only* for special education. Any unspent SEG funding must be treated as deferred revenue for special education.

The SEG is made up of six allocations:

1. The **Special Education Per-Pupil Amount (SEPPA)** provides every school board with foundational funding towards the cost of special education programs and/or services required by students with special education needs.
2. The **Differentiated Special Education Needs Amount (DSENA)** addresses the variation among boards with respect to students with special education needs and boards' abilities to respond to these needs.

3. The **Special Equipment Amount (SEA)** provides funding to assist boards with the costs of equipment essential to supporting students with special education needs where the need for specific equipment is recommended by a qualified professional. This equipment is to provide students with the accommodations that are required to enable them to access the Ontario curriculum and/or a board-determined alternative program and/or course, and/or to attend school. Eligibility criteria are outlined in the ministry document *Special Education Funding Guidelines: Special Equipment Amount (SEA)*.
4. The **Special Incidence Portion (SIP)** provides funding for school boards for support staff to ensure the health and/or safety both of students who have extraordinarily high needs related to their disabilities and/or exceptionalities and of others at the school. Eligibility criteria are outlined in the ministry document *Special Education Funding Guidelines: Special Incidence Portion (SIP)*.
5. The **Facilities Amount (FA)** provides funding for school boards to provide education programs for school-aged children and youth in government-approved care and/or treatment, custody, and correctional facilities. These facilities include hospitals, children's mental health centres, psychiatric institutions, detention and correctional facilities, community group homes, and social services agencies. The provision of education in these facilities is subject to an agreement between a school board and the facility.
6. The **Behaviour Expertise Amount (BEA)** provides funding for school boards to hire board-level personnel who have applied behaviour analysis (ABA) expertise. The use of ABA instructional approaches has proven to be effective for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and for other students with special education needs.

More information on the Special Education Grant can be found on the [Education Funding page](#) of the ministry website.

Appendix A-1: The Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education: Representation

Exceptionalities

- Behaviour disorder
- Autism
- Deaf and hard of hearing
- Learning disabilities
- Gifted
- Developmental disability
- Blind and low vision
- Physical disability
- Multiple exceptionalities

Communities of Interest

- Students/Youth
- Indigenous peoples

Educator Groups

- Trustees
- Supervisory officers
- Principals
- Teachers
- Educational assistants

Professional Support

- Medical practitioners
- Psychologists
- Social workers
- Speech-language pathologists

Non-voting

- Ministry of Community and Social Services
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
- Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development
- Ministry of Children and Youth Services

Two of the voting members are representatives of the Roman Catholic community.

Two of the voting members (one of whom is from the educator group) are representatives of the Franco-Ontarian community.

PART B

Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans

Regulation 306, made under the authority of the Education Act, requires every school board to maintain a special education plan. As set out in the standards in this part of the guide, the special education plan shall be made available to the ministry for review and be publicly accessible. In Part B, the main text of the original policy document entitled Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans (2000) has been reproduced in full. That is, the standards remain unchanged. Three of the appendices from the original document are also placed in Part B; the rest of the appendices are placed at the end of the parts in the present document to which they are now most closely related. Some terminology has been updated as necessary. Cross references to information in other parts of the present document have been added where needed.

Introduction

On January 27, 2000, the Minister of Education announced the government's plans for improving the quality of special education programs and services in Ontario and for ensuring greater accountability in the area of special education. This document describes the new province-wide standards that school boards must meet when developing their special education plans. These standards support the government's goal of ensuring that exceptional students in Ontario receive the best-quality education

possible. System-wide implementation of these standards will make school boards more accountable to students, parents, and taxpayers.

School boards must comply with the requirements for special education plans set out in Regulation 306 under the Education Act, entitled “Special Education Programs and Services”, and in this policy document. These requirements for standards build on requirements for school boards’ special education plans previously set out in memoranda from the ministry.

In accordance with Regulation 306, each school board is required, every two years, to prepare and approve a report on the special education programs and special education services provided by the board, and to submit it to the ministry. Each board is required to maintain a special education plan, to review it annually, to amend it from time to time to meet the current needs of its exceptional students, and to submit any amendment(s) to the Minister for review.

One of the purposes of a school board’s special education plan is to inform the Ministry of Education and the public about special education programs and services that are provided by the board in accordance with legislation and ministry policy on special education.

Beginning in 2001, the Ministry of Education will review each school board’s special education plan to determine whether it complies with the standards mentioned above. The aim of the review is to ensure that certain standards are maintained across the province in the development and provision of special education programs and services. Where the ministry determines that a board’s plan does not comply with the standards, the ministry will require the board to amend its plan. Amending the plan will include responding to identified omissions. Boards will make the necessary changes and submit the amendments to the ministry the following year.

Regulation 306 permits the Minister, at any time, to require a board to amend its special education plan in a manner that the Minister considers necessary so as to ensure that the board provides special education programs and services to meet the current needs of the exceptional students of the board.

The Board's Consultation Process

Purpose of the Standard

To provide details of the board's consultation process to the ministry and to the public

Requirements of the Standard

In developing and modifying their special education plan, boards must take into consideration issues and feedback from members of the community such as parents, members of school councils, community organizations, and students. This public consultation, which takes place with the assistance of the board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), must be maintained on a continuous basis throughout the year.

The board's special education plan must describe the consultation process and must include the following materials:

- a statement of how, in accordance with Regulation 464/97 made under the Education Act, the board ensures that its SEAC is involved in the annual review of the board's special education plan
- a description of any majority or minority reports concerning the board's approved plan that have been received from members of the board's SEAC
- the board's response to these reports
- a statement of how members of the community, particularly parents of children who are receiving special education programs and services, are informed of the timelines and methods for providing input into the board's special education plan
- a summary of feedback received as a result of consultation with members of the community

The special education plan must also provide information on the results of any internal or external reviews of existing special education programs and services within the board that have taken place in the previous or current school year. A list of internal and external reviews of the board's special education programs and services that are planned for the following year must also be included.

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review each school board's special education plan to ensure that these materials are included and that the consultation process meets the ministry's requirements. The ministry will review the SEAC's reports and summary of parent feedback to determine whether concerns have been raised about possible inconsistencies between the board's plan and priorities and legislation and ministry policy and whether the board's response adequately addresses these concerns.

Special Education Programs and Services

► The Board's General Model for Special Education

Purpose of the Standard

To provide the ministry and the public with information on the board's philosophy and service-delivery model for the provision of special education programs and services

Requirements of the Standard

The school board's special education plan must outline in detail the board's general philosophy and service-delivery model for the provision of special education programs and services. The board's special education plan must be designed to comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Education Act and regulations made under the act, and any other relevant legislation. The board must include a statement in the plan confirming that the plan has been designed in accordance with this requirement.

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review each school board's special education plan to ensure that the above information is included.

► Roles and Responsibilities

Purpose of the Standard

To provide the public with information on roles and responsibilities in the area of special education

Requirements of the Standard

The board's special education plan must provide information on the roles and responsibilities of the following in the area of special education in Ontario (for a summary of roles and responsibilities, see the **Roles and Responsibilities in Special Education section** in Part A¹ of this guide):

- the Ministry of Education
- the school boards
- the board's SEAC
- principals and teachers of the board
- parents or guardians
- students

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review the school board's special education plan to ensure that the roles and responsibilities given in the board's plan are consistent with ministry policy.

► Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies

Purpose of the Standard

To provide details of the board's early identification procedures and intervention strategies to the ministry and to the public

1. The position of early childhood educator (ECE) is included in **Part A** of this guide but is not listed here. ECEs were not on staff in schools at the time of writing of the *Standards* document, in 2000. Boards should include ECEs in their special education plans.

Requirements of the Standard

As stated in Policy/Program Memorandum No.11, “Early Identification of Children’s Learning Needs”, boards must have in place “procedures to identify each child’s level of development, learning abilities, and needs”, and they must “ensure that educational programs are designed to accommodate these needs and to facilitate each child’s growth and development”. The board’s special education plan must explain these procedures for school staff and for parents and other members of the public. The plan must also include the statement that “these procedures are a part of a continuous assessment and program planning process which should be initiated when a child is first enrolled in school or no later than the beginning of a program of studies immediately following Kindergarten and should continue throughout a child’s school life” (Policy/Program Memorandum No. 11).

The school board’s special education plan must contain a description of the following:

- the guiding principles or philosophy used by the board for early identification of children’s learning needs
- the teacher’s role in early identification
- the parent’s role in early identification
- policies and procedures on screening, assessment, referral, identification, and program planning for students who may be in need of special education programs and services
- procedures for providing parents with notice that their child is having difficulty
- procedures used within the board for referring a student for an assessment (e.g., an assessment by an in-school team or by professional resource staff) should learning problems be identified that might result in the student’s being referred eventually to an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) (these procedures include notifying parents and involving them in the process)
- procedures for providing parents with notice that their child is being considered for referral to an IPRC
- procedures for providing parents with notice that their child is being considered for a special education program and related services if the child is not referred to an IPRC

- the types of assessment tools/strategies used to gather appropriate information on students in order to assist in the development of appropriate educational programs
- the types of early intervention strategies that are used to support students prior to referral to an IPRC

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review the school board's special education plan to ensure that all of the above information is included and that the board's early identification procedures and intervention strategies are relevant and appropriate.

► The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process and Appeals

Purpose of the Standard

To provide details of the board's IPRC process to the ministry and to the public

Requirements of the Standard

A board's special education plan must include a description of the board's IPRC process, as well as the number of IPRC referrals, reviews, and appeals conducted within the board in the previous school year.

The plan will also include a copy of the board's guide for parents. At a minimum, the parents' guide to special education must contain the information set out in the sample guide that is included in [Appendix D-1](#) in Part D of this guide. The guide gives parents information on the procedures involved in identifying a student as exceptional and determining the student's placement, as well as information on appealing the decision of the IPRC if the parents do not agree with the decision.

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review the school board's special education plan to ensure that the plan includes the above information.

► Educational and Other Assessments

Purpose of the Standard

To provide details of the board's assessment policies and procedures to the ministry and to make parents aware of the types of assessment tools used by the school board, the ways in which assessments are obtained by IPRCs, and the ways in which assessments are used

Requirements of the Standard

A board's special education plan must provide information on the types of assessment tools used within the board, including educational assessments for students who are in need of special education programs and services.

For each type of assessment tool described, the school board's special education plan must include the following information:

- the qualifications of categories of staff who conduct the assessment and/or provide diagnoses; that is, staff who are governed by the Education Act; the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1993; the Health Care Consent Act, 1996; or other legislation, as appropriate (the board must specify which legislation applies)
- average waiting times for assessments to be conducted and the criteria for managing waiting lists if they exist
- an acknowledgement that requirements for obtaining parental consent are met prior to conducting the assessment
- an explanation of how results of an assessment are communicated to parents
- a description of protocols for sharing information with staff and outside agencies
- an explanation of how the privacy of information is protected

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review the school board's special education plan to ensure that the above information has been provided and that the content is consistent with ministry policy.

► Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings

Purpose of the Standard

To provide details of the board's specialized health support services to the ministry and to the public

Requirements of the Standard

A board's special education plan must describe the provision of specialized health support services for students who require them in school settings. The plan must outline specific information about each type of specialized health support service provided by Community Care Access Centres (CCACs),² school board staff, or other service providers. The board must provide this information using the form supplied in [Appendix B-1](#).

For each type of specialized health support service described, the plan must describe the following:

- the agency or the position of the person who performs the service (e.g., CCAC, board staff, parent, student)
- eligibility criteria for students to receive the service
- position of the person who determines whether a student is eligible to receive the service and what the level of support will be
- criteria for determining when the service is no longer required
- review or appeal procedures (if any) available for parents who dispute the provision of these services, including any time limits on requesting reviews or appeals

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review the school board's special education plan to ensure that the above information is provided and that the content is consistent with ministry policy.

2. In December 2016, Ontario passed the Patients First Act, which will help patients and their families obtain better access to a more local and integrated health care system, improving the patient experience and delivering higher-quality care. As part of the Patients First Act, all services that were previously offered by Community Care Access Centres have been transferred to Local Health Integration Networks. Community Care Access Centres are no longer operational.

► Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities

Purpose of the Standard

To make information on the categories and definitions of exceptionalities available to the public, including parents and community associations

Requirements of the Standard

A board's special education plan must list the ministry's categories and definitions of exceptionalities (see the [Categories of Exceptionalities section](#) in Part A of this guide), and must describe the ways in which the board's IPRC applies them in making decisions on identification and placement.

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review the school board's special education plan to ensure that the information provided is consistent with the ministry's categories and definitions of exceptionalities, and that these are the terms used by the IPRC in its statement of decision.

► Special Education Placements Provided by the Board

Purpose of the Standard

To provide the ministry and the public with details of the range of placements provided by the board, and to inform the public that placement of a student in a regular class is the first option considered by an IPRC

Requirements of the Standard

The board's special education plan must:

- describe the ways in which the board's SEAC is involved in providing advice on determining the range of placements offered;
- acknowledge that placement of a student in a regular class is the first option considered by an IPRC;
- outline ways in which a student can be integrated into the regular classroom when the placement meets the student's needs and is in accordance with the parents' preferences;

- outline specific information about each type of placement provided at the elementary and secondary levels;
- list for each category of exceptionality the range of placement options available, along with the criteria for admission, the admission process, and the criteria for determining the level of support provided in each placement, including the board's criteria for assigning intensive support for students who are in need of a great deal of assistance;
- state the maximum class size for each type of special education class;
- list the criteria used for determining the need to change a student's placement;
- describe the alternatives that are provided when the needs of a student cannot be met within the board's range of placements and the ways in which the options are communicated to parents.

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review the school board's special education plan to ensure that the above information is provided and that the content is consistent with ministry policy and the appropriate legislation, including Regulation 181/98.

► Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

Purpose of the Standard

To inform the ministry and the public about the ways in which the board is complying with ministry requirements for implementing IEPs

Requirements of the Standard

The school board's special education plan must describe the following:

- the board's plan for implementing the ministry's standards for IEPs (see [Part E](#) of this guide for more information on the IEP)
- any processes for dispute resolution where parents and board staff disagree on significant aspects of the IEP
- the board's results of the ministry's review for the previous year, along with the board's plans for a response to these results (when available)

The school board must include a copy of its IEP form (see [Appendix E-2](#) in Part E of this guide for a sample IEP template) in the plan.

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review the school board's special education plan to ensure that all of the above information is included and that the board's procedures are consistent with ministry policy on the IEP.

► Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario

Purpose of the Standard

To provide the public with information about the Provincial and Demonstration Schools that are operated for students who are Deaf, blind, or deafblind, or who have severe learning disabilities, which may include attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

Requirements of the Standard

The school board's special education plan must include the following:

- information on programs and services offered by Provincial and Demonstration Schools that is provided by the ministry in the **Provincial Schools and Demonstration Schools section** in Part F of this guide
- current statistics, by program, on the number of students who are qualified to be resident students in the board who are currently attending Provincial and Demonstration Schools
- information about how transportation is provided for students to and from the Provincial or Demonstration School, including transportation of an assistant, if necessary

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review the school board's special education plan to ensure that it includes the information listed above.

► Special Education Staff

Purpose of the Standard

To provide specific details on board staff to the ministry and to the public

Requirements of the Standard

The school board's special education plan must include information on the types of staff who provide special education programs and services. The board must complete and include the form in [Appendix B-2](#), outlining the range of programs and services offered and the qualifications required for the categories of staff listed on the form.

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review the school board's special education plan to ensure that it includes the information noted above and that staff providing the programs and services have the appropriate qualifications.

► Staff Development

Purpose of the Standard

To provide details of the board's professional development plans for special education staff to the ministry and to the public

Requirements of the Standard

The board must outline its plans for the professional development of its special education personnel. The special education plan must describe the following:

- the overall goal of the special education staff development plan
- ways in which staff provide input for the plan
- ways in which the school board's SEAC is consulted about staff development
- methods of determining priorities in the area of staff development
- courses, in-service training, and other types of professional development activities offered by the board

- ways in which staff are trained with regard to the legislation and ministry policy on special education, with particular attention to training for new teachers
- details of the board's budget allocation dedicated to the staff development plan in the area of special education
- any cost-sharing arrangements with other ministries or agencies for staff development
- ways in which school board staff are made aware of the board's special education plan and of professional development opportunities

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review the school board's special education plan to ensure that it includes the information listed above, that it reflects the implementation of any new legislation or ministry policy, and that it reflects the results of consultation described above.

► Equipment

Purpose of the Standard

To inform the ministry, board staff members and other professionals, and parents about the provision of individualized equipment for some students with special needs

Requirements of the Standard

The school board's plan must describe how the board determines whether a student requires individualized equipment, such as assistive technology, and how the board allocates its budget for equipment, including the criteria used for purchasing individualized equipment.

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review the school board's special education plan to ensure that it includes the information noted above.

► Accessibility of School Buildings

Purpose of the Standard

To provide the ministry with further details of the board's multi-year plan, which was previously submitted to the ministry, for improving accessibility for students with physical and sensory disabilities, and to provide the public with this information

Requirements of the Standard

The school board's special education plan must include the following:

- a summary of the board's multi-year capital expenditure plan for improving accessibility to its school buildings, grounds, and administration offices, including resources dedicated to providing barrier-free access in the coming school years
- a statement outlining how members of the public can obtain a copy of the complete plan from the board
- a summary of the board's progress in implementing the capital expenditure plan

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review the school board's special education plan to ensure that it includes the information listed above and that it shows that progress is being made in improving physical accessibility in schools.

► Transportation

Purpose of the Standard

To provide details of the board's transportation policies to the ministry and to the public

Requirements of the Standard

The board's special education plan must describe the types of students with special needs who are eligible to receive transportation and the ways in

which these students can access the transportation. The types of students are as follows:

- students in special education programs, including students who are in regular classrooms
- students in educational programs in care and/or treatment, custody, and correctional facilities
- students attending Provincial and Demonstration Schools
- students who require transportation in order to attend summer school programs

The special education plan must also describe the following:

- the process for deciding whether a student with special needs will be transported with other children or whether it is in the best interests of the student to be transported separately
- the safety criteria that are used by the board in the tendering and the selection of transportation providers for exceptional students (e.g., drivers must have first-aid training; wheelchairs must be secured during transit; a criminal record check must be done on drivers)

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review the school board's special education plan to ensure that it includes the information listed above and that the content complies with ministry policy and the legislation.

The Board's Special Education Advisory Committee

Purpose of the Standard

To provide details of the operation of the board's SEAC to the ministry and to give members of the public information to which they are entitled

Requirements of the Standard

The board's special education plan must provide the following information concerning its SEAC:

- names and affiliation of members
- meeting times and locations
- a contact address, telephone number, and/or e-mail address for each member
- procedures for selecting members
- where applicable, a note that a board has membership to represent the interests of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students

The plan must provide a description of ways in which the board's SEAC fulfilled its roles and responsibilities during the school year in which the plan was developed. This description should include information on the documentation that has been provided to the SEAC to enable it to fulfil its responsibilities. The roles and responsibilities of the SEAC are as follows:

- making recommendations to the board with respect to any matter affecting the establishment, development, and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional students within the board
- participating in the board's annual review of its special education plan
- participating in the development of the board's annual budget for special education
- reviewing the financial statements of the board as they relate to special education

The plan must also include a description of ways in which parents and other members of the public can make their views known to the SEAC.

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review the school board's special education plan to ensure that it includes the information listed above and that it is consistent with Regulation 464/97.

Coordination of Services with Other Ministries or Agencies

Purpose of the Standard

To provide the ministry and the public with details of the board's strategies to ensure a smooth transition for students with special needs who are entering or leaving a school

Requirements of the Standard

The special education plan must provide specific details about advance special education planning that is done for students with special needs who are arriving from other programs, such as the following:

- preschool nursery programs
- preschool programs for students who are Deaf
- preschool speech and language programs
- intensive early intervention programs for children with autism
- care and/or treatment, custody, and correctional facilities
- programs offered by other boards of education

The special education plan must indicate whether it is the board's policy or practice to accept assessments accompanying the students from these programs or whether it is the board's policy or practice to reassess all incoming students. If reassessment is the policy or practice, the plan must state the estimated waiting time for completing an assessment.

The special education plan must also provide details about the way in which information is shared for students leaving the board to attend programs offered by other school boards or by care and/or treatment, custody, and correctional facilities.

In the special education plan, the board must identify the position of the person responsible for ensuring the successful admission or transfer of students from one program to another.

Compliance with the Standard

The ministry will review the school board's special education plan to ensure that it includes the information listed above and that the content is consistent with the legislation and with ministry policy.

Submission and Availability of School Board Plans

Each board is required to make its special education plan available to the public at the same time that it submits the plan to the ministry. The board must inform the public in a variety of ways about how to access the plan. If the board maintains a website, the board is required to include information on ways in which members of the public may access the plan, and is encouraged to make the plan available on the website.

Two copies of the special education plan approved by the school board, and any amendments, must be forwarded to the local district office of the Ministry of Education.³ The complete plan must be submitted along with the following documents:

- a letter from the director of the school board⁴ that confirms that the school board's special education plan is being submitted in compliance with the requirements of Regulation 306 and with the standards outlined here
- a copy of the board's motion of approval of the plan, including the date of approval
- a copy of any related motions or recommendations from the board's SEAC

3. For a list of the Ministry of Education Regional Offices, see [Appendix B-3](#).

4. In the case of school authorities, this letter would be provided by the secretary of the school authority.

Appendix B-1: Specialized Health Support Services

Specialized Health Support Service	Agency or position of person who performs the service	Eligibility criteria for students to receive the service	Position of person who determines eligibility to receive the service and the level of support	Criteria for determining when the service is no longer required	Procedures for resolving disputes about eligibility and level of support (if available)
Nursing					
Occupational therapy					
Physiotherapy					
Nutrition					
Speech and language therapy					
Speech correction and remediation					
Administering of prescribed medications					
Catheterization					
Suctioning					
Lifting and positioning					
Assistance with mobility					
Feeding					
Toileting					
Other					

Appendix B-2: Special Education Staff

Elementary Panel

Special Education Staff	FTEs	Staff Qualifications
1. Teachers of exceptional students		
1.1 Teachers for resource-withdrawal programs		
1.2 Teachers for self-contained classes		
2. Other special education teachers		
2.1 Itinerant teachers		
2.2 Teacher diagnosticians		
2.3 Coordinators		
2.4 Consultants		
3. Educational assistants in special education		
3.1 Educational assistants		
4. Other professional resource staff		
4.1 Psychologists		
4.2 Psychometrists		
4.3 Psychiatrists		
4.4 Speech-language pathologists		
4.5 Audiologists		
4.6 Occupational therapists		
4.7 Physiotherapists		
4.8 Social workers		
4.9 Subtotal		
5. Paraprofessional resource staff		
5.1 Orientation and mobility personnel		
5.2 Oral interpreters (for Deaf students)		

(continued)

(continued)

Special Education Staff	FTEs	Staff Qualifications
5.3 Sign interpreters (for Deaf students)		
5.4 Transcribers (for blind students)		
5.5 Interveners (for deafblind students)		
5.6 Auditory-verbal therapists		
5.7 Subtotal		

Secondary Panel

Special Education Staff	FTEs	Staff Qualifications
1. Teachers of exceptional students		
1.1 Teachers for resource-withdrawal programs		
1.2 Teachers for self-contained classes		
2. Other special education teachers		
2.1 Itinerant teachers		
2.2 Teacher diagnosticians		
2.3 Coordinators		
2.4 Consultants		
3. Educational assistants in special education		
3.1 Educational assistants		
4. Other professional resource staff		
4.1 Psychologists		
4.2 Psychometrists		
4.3 Psychiatrists		
4.4 Speech-language pathologists		
4.5 Audiologists		
4.6 Occupational therapists		

(continued)

(continued)

Special Education Staff	FTEs	Staff Qualifications
4.7 Physiotherapists		
4.8 Social workers		
4.9 Subtotal		
5. Paraprofessional resource staff		
5.1 Orientation and mobility personnel		
5.2 Oral interpreters (for Deaf students)		
5.3 Sign interpreters (for Deaf students)		
5.4 Transcribers (for blind students)		
5.5 Interveners (for deafblind students)		
5.6 Auditory-verbal therapists		
5.7 Subtotal		

Appendix B-3: Ministry of Education Regional Offices

Barrie Regional Office, Ministry of Education

20 Bell Farm Road, Unit 9, Barrie, ON L4M 6E4

Tel: 705-725-7627; 1-800-471-0713

London Regional Office, Ministry of Education

217 York Street, Suite 207, London, ON N6A 5P9

Tel: 519-667-1440; 1-800-265-4221

Ottawa Regional Office, Ministry of Education

1580 Merivale Road, Suite 504, Nepean, ON K2G 4B5

Tel: 613-225-9210; 1-800-267-1067

Sudbury/North Bay Regional Office, Ministry of Education

199 Larch Street, Suite 1103, Sudbury, ON P3E 5P9

Tel: 705-474-7210; 1-800-461-9570

Thunder Bay Regional Office, Ministry of Education

615 South James Street, 1st Floor, Thunder Bay, ON P7E 6P6

Tel: 807-474-2980; 1-800-465-5020 (only available for area code 807)

Toronto and Area Regional Office, Ministry of Education

Sun Life Financial Building, 3300 Bloor Street West,

16th Floor, Suite 3610, Etobicoke, ON M8X 2X3

Tel: 416-212-0954; 1-800-268-5755

PART C

Early Identification, Assessment, and Transition Planning

Introduction

All students, including students with special education needs, in schools across Ontario require programs that provide them with the best possible opportunities to learn and to maximize their potential. They require knowledge and skills that will help them to succeed in school and in life. This part of the guide outlines the steps normally taken to ensure effective program planning for students who require special education programs and services. It includes information about early identification, continuous assessment, the integrated process of assessment and instruction, and the key transitions in a student's schooling. It also describes how to ensure that a student's transitions are as smooth as possible and identifies potential areas of overlap among all the plans a student may have.

In their program planning, educators of students with special education needs, like all educators, should consider the shared beliefs outlined in *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2013)* and reproduced in the **Introduction** of this guide. These beliefs, which drive the integrated process of assessment and instruction, are designed to help all students improve their achievement and well-being.

Early Intervention and Special Needs Services

Early identification of children with special needs is often done by agencies of ministries other than the Ministry of Education. A number of initiatives from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services are intended to facilitate early identification of young children with special needs and to provide appropriate services for them. These initiatives include the following:

- **Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program:** Provides prevention and early intervention services for families with young children identified to have risk factors. Screening is for physical, cognitive, communicative, and psychological health concerns that may impact the child's development. The program also provides home visiting services to vulnerable families to support parenting and healthy child development. Screening and support services are provided from the prenatal period until the child's transition to school.
- **Ontario Infant Hearing Program:** Identifies infants with permanent hearing loss and those at risk of developing late onset or progressive hearing loss, as early as possible. It also provides these children with the supports and services required for communication and language development so that they are ready to learn when they reach school. The Infant Hearing Program offers:
 - ✧ universal newborn hearing screening in hospitals and community settings;
 - ✧ audiology assessment and hearing aid selection;
 - ✧ monitoring for those babies born at risk of early childhood hearing loss;
 - ✧ services until school entry to support language development in infants and preschool children who are Deaf or hard of hearing.
- **Ontario Autism Program:** This new program, which will begin to be implemented in June 2017, will make it easier for families to access services for their children by reducing wait times, providing more flexible services at a level of intensity that meets each child's individual needs, and increasing the number of treatment spaces available.
- **Preschool Speech and Language Program:** Identifies children with speech and language delays and disorders, and provides services to support their communication and early literacy development. Services are provided by speech-language pathologists and supportive personnel, and include assessment and a range of age-appropriate and needs-based intervention approaches, such as parent training, group and individual

treatment, and caregiver consultation. Services are provided from a child's birth to the time the child enters school.

- **Blind–Low Vision Early Intervention Program:** Provides early intervention support and education for families with children who are born blind or who have low vision. Specialized family-centred services are available for children from the time of their birth to school entry. These services include:
 - ✧ family supports;
 - ✧ specialized intervention services for the child and family;
 - ✧ consultation for professionals in child care and early learning environments on how best to work with and teach children who are born blind or who have low vision.
- **Infant Development Program:** Provides support and services to families with young children (from birth to age five) who have a developmental delay or disability. Services are provided in the child's home and/or community and focus on supporting parents in promoting their child's early development. Attention is given to the following areas of development: cognitive, fine and gross motor, social-emotional, linguistic, and self-help.

More information on these initiatives can be found on the [website of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services](#).

Another initiative that the Ministry of Children and Youth Services has implemented is the **Special Needs Strategy**. Introduced in 2014, this strategy involves three other ministries – Education, Health and Long-Term Care, and Community and Social Services. The four ministries are committed to working together with parents, children and youth, service providers, and community partners to enhance outcomes for children and youth with special needs. The objective is to improve how families of children and youth with special needs – including physical, developmental, and/or communicational needs – can access services in a timely and coordinated way, as close to home as possible.

The Special Needs Strategy aims to improve the service experience of families by implementing the following three key initiatives:

- A new developmental surveillance process will give families who may have a concern about their child's development access to supports as early as possible. This process will be designed to facilitate conversation between families and trained providers, enhance families' understanding of their child's development, and when needed, connect children to the appropriate services.

- Coordinated Service Planning will provide children and youth with multiple and/or complex special needs* and their families with the support of a Service Planning Coordinator. This coordinator will help to connect these children and their families with services and supports, and will develop and monitor a Coordinated Service Plan that is responsive to their individual goals, needs, and strengths.
- Rehabilitation services, including speech and language pathology, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy, will be integrated so that children and youth with special needs and their families have a seamless service experience from birth through to school exit, and access to a broad range of interventions within a tiered service delivery framework, in accordance with provincial program guidelines.

For a child with multiple and/or complex special needs, a Service Planning Coordinator, in collaboration with the family and the service providers, will develop a holistic, coordinated service plan that builds on information made available during the screening process. With the consent of the parents, information will be shared among the various providers, educators, and other professionals, so that parents don't have to repeat their story several times to all those involved. The Service Planning Coordinator, in collaboration with the family, will also keep track of the child's outcomes and monitor and update the service plan as appropriate. Where a preschool identification of a child with special needs has been made, the Service Planning Coordinator will work with service providers and educators to plan for the transitions, including the transition to school. The Service Planning Coordinator may also provide information about any potential accessibility-related requirements or other modifications required to facilitate the child's participation in school. District school boards that provide services and/or supports to children and youth with special needs are expected to participate in Coordinated Service Planning. These school boards will have formal agreements with the coordinating agency regarding information sharing and participating in the Coordinated Service Planning process.

* Children and youth with multiple and/or complex special needs are a subset of children and youth with special needs. These children and youth require multiple specialized services (e.g., rehabilitation, autism, developmental, and/or respite services) due to the depth and breadth of their needs and informed by their families' needs, strengths, and capacities. They may experience challenges related to multiple areas of their development, including their physical, communicational, intellectual, emotional, social, and/or behavioural development, and may require services from multiple sectors and/or professionals. They may also have ongoing service needs, such as severe physical and intellectual impairments that require the use of technology.

Coordinated Service Planning can be accessed through a referral to the local coordinating agency. General information about the Special Needs Strategy can be found on the [website of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services](#).

Planning Entry to School

Entry to school represents a major threshold in a child's life. It marks an important transition into the formal education system at a critical stage in early child development. Whether the child has remained at home until starting school or has participated in preschool programs, planning for entry to school can support the child's long-term success.

Four- and five-year-olds entering school in Ontario today have access to full-day Kindergarten. The program is designed to provide a strong foundation for learning in early years. All children, including those with special education needs, have the right to attend school from the beginning of the school year following registration in the program.

To ensure a smooth transition to school for children with special education needs, schools should have in place transition-planning processes. The question of the continuation of existing support may be considered when the parents first discuss their child's enrolment with the principal. Parents and community resource persons should be encouraged to contact the principal at an early stage prior to enrolment, in order to give the principal time to consult with appropriate board personnel about resources and programming.

For all students, it is important to plan entry to school. For children with special education needs, however, entry to school is more complex, and additional careful planning and coordination is required. Further information about planning for this key transition can be found later in this part of the guide, in the [Transition Planning section](#).

Early Identification at School

The early identification of the learning abilities and needs of students has been a long-time priority in Ontario schools, as reflected in [Policy/Program Memorandum No. 11, "Early Identification of Children's Learning Needs"](#) (1982). This PPM requires school boards to identify all

students' strengths and needs when they are first enrolled – or no later than the beginning of a program of studies immediately following Kindergarten – and to reassess them on a regular basis. Although these procedures are not strictly considered to be part of special education, children identified may receive a variety of support services. Documentation of these support services and monitoring of ongoing school progress should be an integral part of any later recommendations for special education assistance, since the identification of a student's needs is crucial to the provision of special education programs and services.

Early identification may serve to:

- establish a clear understanding of any visual, hearing, or other medical conditions that may affect learning;
- identify students who may face learning, cognitive, motor, or social challenges, so that interventions or more in-depth assessments can be initiated;
- identify students who are not developing speech and language skills within normal ranges, so that remediation or treatment can be initiated;
- enable in-school teams to plan proactively to provide experiences and programs that will maximize students' strengths and meet any special education needs they may have from the time they enter school.

An area of concern may be suspected on the basis of observable behaviours, health or medical issues, and current development levels. It is the combined responsibility of school personnel, other professionals, and parents to gather this information and share it so that appropriate programming and monitoring can be put in place at the school.

Kindergarten educators begin this ongoing assessment process, as described in *The Kindergarten Program (2016)*, in order to meet the needs of every child in the classroom. In addition to information provided by parents and preschool providers, educators use information from observation and various other types of assessment.

Each school board must have procedures in place to identify students who may be in need of special education programs and/or services. An Individual Education Plan (IEP), which describes the special education program and services required by a particular student, including any accommodations, modified expectations, and/or alternative expectations or programs, must be developed for each child who has been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC). An IEP

may also be developed for any child who is receiving special education programs and/or related services but who has not been identified as exceptional by an IPRC. The principal is responsible for programs and services for children entering the school and for ensuring that an IEP that conforms to ministry standards is completed for each child who has been identified as exceptional. **Part D** of this guide provides a detailed description of the IPRC process. **Part E** describes the components of the IEP standards as well as effective practices related to various aspects of IEP development.

English Language Learners

Ontario schools have some of the most multilingual student populations in the world. These students bring a rich diversity of experience to the classroom. When they start school in Ontario, however, many of these students are entering a new linguistic and cultural environment. All teachers share in the responsibility for these students' English-language development, and care must be taken in assessing these students' learning.

When assessing English language learners (students who are learning English as a second language or additional language in English-language schools), educators must carefully consider a student's language acquisition needs and possible special education learning needs. As researchers in this field have noted, "Sometimes characteristics of typical ELLs [English language learners] look similar to the learning difficulties experienced by students with special education needs. It is necessary to gain more information and to go through a systematic and focused process to determine the root of each student's difficulties, and the most appropriate and effective method to address his/her needs."¹ Educators with expertise in supporting English language learners, such as English as a second language (ESL) teachers and English literacy development (ELD) teachers, should be a part of all in-school discussions.

English language learners need to learn the language of instruction at the same time as they are working towards meeting learning expectations.

1. Vicki Adelson, Esther Geva, and Christie Fraser, *Identification, Assessment, and Instruction of English Language Learners with Learning Difficulties in the Elementary and Intermediate Grades* (Toronto: OISE, University of Toronto, 2014), p. 2.

Students who do not speak English, or who speak a variety of English that is significantly different from the variety used for instruction in Ontario schools, may require focused educational supports to assist them in attaining proficiency in English. Every curriculum document, including *The Kindergarten Program (2016)*, has a section on supporting English language learners.

During their first few years in Ontario schools, English language learners may receive support through one of two distinct programs from teachers who specialize in meeting their language-learning needs: ESL programs or ELD programs. Even with such support, however, rates of language acquisition vary: it can take considerably longer for some students than for others to become fluent in English. In a supportive learning environment, most students will develop oral language proficiency quickly. Most English language learners who have developed oral proficiency in everyday English will nevertheless require instructional scaffolding to meet curriculum expectations. Research has shown that it takes five to seven years for most English language learners to catch up to their English-speaking peers in their ability to use English for academic purposes.

The *STEP: Steps to English Proficiency (2015)* framework is one of a number of resources designed to assist teachers in supporting a growing demographic of English language learners in Ontario schools. As a framework for assessing and monitoring the language acquisition and literacy development of English language learners across the Ontario curriculum, the STEP resource can be used for both initial and ongoing assessment purposes. Information gathered using this resource can help **in-school teams** in their review of an English language learner's progress.

Some English language learners may have had limited or interrupted formal schooling. Students who have large gaps in education, or, in some cases, no previous access to education, may appear to have special education needs. In assessing these students, educators should take the following factors into consideration:

- current access to programming, such as ELD programs, to address their literacy and numeracy needs as well as their need to develop proficiency in English
- educational background (e.g., previous school experiences, including length of school day; attendance patterns; languages spoken)
- medical history (e.g., need for hearing or vision testing)

Where special education needs have been identified, either in the initial assessment or through later assessments, students are eligible for ESL or ELD services and special education services simultaneously. For more information on policy concerning English language learners, see *English Language Learners/ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (2007). For additional resource information, see *Supporting English Language Learners: A Practical Guide for Ontario Educators, Grades 1 to 8* (2008).

Assessing Student Learning

The early identification procedure, discussed earlier, is part of an ongoing assessment process that school boards are required to initiate when a child first enters school. Ongoing assessment is intended to give educators and students precise and timely information so that instruction can be adjusted in response to individual students' strengths and needs, and students can adjust their learning strategies or revise their goals.

► The Continuous Assessment Process

Section 1(1) of the Education Act defines a *special education program* as “an educational program that is based on and modified by the results of *continuous assessment and evaluation* and that includes a plan containing specific objectives and an outline of educational services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil” (emphasis added).

Assessment of students with special education needs is a continuous, cyclical process that begins and ends with the classroom teacher(s). Educators gather assessment information about students in their classes every day. In doing so, they are able to understand students' strengths, even in the earliest grades, and can focus on areas that may need special attention.

In some cases, teachers may require the support of an **in-school team and out-of-school resources**, including professionals such as psychologists, speech therapists, and medical personnel, to assess a student's learning

and to plan a program to meet a student's needs. The in-school team and the out-of-school professionals may conduct additional educational assessments as well as professional assessments, including health, speech and language, and psychological assessments.

The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) requires an **individual educational assessment** before making a decision about the identification of a student as exceptional or the placement of a student in a special education program. This assessment is often conducted by, or under the direction of, the in-school team. Other **professional assessments**, which are described below, may be part of the **IPRC process** as well.

► An Integrated Process of Assessment and Instruction

Teachers can adjust instructional strategies, resources, and environments effectively to help all students learn *only if they have accurate and reliable information about what their students know and are able to do at any given time, and about how they learn best.*

Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2013, p. 28)

The use of evidence-informed assessment and instructional strategies that draw on principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and differentiated instruction, combined with ongoing monitoring and responsiveness to a student's progress, is essential to support the learning of students with special education needs.

Classroom educators use an integrated approach to assessment and instruction, drawing on information gathered through ongoing assessment to inform instruction and improve learning.

Research in education, as reflected in the ministry policy document *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools* (2010), has focused on three types of assessment:

- assessment *for* learning;
- assessment *as* learning;
- assessment *of* learning.

These three types of assessment are described in the sections below. The use of this terminology for assessment places an emphasis on how the information gathered through assessment is to be used.

Assessment *for* and *as* Learning

Data from ongoing assessment *for* learning by the classroom teacher(s) and from ongoing assessment *as* learning by the student is collected to seamlessly plan instruction and further assessment. This process helps teachers to develop assessment and instructional approaches personalized to each student's strengths, interests, and areas in need of improvement.

Assessment *for* learning involves gathering evidence from a variety of sources to plan, adjust, and deliver instruction that meets the particular needs of individual students. Assessment *for* learning includes both diagnostic assessment and formative assessment. Diagnostic assessment is conducted before instruction begins, and formative assessment is conducted frequently and in an ongoing manner during the course of instruction. The table below, from *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (2013, p. 29), provides *examples* of assessment tools and measures that are diagnostic and formative in nature. It is not an exhaustive list of commonly used assessments. Note that, in addition to educational (or classroom) assessments, professional assessments, where appropriate, should be done before instruction begins so that teachers can plan a differentiated and personalized learning program to meet the student's learning needs.

Assessment *for* Learning: Examples of Diagnostic and Formative Assessment Tools and Measures

Diagnostic Assessment <i>Occurs before instruction begins, to set learning goals and plan instruction and assessment that are differentiated and personalized</i>	Formative Assessment <i>Occurs frequently and in an ongoing manner during the course of instruction, to monitor progress, provide feedback, and differentiate instruction and assessment</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of recent report cards • Consultation with previous teachers, parents, special education teacher • Classroom observation (e.g., anecdotal notes) • Classroom assessments (e.g., pre-tests, assessment of student's prior knowledge) • Interest inventory • Commonly used school board assessments (e.g., oral language screening and reading comprehension tools), as well as assessments of achievement of alternative learning expectations (e.g., those relating to daily living, social skills) • Professional assessments, if needed • Review of any existing transition plans • Moderated marking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom assessments of various types, using various modes and media that best suit students' strengths and needs, learning styles and preferences, interests, readiness to learn • Provision of timely descriptive feedback to students • Use of assessment results to guide further instruction • Use of the moderated marking process to support ongoing assessment and monitoring of student learning

Accurate and reliable assessment for learning provides the foundation for personalization and precision in instruction.

While assessment *for* learning is designed to give teachers information to differentiate and personalize teaching and learning activities, assessment *as* learning enables students themselves to develop the skills to assess and monitor their progress towards achieving learning goals based on the curriculum expectations and/or the learning expectations in their

IEP.² A critical component of this assessment process is that teachers help students to develop these metacognitive skills by clearly identifying the learning goals and co-constructing the success criteria and by modelling how to use the criteria to monitor progress in learning.

Assessment that is planned concurrently with instruction and integrated seamlessly into the learning cycle informs instruction, guides next steps, and helps teachers and students monitor students' progress towards achieving learning goals.

Teachers who have accurate and reliable information from assessment about what their students know and are able to do at any given time, and about how they learn best, are able to provide timely, precise, and personalized instruction. They are able to provide descriptive feedback and adjust strategies, resources, and environments effectively to help every student learn.

Teachers working with students who have special education needs use assessment information and strategies to:

- identify and verify individual students' needs and where they are in their learning;
- identify, share, clarify, and build a common understanding of what the student is to learn;
- determine next steps in the student's learning and how best to move forward;
- support a range of other decisions, such as those relating to screening, referrals, and identification;
- support decisions about the student's program;
- help determine particular interventions and accommodations that may be necessary to enable the student to learn and to demonstrate learning and achievement.

As soon as a concern about a particular student's progress or behaviour arises, the teacher's observations need to be recorded as part of the data-gathering process. This assessment information will be important, particularly if the teacher later requests the assistance of the in-school team.

2. Learning expectations identified in the IEP are expectations designed to meet the unique educational needs of a student and must be recorded in the Special Education Program section of the IEP, under the appropriate subject, course, or skill heading.

As teachers observe students, they record many different aspects of a student's responses in the moment of learning. When gathering assessment information, educators may watch for the following:

- how the student responds to text and to non-print alternatives
- how the student approaches new tasks, persists with tasks, organizes time and materials, uses language, and responds to cues (including auditory, visual, and direct and indirect verbal cues)
- how the student performs individually or in small and large groups (e.g., how the student interacts with peers, teachers, non-teaching staff, and others in roles of authority)
- how the student's learning is affected by environmental variables (e.g., lighting, sound, temperature, colours, the physical arrangement of the classroom, the time of day, and routines and schedules)

In addition to their own observations and assessment, educators can gain valuable additional information from parents and others who have worked with the student.

All information gathered about a student must be carefully documented and stored in a secure place to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. School board policies addressing the requirements of the [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(MFIPPA\)](#) must be followed.

If the teacher requires assistance in assessing a student's learning or in program planning to meet the student's needs, the teacher may make a referral to the in-school team. The in-school team may recommend referring a student for further assessment(s). This does not necessarily mean that the student has a special education need but may simply indicate that there are areas in which the teacher might benefit from the insights and expertise of other professionals in making assessments and/or developing further programming ideas.

The resource document *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2013)*, which expands on the key themes outlined in *Education for All: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students With Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6 (2005)*, is the primary

source for more information about the integrated process of assessment and instruction. The following policy documents also make reference to this process:

- *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools* (2010)
- *Growing Success – The Kindergarten Addendum* (2016)
- *Policy/Program Memorandum No. 8, “Identification of and Program Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities”* (2014)

Ongoing Monitoring and Responsive Intervention

The various types of assessments contribute to a decision about the development of a program and supports for a student and the placement, when necessary or as appropriate, of that student. Ongoing assessment and monitoring are necessary to confirm the appropriateness of these programs and supports. As new information is gathered, based on the student’s response to instructional strategies, the teacher notes progress or the lack of it, considers any adjustments in planning that could be beneficial, and may decide on providing more intensive instructional supports and interventions. In the case of students who have persistent difficulties, the teacher may consider intervention by the in-school team or by out-of-school professionals and/or the provision of additional supports. In such cases, precise and detailed information is required; this can be gathered from various sources, including the records of the classroom teacher(s) or special education teacher and the findings of any educational or other professional assessments.

The teacher works in collaboration with the in-school team to review the effectiveness of teaching strategies and/or to incorporate recommendations made by out-of-school professionals. Classroom teachers should communicate with the principal, other educators, and other members of the in-school team to coordinate efforts and share information regarding students for whom they believe an IEP should be developed.

Assessment of Learning, Evaluation, and Reporting of Student Achievement

In conducting assessment of learning for students with special education needs, the teacher assesses and evaluates the student's achievement with respect to the curriculum expectations and/or the learning expectations and annual goals identified in the student's IEP. Assessment of learning is summative in nature and is used to confirm what students know and can do, to demonstrate whether they have achieved the expected outcomes of a program.

For a student who has an IEP, the IEP specifies whether the following are required:

- accommodations only
- modified expectations (with or without accommodations)
- alternative expectations/programs, not derived from the curriculum expectations for a subject/grade or a course (with or without accommodations)

For a student with special education needs who requires “accommodations only”, assessment and evaluation of achievement will be based on the grade-level curriculum expectations and the achievement levels outlined in the curriculum documents. For a student with special education needs who requires modified expectations and/or alternative expectations/programs, assessment and evaluation of the student's achievement will be based on the modified curriculum expectations and/or alternative expectations/programs outlined in the IEP. (See [section 4, The Special Education Program](#), of Part E for a fuller description of these three categories.)

Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools (2010) sets out the policy for reporting on the achievement of students with special education needs. Chapter 6 of that document includes special considerations with respect to the elementary and secondary Provincial Report Cards and the Elementary Progress Report as well as comments that can be used in the report cards and progress report cards for students with special education needs. *Growing Success – The Kindergarten Addendum (2016)* provides corresponding information regarding Communication of Learning reports for children in Kindergarten.

► The Individual Educational Assessment for the IPRC

The decision to refer a student to an IPRC, which is often made by the in-school team, should be reached only after careful review of all the data gathered from an individual educational assessment. **Such a decision should never be based solely on results from province-wide testing.**

An individual educational assessment consists of multiple sources of information. It may involve the use of a combination of strategies and tools and may be diagnostic, formative, and/or summative in nature. An individual assessment is required by an IPRC to make a decision about the identification of a student as exceptional and the placement of a student in a special education program. Where school staff are concerned about a student's achievement, the teacher should inform the student's parents before such an educational assessment is undertaken. (Depending on the components of the assessment, parental consent in writing may be required.)

The assessment strategies and tools that educators use routinely in the classroom may be used to complete an individual educational assessment for the IPRC. These may include, but are not limited to:

- direct observation
- pedagogical documentation
- portfolios
- journals
- rubrics
- tests
- projects
- performance tasks
- self- and peer assessment

It should be noted that when the IPRC identifies the student as exceptional and applies the ministry's definition to describe the exceptionality, it is not diagnosing a condition but merely indicating an educational category. The IPRC identification should not be interpreted as a diagnosis.

► Provincial Assessments

Results from provincial assessments, which are curriculum-based, can provide a valuable record of student achievement. As stated in *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools* (2010, p. 74), “Teachers and principals need to make every effort to enable students with special education needs to participate with their peers in all aspects of a provincial large-scale assessment [such as the EQAO assessments of reading, writing, and mathematics and the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test] and demonstrate the full extent of their learning”. However, as stated earlier, **the results from provincial assessment alone should not be used as the basis for a referral to an IPRC.**

Note that if the student already has an IEP, it identifies the accommodations that must be provided for the student during provincial assessments. These accommodations must be consistent with those required in the classroom and must be permitted by the EQAO (see *Growing Success*, p. 73). For further details on possible accommodations as well as on exemptions from part or all of the provincial assessments, see [section 7, Provincial Assessments](#), in Part E of this guide.

► Professional Assessments

In addition to the educational assessment, other types of assessments may be requested by and/or presented to the in-school team to assist with program planning or to the IPRC in order to assist with the committee’s decision making. These assessments may include health, speech and language, and psychological assessments, which are described below.

When other types of assessments beyond the educational assessment are requested, informed parental consent must be obtained before the assessment can be done. Each assessment must be administered by a legally qualified and registered practitioner (such as an audiologist, ophthalmologist, speech-language pathologist, or psychologist).

As noted below, specific acts and legislation govern how each assessment must be conducted. More information on these can be found in Part A, in the section entitled [Other Legislation Relevant to the Education of Students with Special Education Needs](#).

Health Assessment

Health assessments are administered by legally qualified medical practitioners or specialists (such as audiologists or ophthalmologists). Parental consent must be obtained in the exchange of assessment information with the school.

Should a health assessment result in suggestions for treatment, it is important that valid consent be obtained before any treatment is provided. The **Health Care Consent Act** sets out the elements of a valid consent with respect to any medical treatment. These include the following:

- Consent must relate to the treatment.
- Consent must be informed.
- Consent must be given voluntarily.
- Consent must not be obtained through misrepresentation or fraud.

Speech and Language Assessment

A speech and language assessment, also known as a communication assessment, is conducted by a speech-language pathologist. Under the **Regulated Health Professions Act** and the **Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Act**, all speech and language assessments must be performed by or under the supervision of a qualified member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists, with informed consent from the parent(s).

A speech and language assessment will:

- provide a professional opinion about the student's communicative ability;
- determine whether a communication difficulty exists and, if so, its severity and how the difficulty interferes with the learning process;
- determine whether communication programming would be appropriate;
- assist in determining an appropriate placement;
- provide screening for referral to an outside agency;
- determine whether a more in-depth assessment is necessary.

The person doing the assessment may:

- administer standardized tests;
- use non-standardized tests (e.g., informal measures such as observation);
- use classroom-based procedures and base the assessment on selected curriculum expectations;
- confer with parents, outside agencies, and resource teams;
- provide and/or obtain professional opinions;
- engage in preventive intervention, when appropriate;
- analyse, interpret, and synthesize information;
- prepare oral and written reports;
- communicate the results to parents and the in-school team.

Psychological Assessment

Under the **Regulated Health Professions Act** and the **Psychology Act**, all psychological assessments must be performed by or under the supervision of a qualified member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario, with informed consent from the parent(s). Many school boards employ or have access to psychological services staff who can provide or supervise psychological assessments.

A psychological assessment could include information from a number of sources, including school staff, the student, and the student's parent(s), in order to understand the student's characteristics as a learner. Other information that may assist in the analysis includes results from interviews, consultations, and individual psychological tests. The box below indicates the areas where a psychological test typically evaluates the student's functioning.

A psychological assessment is an objective measure of samples of behaviour, including its causes, significance, and consequences. It may include the evaluation of the following:

- social adjustment
- emotional status
- personality
- cognitive/developmental functioning
- language processing
- information processing
- visual-motor development
- executive functioning (i.e. attention, impulse control)
- aptitude
- academic achievement
- motivation

Professional Practice Guidelines for School Psychologists in Ontario
(Toronto: Ontario Psychological Association, 2013) p. 16

The data from a comprehensive psychological assessment informs a psychologist's recommendations concerning intervention strategies for parents and educators. Such information can inform the development of a student profile of learning strengths and needs and can be used to guide the formulation of appropriate program adjustments for the learner. A diagnosis is provided where applicable. Only a registered psychologist or registered psychological associate can provide a diagnosis.

The In-School Team and Out-of-School Resources

Establishing an in-school team is an important step in creating conditions that enable a student who is experiencing difficulty to succeed in the learning environment. School boards do not have a legislated responsibility to establish in-school teams, but many boards find that such teams can provide interventions and supports that effectively meet the student's needs.

An in-school team can collaboratively review instructional strategies and interventions that have been implemented, as well as the student's responses to them, and assess their effectiveness. The team may also consider whether and how to incorporate recommendations made by out-of-school professionals. An in-school team may also be involved in referring a student to an IPRC or developing an IEP, including the transition plan.

The in-school team is made up of people with various types of expertise who:

- support the student, the parent, and one another;
- collaborate, consult, and share information and knowledge to identify strategies that may increase the student's learning success.

Teams are designed to suit the specific needs of the students within the school, using the individual resources and skills of the school and/or board staff in order to respond to these needs. The principal, in collaboration with school staff, may establish formal guidelines for the team's membership, meeting times, and procedures for recording and reporting on its activities.

The composition of the in-school team will vary depending on the team's purpose. However, each team consists of a core group of individuals. In most schools, the core members of the in-school team would include:

- the student's classroom teacher(s) and/or the "referring" teacher;
- the principal or vice-principal;
- the school special education teacher (if available);
- a guidance teacher/counsellor (especially at the secondary level);
- the student success teacher (especially at the secondary level).

Where appropriate, the in-school team may also include – or may seek assistance from – board staff and professionals in the community who have expertise in the various exceptionalities and who have experience in areas such as speech and language development, psychology, physical and occupational therapy, social work, modification of curriculum expectations, and ESL/ELD.

As circumstances require, the in-school team may also seek assistance from parents and other family members, as well as outside resources such as:

- community associations/agencies, such as Friendship Centres or other Indigenous partners/organizations;
- service providers from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

As discussed in [Part E](#) of this guide, the development of a student's IEP often involves the core group of the student's in-school team in addition to other individuals. The development of a transition plan, as part of the IEP process, often involves many of the same team members; however, there may be a need to consult health care and social service agencies, employer groups, and educational institutions.

The active involvement of parents and the student enhances the effectiveness of the school team. Parents and students have important information to share with members of the team and should be invited to meet with the team when necessary and as appropriate. The support of parents has positive and pervasive effects on the student's success in school, and parents should be encouraged to feel that their contribution is a valuable part of the team process. Note that principals are required to ensure that parents and the student, if the student is 16 years of age or older, are consulted in the development of the IEP, which is a team process.

► Stages in the In-School Team Process

Stage 1: Classroom Screening and Intervention

Apart from the parents, classroom teachers are usually the first people to recognize that a student is experiencing difficulty in learning. Teachers should discuss their concerns with the parents and with previous teachers and other subject teachers working with the student, review information

in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR), and make some initial program adjustments. Throughout the screening and intervention process, the teacher should keep the student's parents informed about the student's progress and the planned program adjustments. During this process, the teacher is able to assess the student's strengths and needs. The teacher and the principal then determine what resources, support personnel, and strategies are available to meet those needs.

If the student continues to have difficulty, a referral is usually made to the in-school team. Ongoing communication with the parents can elicit valuable information about the student and is encouraged.

Stage 2: Referral to the In-School Team

At the request of the student's teacher or the principal, the in-school team will allocate time for the core members of the team to meet to discuss concerns regarding the student's learning. Some school boards have a practice of notifying the parents prior to the meeting about their specific concerns.

The in-school team may include additional persons who have information or expertise to share. The selection of additional members depends on the needs of the student and the personnel resources available to the school. Additional members may include other teachers (subject teachers, cooperative education teachers, guidance teachers/counsellors) who work with the student, early childhood educators, educational assistants who work with the student, and service providers from community agencies who may have relevant information to share. Where a number of teachers are involved (as in secondary school), some information may be presented through assessments or reports collected from the teachers. However, it is important for those most closely involved with the student to be present.

The in-school team may decide to do one or more of the following:

- determine whether interventions or accommodations are needed
- provide program interventions in the regular class
- provide specific supports in the classroom or withdraw the student from the classroom for limited periods of time (e.g., for remediation or enrichment)
- refer the student to other specialized services, including hearing, vision, and/or speech and language services; psychological services; and social or medical services

- refer the student for assessment, which may or may not lead to referral to an IPRC
- monitor the student and review the student's progress after several weeks
- develop an IEP, including a transition plan, specifying the special education strategies, resources, or other accommodations that the student requires
- develop a transition plan alone

The goal of applying interventions and making accommodations is to enable the student to learn successfully. Decisions about interventions and accommodations are best made at the in-school team meeting. The needs of the individual student, the resources available, and parent and student preferences must all be considered in determining the nature and extent of the interventions and accommodations recommended and provided. The in-school team uses the expertise of its members to make decisions about how to best assist the student. Follow-up monitoring permits the team to build on the student's success and to change the interventions that are not effective. Where appropriate, the in-school team may recommend that an IEP – or a transition plan alone – be developed to address the student's special education needs.

Stage 3: Follow-Up Meetings of the In-School Team

A student's case may be discussed once or over several meetings of the in-school team, depending upon the student's ongoing or changing needs, the success of school-based problem-solving efforts, and the need for additional information from specialized services. Usually a referral is made to an IPRC only after the interventions or accommodations agreed to at the in-school team meeting(s) have been tried and found insufficient. In some cases, it may be obvious at the outset that the needs of a child will be best met through an IPRC.

Stage 4: Referral to an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)

Referral to an IPRC is made by the school principal, usually following a recommendation from the in-school team. The in-school team's recommendation is based on:

- the results of ongoing program interventions;
- an educational assessment;
- additional assessments as requested by the team.

If a parent submits a written request for referral to an IPRC, the principal must follow the school board procedure in arranging for the IPRC meeting. (For further information about the IPRC process, see [Part D](#).)

Transition Planning

► Introduction

Throughout their education, all students face a variety of transitions, including the transition from home or from an early years program to school, from one grade or level of schooling to another, from one school to another, and from secondary school to an appropriate postsecondary pathway. Such transitions can pose a challenge for all students, but they can be particularly difficult and confusing for students with special education needs and their families. The coordination of planning well before the transition takes place can ensure that the student has all the necessary supports in place to make a successful and smooth transition.

Since 1998, transition plans have been required under [Ontario Regulation 181/98, “Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils”](#), as part of the IEP, for exceptional students over the age of 14 who were making the transition from secondary school to postsecondary activities and community living, if they were not identified solely as “gifted”.

In 2000, the ministry policy document *Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation* set out additional requirements for the IEP, including the postsecondary transition plan. This policy document stipulated that the transition plan, as part of the student’s IEP, must include the following components:

- specific goals for the student’s transition
- the actions required, now and in the future, to achieve the stated goals
- the person or agency responsible for or involved in completing or providing assistance in the completion of each of the identified actions
- timelines for the implementation of each of the identified actions

In 2007, with the release of **PPM No. 140, “Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)”**, it became a requirement for school boards to provide transition planning, as appropriate, between various activities and settings, for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). This policy also required that, where appropriate, relevant applied behaviour analysis (ABA) methods be used to support transitions.

More recently, evidence gained from research and practice has confirmed the value and benefit of transition planning for all students, including students with special education needs, whether or not they have been identified as exceptional by an IPRC. Successful transition experiences help build resiliency, support improved student achievement and well-being, and, for students with special education needs, result in improved continuity of programs and services.

As of September 2014, **PPM No. 156, “Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs”**, requires *all students who have an IEP*, whether or not they have been identified as exceptional by an IPRC, to have an up-to-date transition plan at every stage of their journey through school.³ (For more details on the legislative and policy requirements for transition plans, see **Part E**.)

The key transitions in a student’s schooling can include the following:

- entry to school
- a change from one school to another
- the move from elementary to secondary school
- the transition from secondary school to postsecondary activities
- a move to a school following a prolonged absence for medical reasons or after receiving care, treatment, or rehabilitation at another institution

The development of a coordinated and detailed plan for each key transition will help ensure that school and board staff are prepared to meet the needs of the student, contributing to smooth transitions and paving the way for the student’s future success. The physical, emotional, and learning needs of a student must be considered when a transition plan is being developed as part of the IEP. For more information on this process and on the components of a transition plan, see **Part E**.

3. At the discretion of the school board, students who are receiving special education programs and/or related services, but who have not been formally identified as exceptional by an IPRC and who do not have an IEP, may also have a transition plan.

To ensure successful transitions, schools and school boards can implement a number of strategies, including, but not limited to, the following:

- encouraging parents, and community partners who have parental consent, to notify the board about a student with special education needs well in advance of the student's entry or transition to school
- encouraging parental involvement in the entry or transition to school planning process
- establishing and maintaining links with community partners that provide services for students with special education needs and their families
- identifying key individuals who will play a role in the student's transitions – for example, individuals who have worked with the student in the past at preschool support services or other community agencies and who will continue to work with school board staff;⁴ those who will play a role in supporting the child in the new school environment; and one person who will coordinate the transition process
- holding a case conference to share and review information and develop a plan involving, as necessary, the principal, the classroom teacher(s) and early childhood educator, special education staff, the guidance teacher/counsellor, secondary subject teachers, the educational assistant, community agency staff, and parents
- gathering information from parents and any community agencies or professionals who might have worked with the student (e.g., relevant assessment reports, documentation and records, program and service recommendations)
- providing orientation opportunities for students and parents
- providing training for school staff to ensure they are familiar with effective strategies

In addition, a school board can develop, in consultation with community service agencies, a detailed protocol for the transition process, and can regularly review the effectiveness of the process, using feedback from community agencies and parents.

On the following pages, some of the key transitions are described, as well as methods to ensure that they are as smooth as possible.

4. For many students, including those with autism, the transition to school is of particular importance. For example, if a student is currently working with a community service professional, that professional should be involved in the transition process.

► Entry to School

Children arrive at school with different backgrounds and experiences and at different stages of development. It is important to plan early to ensure as smooth a transition as possible. Whether the child is coming from home or has been in child care, a successful transition depends on the ability of all those involved to communicate effectively and to share information about the child.⁵

If, when a child is registered in the spring for first-time attendance at school in the fall, the parents and board staff agree that the child could benefit from a special education program and/or services, a case conference with the appropriate people could be held. At the conference in the spring, the child's program and service needs could be discussed, so that the agreed-upon program and/or services could be provided to the child when he or she starts school. After the child arrives at school, it may also be determined that an IPRC meeting is necessary.

Once a child with special education needs has been registered, the school and parents should continue the process of collecting and reviewing information related to the child's needs and should communicate regularly about the child's progress. Early documentation of a child's strengths, needs, and developmental stage will be useful in establishing records.

Teachers, early childhood educators, members of the community, and families must work together to provide constructive and consistent learning experiences that will build children's confidence, encourage them to see learning as both enjoyable and useful, and provide a strong foundation for their future intellectual, physical, and social development.

5. Any exchange of information must be in accordance with freedom of information legislation and appropriate regard for confidentiality.

Including Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Language Programs

It is important that students and parents are aware that all classrooms, including French as a second language (FSL) classrooms, are required to provide appropriate supports for students who have special education needs. Core French, Extended French, and French Immersion are for all students. In these programs, FSL teachers, often in collaboration with special education staff, plan performance tasks that respect the particular abilities of all students, including students who have special education needs, based on accommodations, modifications, and/or alternative expectations outlined in the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

The document *Including Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Language Programs (2015)* reflects the Ministry of Education's commitment to supporting school boards, educators, and other stakeholders when they are making decisions about participation in FSL programs. These participation and programming decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the strengths, needs, and interests of the individual student. As such, practices regarding transfers, exemptions, and substitutions within FSL programs should not generally exclude students with special education needs from accessing opportunities for second language learning.

► School-to-School Transition

Many students change schools, whether because of program considerations or relocation of their family. Regardless of the reason, or whether the move is within the same school board or to another board, the transition can be made more smoothly with advance planning. Such planning is particularly important where students who have special education needs are concerned. To the extent allowed under applicable legislation including the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and in accordance with *The Ontario Student Record (OSR) Guideline (2000)*, pertinent information about the student should be shared with the receiving school prior to the student's arrival so that appropriate supports are in place.

In planning programs and/or supports for a student with special education needs who is transferring from another board, the new board should use any assessments available from the originating board.

The new school will receive a copy of the student's IEP, including the transition plan, as part of the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR). Parents may also provide the school with a copy of the student's IEP at the time of registration. As described in **Part E** of this guide, the IEP contains a variety of information (e.g., the student's exceptionality, relevant medical information, details on special education services, information on the student's strengths and needs, a record of any accommodations needed, a list of any modified and/or alternative learning expectations) that will enable the new school to start planning the student's program without delay.

► Transition from Elementary to Secondary School

The transition from elementary to secondary school is among the most challenging periods of adolescence. ... Effective transition planning to secondary school begins for all students in Grade 7 and continues into and sometimes beyond Grade 9. A smooth transition contributes to a strong foundation for success in secondary school and beyond.

Creating Pathways to Success (p. 21)

Students in Grades 7 to 12 are supported in their transition to secondary school through the required development of an Individual Pathways Plan (IPP) under the education and career/life planning program outlined in *Creating Pathways to Success: An Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Ontario Schools – Policy and Program Requirements, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (2013). With the support of educators and parents, students focus on planning, in various ways and in various areas, including course selection, for this major transition.

To support students with special education needs who are planning for a successful transition from elementary to secondary school, educators need to provide these students with information about:

- the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), the Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC), or the Certificate of Accomplishment, where appropriate;
- the Ontario Student Transcript (OST);
- types of courses offered, and how best to design their personal secondary school program based on their interests, strengths, needs, and aspirations;

- specialized programs and board-wide programs, extracurricular activities, and additional support programs;
- strategies for completing the community involvement requirement;
- the full range of postsecondary opportunities (apprenticeship training, college, community living, university, and the workplace);
- the education and career/life planning process and strategies for the effective use of education and career/life planning resources.

The information individual students share from their IPPs may provide additional insights into their particular learning strengths, needs, interests, and aspirations, which may be useful when developing their IEPs, which include transition plans.

► Transitions from School to Work, Postsecondary Education, and Community Living

The transition from secondary school to postsecondary destinations – whether further education or training, work, or independent living – can be intimidating for many students. But this transition can be particularly challenging for some students with special education needs. The probability of a successful transition is significantly increased when schools work with the student, parents, employers, community agencies, and providers of further education to develop coordinated plans for exceptional students, as required under [Regulation 181/98, “Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils”](#).

Information shared with educators by students as documented in their IPP, as noted above, provides valuable information for developing the secondary-to-postsecondary transition plan. *Creating Pathways to Success* notes that “planning for the transition from secondary school to postsecondary endeavours must be included as part of student learning in the compulsory Grade 10 Career Studies course and must also be made part of the school’s established process for course selection by students, in consultation with their parents, for Grades 11 and 12” (p. 22).

In addition to the above, to support a student with special education needs in making the transition to work, further education, and/or community living, this process could include making provisions to help the student connect with postsecondary institutions, community agencies, and/or the workplace, as appropriate. In some cases, this supportive information

may have been provided during the transition-planning process. If so, the ongoing transition-planning process provides an opportunity to review this information with the student.

► **Transition to School Following a Prolonged Medical Absence**

When a student is ready to return to school after a long medical absence, advance preparation with staff and other students could be helpful in enhancing awareness of and sensitivity to the student's needs, depending on the student's medical condition. It is essential to discuss the transition with parents and, after proper consent is obtained, with medical personnel who have been involved with the student. In addition, organizations that support persons with specific medical conditions may be able to provide useful in-service training for teachers and other school staff.

The following strategies may be helpful in meeting the needs of the student making the transition to school:

- Arrange for remedial sessions for the student after initial assessments of the student's level of functioning are completed.
- Set up a buddy system to ease the student's adjustment to school life.
- Shorten the school day, at least initially, for the benefit of the student. Such a strategy may be helpful in some cases where endurance is a problem. This option should be exercised only when it is in the student's best interest to do so.

► **Transitions to and/or from Educational Programs in Care and/or Treatment, Custody, and Correctional (CTCC) Facilities**

For students who are transitioning to and/or from CTCC educational programs, school board and facility staff should make every effort to ensure that these students receive continuous programs and services with a minimum of disruption. At each stage, transition plans are to be developed and monitored by the students' teams, which may include but are not limited to parents, students (where appropriate), educators, facility staff, and community service partners, to address the students' strengths, interests, and needs and to support a seamless transition into and/or out of

the CTCC educational program. Elements of transition planning include sharing of documentation and records, in keeping with the information outlined in *The Ontario Student Record (OSR) Guideline (2000)*, regular communication with parents, and gradual reintegration into the school system, where appropriate.

For more information on CTCC education programs, see **Part F** of this guide or see the ministry document *Guidelines for Educational Programs for Students in Government Approved Care and/or Treatment, Custody and Correctional (CTCC) Facilities*.

Integrated (Tri-ministry) Transition Planning for Young People with Developmental Disabilities

The development of transition plans for students with special education needs often involves collaboration with community partners. In recognition of this need for collaboration, the Ministry of Education has committed to working with two other ministries – Children and Youth Services, and Community and Social Services – to build on and improve the existing continuum of supports for young people with developmental disabilities. As of 2014, integrated transition planning is available to all young people (14 years of age and older) who meet the definition of having a developmental disability under any of the three ministry legislation frameworks. The intent of integrated transition planning is for all who support the young person with a developmental disability to work collaboratively in order to facilitate a smooth transition to post-secondary pathways. Integrated transition planning involves principals, educators, students and their families, and others who support the young person such as community service and health care providers.

Across the province, regional protocols have been developed to ensure that this transition-planning process is coordinated with the transition-planning process that is part of the IEP and leads to a single integrated transition plan for the student. The single integrated transition plan is expected to be a long-range, evolving plan that is developed when the student is age 14 and reviewed and updated regularly as part of the IEP process. It should identify the steps needed – from the time the plan is implemented to the time the

student is expected to leave school – for the student to attain his or her goals. The integrated transition plan has the same components as the transition plan that is developed as part of the IEP process. These components are described above, in the **Introduction** of the Transition Planning section, and in greater detail in **section 8** in Part E of this guide.

Integrating Planning Processes

Depending on the needs and the profile of the individual student, several different plans are often required to ensure that the student fully benefits from school programs and makes a successful transition into adult life. If these plans are developed separately, there is a risk of considerable duplication of effort and an even greater risk that the plans will contradict each other. It is therefore recommended that school boards and school principals develop procedures to integrate planning for students with special education needs. For example, a student's various plans might be coordinated by a team of core participants at a multipurpose planning meeting scheduled for the start of each semester or school year. It is also important to note that integrated planning must observe all regulatory or policy requirements governing individual plans.

The IPRC statement of decision, where available, provides a starting point for integrated planning, in that it identifies the student's strengths and needs and may make program and service recommendations, all of which must be taken into consideration when developing the IEP and other plans.

The following sections review some of the plans that a student may have, and identify potential areas of overlap among the plans.

► **The Individual Education Plan (IEP) and the Transition Plan**

The regulatory requirement that the transition plan be a part of the student's IEP leaves to the discretion of the school board or school the extent to which these two plans are integrated. The components of the transition plan may be:

- collected in a separate section of the IEP; or
- collected in a distinct document appended to the IEP.

As previously noted, it may be appropriate in some cases (especially for students with complex needs) for the transition-plan portion of the IEP to be developed in a meeting devoted exclusively to that purpose. In these cases, the challenge will be to ensure that the transition plan is compatible with the rest of the IEP. The actions documented in the transition plan must be consistent with the goals, learning expectations, supports, and accommodations identified in the student's IEP. To achieve this, the transition plan should be reviewed and revised in the light of all aspects of the IEP.

► **The All About Me Portfolio and the Individual Pathways Plan (IPP)**

The policy outlined in *Creating Pathways to Success: An Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Ontario Schools – Policy and Program Requirements, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2013)* requires all students, including students with special education needs, to develop an Individual Pathways Plan (IPP) (Grades 7–12). Students in Kindergarten to Grade 6 have the option of developing an All About Me portfolio. The portfolio and IPP are developed by the student and belong to the student. The information individual students may share from their portfolios or IPPs may provide additional insight into their particular learning strengths, needs, interests, and aspirations, which may help to inform the development (or annual revisions) of their IEPs, including the transition plan.

Supporting transitions for students is an important aspect of the education and career/life planning program outlined in *Creating Pathways to Success*. In this program, students use an inquiry process built on four questions linked to the four areas of learning in education and career/life planning – Knowing Yourself; Exploring Opportunities; Making Decisions and Setting Goals; and Achieving Goals and Making Transitions. The evidence students gather as part of this process supports them as they move from grade to grade, from elementary to secondary school, and from secondary school to their initial postsecondary destination.

► Work Experience and Cooperative Education Learning Plans

Students participating in work experience and cooperative education programs have learning plans that outline their learning goals and activities. Details of the requirements for these learning plans are set out in the Ministry of Education policy document *Cooperative Education and Other Forms of Experiential Learning: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Secondary Schools (2000)*.

Work experience and cooperative education programs provide students, including students with special education needs, with an opportunity to learn more about themselves (their strengths and interests), their communities, and the nature of the workplace. To ensure a meaningful learning experience for the student, educators who are involved in developing the student's learning plan and establishing the student's placement must ensure that both are consistent with the student's goals, strengths, and needs, as documented in the student's IPRC statement of decision and the student's IEP, including the transition plan.

Students' work experience can affect their interests and goals. Consequently, the perceptions of the student, parent, job coach (where applicable), and teachers about the student's recent work experience or cooperative education experience may help shape the next year's transition plan and IEP.

► Health and Safety Support Plans

Other planning and administrative documents may be associated with the health and safety supports required by some students with special education needs. The services outlined in these documents form part of the framework of support for the student and should be integrated into the planning process so that they are consistent with the IEP. These plans may include the following:

- **A safety plan:** A safety plan is developed for students whose behaviour is known to pose an ongoing risk to themselves, other students, staff, or other people in general. It can serve as a crisis-response plan that outlines the roles and responsibilities of the staff in dealing with specific problem behaviours. The development of a safety plan involves all staff members who work on an ongoing basis with a student, as well as

parents and representatives from any community agencies working with the student and/or family.

- **A behaviour support plan:** A behaviour support plan is designed to target the underlying reason for an inappropriate behaviour, replace the inappropriate behaviour with an appropriate behaviour that serves the same function, and reduce or eliminate the inappropriate behaviour. In school boards, behaviour support plans are sometimes referred to as “behaviour management plans”.
- **A medical plan:** A medical plan is developed for students with serious health issues. It should be comprehensive and include an emergency health care plan, a list of any environmental accommodations the student requires, and information about in-service education for staff.

PART D

The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process

Introduction

Identification, Placement, and Review Committees (IPRCs) are responsible for the identification of exceptional students and their placement in special education programs. This part of the guide describes the roles, processes, and regulatory requirements related to IPRCs, including processes for appeals and reviews, whether through the IPRC or the special education appeal board (SEAB). This part of the guide also provides information about later appeals, under certain circumstances, to the Ontario Special Education Tribunal (OSET).

Where applicable, the relevant sections of **Ontario Regulation (O. Reg.) 181/98, “Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils”**, which sets out most of the requirements for IPRCs, are referenced in the main text, just below the paragraph under discussion. These section references are hyperlinked to the specific section of the regulation.

Additional information on IPRCs can also be found on the Ministry of Education’s website, at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/identifi.html.

The Identification and Placement of Exceptional Students

► The IPRC

An IPRC is a formal committee that meets and decides if a student should be identified as exceptional and, if so, the placement that will best meet the student's needs. All school boards must establish one or more IPRCs. An IPRC is composed of at least three persons, one of whom must be a principal or supervisory officer of the board. A school board trustee may not be a member of an IPRC.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, sections 10 and 11](#))

The ministry standards for school boards' special education plans outlined in [Part B](#) of this guide require that those plans provide details concerning the IPRC process.

► The Role of an IPRC

An IPRC must:

- invite the parent and the student (if the student is 16 years of age or older) to attend the IPRC meeting;
- review relevant information about the student;
- describe the student's strengths and needs;
- decide whether or not the student should be identified as exceptional;
- identify the area(s) of the student's exceptionality or exceptionalities, according to the categories and definitions of exceptionality provided by the Ministry of Education (see Part A, the [Categories of Exceptionalities section](#), for a list of these categories and definitions);
- decide on an appropriate placement for the student;
- provide reasons for the placement if deciding for a placement in a special education class;
- discuss proposals for special education programs and services if the parent, or the student age 16 or over, requests it;
- review the identification and placement at least once in each school year, unless the parent gives written notice dispensing with the review.

► Requesting an IPRC Meeting

Once a child has been enrolled in school, the parents have the right to request that the principal refer their child to an IPRC.

According to the regulation, the principal of the student's school:

- must refer the student to an IPRC upon receiving a written request from the parent;
- may, with written notice to the parent, refer the student to an IPRC.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 14\(1\)](#))

If a parent makes a written request for an IPRC, the principal must follow the school board procedure in arranging for the IPRC meeting. Neither the board nor the principal can refuse the request.

Within fifteen days of receiving a written request from the parent, or giving the parent notice of a referral, the principal must provide to the parent:

- an acknowledgement of the parent's request (if the IPRC is being convened at parental request);
- a copy of the school board's special education guide for parents;
- a written statement indicating approximately when the IPRC will meet.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 14\(6\)](#))

Note: Upon request, communication with the parent or student about the IPRC meeting and its results must be provided in Braille, large-print, or audio format.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, section 4](#))

Once the request for an IPRC has been made by either the principal or the parent, or by both of these parties, the principal must follow the school board procedure in arranging for an IPRC meeting.

Considerations Related to Students Who Are Moving from a Demonstration School to a School of a Board

If a decision is made by the parents and a Demonstration School to move a student from the Demonstration School to a school of a board, the superintendent of the Demonstration School must notify the school board as

early as possible that the student is to be enrolled in a school of the board. The IPRC should meet as soon as possible after the decision is made to move the student to a school of the board.

► Notice of the IPRC Meeting

At least ten days before the meeting of the IPRC, the chair of the committee must send the parents written notification of the meeting.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 5\(5\)](#))

This letter will provide information about the date, time, and place of the meeting, and should ask the parents to indicate whether they will attend. Parents should be encouraged to attend, and every effort should be made to accommodate their schedule. Parents should also be informed that they have the right to:

- be present at and participate in all committee discussions about the student;
- be present when the committee makes its decision about the identification and the placement;
- have a representative present to speak on their behalf or otherwise support them.

Each school board has its own procedures for inviting parents to attend the IPRC meeting. Many boards find it helpful to contact parents by telephone and follow up with a letter of invitation. If no reply to the notice of the meeting is received by two or three days before the scheduled date, the principal should contact the parents directly. At the same time, the principal may also wish to verify whether the parents have received, read, and understood the parents' guide to special education prepared by the school board (see "The Parents' Guide" below).

The parents (and student who is 16 years of age or older) must receive the same information about the student that the chair of the IPRC has received. This information is to be sent out as soon as possible after the chair has received it.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 15\(8\)](#))

► The Parents' Guide

Each school board is required to prepare a parents' guide to special education.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 13\(1\)](#))

At a minimum, the parents' guide to special education must contain the information set out in the sample guide that is included in [Appendix D-1](#) in this part of the guide.

Once an IPRC has been requested, parents must be provided with a copy of the guide, which contains information on the IPRC and the decision-making process.

The parents' guide provides information on the following topics:

- the function of the IPRC and the IPRC review;
- the procedure for identifying a student as exceptional and for deciding the student's placement;
- the IPRC's duty to describe the student's strengths and needs;
- the IPRC's duty to include the student's exceptionality and the category and definition of that exceptionality in its statement of decision;
- the function of a special education appeal board (SEAB) and the parents' right to appeal the decision of the IPRC to such a board;
- the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the Provincial and Demonstration Schools;
- whether and to what extent the school board purchases special education programs and/or services from another school board;
- a list of local parents' organizations eligible to be on a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC);
- the fact that an IPRC placement decision cannot be implemented unless a parent has consented to the decision or has not filed a notice of appeal within the required time limit.

All parents should be informed by means of an item in the school newsletter, or by other appropriate means, *at least once each year*, of the availability of the school board's special education guide for parents. At the same time, parents should also be informed of their right to request that their child be referred to an IPRC.

Upon request of the parents or the student, the parents' guide must be made available in Braille, large-print, or audio format. Copies of the

parents' guide must be available at every school, head office of the school board, and local district office of the Ministry of Education.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 13\(2\)](#))

► Preparation for the IPRC Meeting

Once an IPRC has been requested, the committee will:

- obtain an educational assessment of the student (see [Part C](#) of this guide for a discussion of educational assessments);
- obtain, subject to the provisions of the Health Care Consent Act, 1996, health and/or psychological assessments, if it is believed that such information is required to make an accurate identification or placement decision (see [Part C](#) of this guide for information on health and psychological assessments);
- consider interviewing the student, if the committee members feel it would be useful to do so (parental permission is necessary before interviewing a child under 16 years of age);
- consider any information about the student submitted by the parents, or by the student who is 16 years of age or older; and
- consider any other information that may be relevant to the IPRC decision.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsections 15 \(1\)–\(7\)](#))

► A Delayed IPRC Meeting

No student is to be denied any special education program pending an IPRC meeting or decision. If there is a delay in holding the IPRC meeting or in determining identification and placement, a special education program and/or special education services appropriate to the student's apparent strengths and needs must be provided for the student in the interim.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, section 9](#))

▶ Attending the IPRC Meeting

Parents, and students who are 16 years of age or older, are entitled to be present at and participate in all IPRC discussions about the student and to be present when the committee's identification and placement decisions are made.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 5\(1\)](#))

In addition to the three people that constitute an IPRC, other people may attend the IPRC meeting. Possible attendees include:

- the principal of the student's school (if not already a member of the IPRC);
- resource people such as the student's teacher(s), special education staff, school board support staff, or other professionals who may be needed to provide further information or clarification;
- a representative of the parents and/or of a student who is 16 years of age or older (i.e., a person who can provide support for or speak on behalf of the parents and/or student);
- an interpreter (including a sign-language interpreter), if required; and
- other individuals whose presence is requested by either the parents or the principal of the student's school (subject to the agreement of the IPRC chair).

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsections 5 \(3\) and \(4\)](#))

▶ Recording at an IPRC Meeting

There is no requirement in O. Reg. 181/98 for a transcript or any other record of an IPRC meeting to be prepared. However, it is effective practice to document discussions at meetings where important decisions are made. Such records, including reports submitted to and relied on by the IPRC, support accountability for decisions, enable processes to be reviewed and improved, and assist future committees in understanding past decisions. In addition, the school board may want to keep a formal record of the meeting, including documents considered by the committee, for use in the event of an appeal. If anyone wishes to arrange for some form of record to be made of the meeting, this request should be discussed at the earliest

opportunity with the IPRC chair and the other people attending the meeting. Regardless of whether a formal record is made, the IPRC chair and members, and the parents and student may make notes during the meeting.

► Prior to the IPRC Meeting

Some time prior to an IPRC meeting, it is advisable that the principal and/or a designated school staff member arrange to meet with the parents for a preliminary discussion in order to:

- make sure that parents understand their rights concerning the IPRC, as explained in the parents' guide;
- request any additional information from parents that may be relevant to the IPRC decision;
- review the results of educational and other assessments that were conducted with the student;
- outline the agenda for the IPRC meeting;
- explain the recommendations that will be made by the school staff;
- discuss the possible decisions the IPRC might make; and
- answer any questions.

► The IPRC Meeting

It is the responsibility of the members of the IPRC to set an informal and welcoming tone in the meeting. It is also effective practice for the IPRC chair to:

- introduce all those attending the meeting and explain the reasons for their presence;
- explain the purpose of the meeting; and
- ensure that all participants feel that their contributions are valued.

Parents, and/or students who are 16 years of age or over, must be given the opportunity to have a representative with them if they wish, and to present information and ask questions.

The IPRC meeting will review all available information about the student. The committee will:

- consider the results of the student’s educational assessment;
- consider the results of any other assessments, such as health and/or psychological assessments, if it is believed that such information is required to make an accurate identification or placement decision;
- consider the results of an interview with the student, if the committee members feel it would be useful to do so;
- consider any information about the student submitted by the parents, or by the student who is 16 years of age or older; and
- consider any other information that may be relevant to the IPRC decision.

At the meeting, teachers may be asked questions about the student’s achievement, progress, behaviour, assessment results, and potential response to a change in placement.

The committee may discuss and make recommendations regarding special education programs and services for the student. At the request of the parents, or of a student who is 16 years of age or older, committee members will discuss any such recommendations with the parents and/or the student. Parents and students should be encouraged to ask questions and participate in the discussion.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsections 16 \(1\) and \(2\)](#))

► The IPRC Placement Decision

Before the IPRC considers placement of the student in a special education class, the committee, as required by the regulation, must consider placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services. If, after considering all of the information presented to it, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a regular class would meet the student’s needs and is consistent with parental preferences, the committee will decide in favour of a placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 17\(1\)](#))

If the committee decides that the student should be placed in a special education class, it must give reasons for that decision in its written statement.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, clause 18\(2\)\(c\)](#))

The following chart outlines the range of options the IPRC may consider in making its placement decision.

Placement	Description
A regular class with indirect support	The student is placed in a regular class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialized consultative services.
A regular class with resource assistance	The student is placed in the 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.
A regular class with withdrawal assistance	The student is placed in the regular class and receives instruction outside of the classroom for less than 50 per cent of the school day, from a qualified special education teacher.
A special education class with partial integration	The student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class where the student-teacher ratio conforms to the standards in O. Reg. 298, section 31, for at least 50 per cent of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.
A special education class full time	The student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class, where the student-teacher ratio conforms to the standards in O. Reg. 298, section 31, for the entire school day.

Other options exist to meet the student's needs, and parents and school board staff are encouraged to explore them. For example, they may need to consider applying for admission to:

- a Provincial School for students who are Deaf, blind, or deafblind, or a Demonstration School for students who have severe learning disabilities; or
- a facility that provides the necessary care or treatment appropriate to the student's condition.

Applications to Provincial Schools and Demonstration Schools are coordinated and submitted by the school board. Applications to care and

treatment facilities are made by the parents directly to the facility, although school board staff may be able to assist the parents in gathering useful information.

► The IPRC Statement of Decision

The committee will make its decision about identification and placement after all the information has been presented, considered, and discussed. The committee need not make its determination at the IPRC meeting. It may reserve its decision (e.g., pending the receipt of further information). However, parents (and students 16 years of age or over) are entitled to be present whenever the IPRC makes its decision.

The IPRC written statement of decision will indicate whether the committee has identified the student as exceptional. Where the IPRC has identified the student as exceptional, the statement of decision must include:

- the categories and definitions of any exceptionalities identified;
- the IPRC's description of the student's strengths and needs;
- the IPRC's placement decision;
- the IPRC's recommendations regarding a special education program and special education services, if any; and
- reasons for placing the student in a special education class, if that is the IPRC's decision.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 18\(2\)](#))

Whether or not the IPRC places a student in a special education class, its statement of decision may indicate the rationale for its decisions and provide a record of both the evidence that was submitted to the committee and the evidence that it relied on in reaching its decisions regarding exceptionalities, placement, and strengths and needs.

School boards have found it helpful to develop a form to use when recording the decision of the committee. This form may become the statement of decision, as long as it contains the information listed above. It also usually lists:

- the names of the committee members present;
- the names of other persons present;
- the titles of the documents considered; and

- the process available to parents if they do not agree with the IPRC's decision.

The chair of the IPRC must send a copy of the statement of decision to:

- the parents;
- the student, if 16 years of age or older;
- the school principal;
- the director of the school board.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 18\(1\)](#))

► Parental Consent

The school board will implement the placement decision either after the parents consent to it or, if the parents do not consent but do not wish to appeal the decision, after the time limit for an appeal has expired. Although the regulation requires that the consent be written, it does not specify the precise form in which written consent will be provided. Many school boards have a policy of asking the parents to sign their names to the statement of decision to indicate agreement with the committee's identification and placement decision. The statement of decision may be signed at the IPRC meeting or taken home and returned. Parents should be encouraged to give serious consideration to their child's identification and placement prior to signing the IPRC form.

If the student's parents did not attend the IPRC meeting, the statement of decision and a consent form should be mailed to the student's home to be signed and then returned to the school principal. If the parents do not sign the consent form and do not appeal the decision within the time limit, the school board will implement the IPRC decision, with written notice to the parents.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, section 20](#))

► After the IPRC Decision

A follow-up meeting of the IPRC may be held at the parents' request whether or not they agree with the IPRC decision. The parents have fifteen days after receiving the statement of decision to make a written request to the student's current school principal for a follow-up meeting with the

IPRC. The principal will arrange for the meeting to be held as soon as possible. Then, as soon as possible after the follow-up meeting, the IPRC chair will inform the school board and the parents if any changes were made to the IPRC decision and, if so, will provide a revised statement of decision and written reasons for the changes. The parents will be asked to consent to the revised identification and/or placement decision.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, section 19](#))

► Agreement with the IPRC Decision

Once the IPRC has identified the student as exceptional and the parents have agreed with the IPRC identification and placement decision, the school board will promptly notify the principal of the school at which the special education program will be provided of the need to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for the student, including a transition plan¹ for each exceptional student who is 14 years of age or older, unless the student is identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 7\(7\)](#))

(For a discussion of IEPs, see [Part E](#) of this guide.)

► Disagreement with the IPRC Decision

If the parents disagree with the revised decision, they may:

- within thirty days of receipt of the initial IPRC decision, file a notice of appeal with the secretary of the board (who is usually the director of education);
- within fifteen days of the receipt of the decision of the second meeting, file a notice of appeal with the secretary of the board.

(See [The IPRC Appeal section](#), for more information.)

If the parents do not supply written consent to the IPRC decision and also do not appeal the decision within the time limit set for appealing, the school board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

1. Ministry policy requires transition plans under other circumstances as well. For details, see [Part E](#) of this guide.

Summary of the IPRC Timeline

IPRC Meeting Requested	Action
Within 15 days of request	Principal sends parent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acknowledgement of request or notice of referral • parents' guide to special education • approximate date for IPRC meeting
At least 10 days before meeting	IPRC chair sends parent (and student if 16 or over): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notification of IPRC meeting • details of meeting (date, time, place)
Before the meeting and as soon as possible after receipt of information on student	IPRC chair sends parent (and student if 16 or over) information about student received by IPRC

IPRC Meeting	Action
	IPRC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • documents student's strengths and needs • makes decision about identification and placement • identifies category and definition of student's exceptionality • may recommend program and services As soon as possible after decision is made, statement of decision is sent to the relevant parties, along with reasons for placing student in special education class, if that is IPRC's placement decision

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After IPRC Decision	Action
Within 15 days of statement of decision	Parent may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agree with decision and sign consent form • make no response • request further discussion, or • disagree with decision and file appeal with SEAB
<i>If parent agrees or makes no response:</i>	<i>Action</i>
Within 30 school days of placement being implemented	School completes IEP Parent gets copy of IEP
<i>If parent wishes further discussion:</i>	<i>Action</i>
Within 15 days of receipt of decision	Parent requests second meeting
<i>If parent disagrees:</i>	<i>Action</i>
Within 30 days of receipt of initial IPRC decision	Parent files notice of appeal with secretary of board
Second IPRC Meeting	Action
	As soon as possible after second IPRC meeting, notice of results sent to relevant parties, along with reasons for changes if there is a revised decision
After Second IPRC Meeting	Action
	Parent may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sign consent form, or • make no response (board then implements placement decision, and develops IEP within 30 days)
<i>If parent disagrees:</i>	<i>Action</i>
Within 15 days of request of decision of second meeting	Parent files notice of appeal with secretary of board

The IPRC Review

► Request for a Review / Dispensing with the Annual Review

At any time after a placement has been in effect for three months, a request for an IPRC review may be made by:

- the school principal with written notice to the parent;
- the parent in a written request to the principal; or
- the director of education of the educating board (in purchase-of-service situations).

A request for an IPRC review cannot be made more often than once every three months. An IPRC review meeting *must be held once within each school year*, unless the principal of the school at which the special education program is being provided receives written notice from the parent dispensing with the annual review.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsections 21 \(1\), \(2\), \(3\), and \(4\)](#))

► Timelines for the IPRC Review

The IPRC review operates under the same timelines as the original IPRC process. Within fifteen days of a principal's giving written notice to the parent for a review or of the parent's written request to the principal for a review, the school principal must let the parent know, in writing, approximately when the IPRC review will take place.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 21\(5\)](#))

► Attendance at the IPRC Review

The same people who attended the original IPRC meeting may attend the IPRC review. If a special education program and/or special education service has been purchased from another school board, a representative of the purchasing board may be present.

► The IPRC Review Decision

The IPRC will review the original placement and identification decisions and decide whether they should be continued or revised. The IPRC review considers the same type of information that was originally considered at the initial IPRC. With the parent's written permission, the IPRC conducting the review will consider the progress that the student has made in relation to the IEP.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 23\(2\)](#))

► After the IPRC Review Decision

As soon as possible after the IPRC review, a written statement confirming or changing the student's identification and/or placement must be sent by the chair of the committee to:

- the parent;
- the student, where the student is 16 years of age or older;
- the school principal;
- the designated representative of the school board providing the services;
- the representative of the purchasing board (if appropriate).

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsections 23 \(3\) and \(4\)](#))

Following an IPRC review, the IPRC may:

- confirm its original decision about the identification and placement of the student and provide all relevant parties with a written statement of decision; or
- change its original decision about the student's identification or placement, or both, and provide all relevant parties with a new statement of decision that specifies:
 - ✧ reasons for changing the original IPRC decision;
 - ✧ whether the student should continue to be identified as an exceptional student;
 - ✧ where the committee considers that the student should continue to be identified as an exceptional student, the committee's placement decision, description of the student's strengths and needs, and the categories and definitions of any exceptionalities of the student; and
 - ✧ where the committee considers that the student should be placed in a special education class, the reasons for that decision.

As at the initial IPRC meeting, the committee must consider placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services before it considers placement in a special education class. If the committee decides that the student should be placed in a special education class, it must provide the reason(s) for that placement in its statement of decision.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 23 \(6\)](#))

After receiving the confirmation or statement of decision resulting from a review, the parent may send a request to the principal for a follow-up meeting. A follow-up meeting of the IPRC review may be held at the parents' request whether or not they agree with the IPRC review decision.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 24\(1\)](#))

If the parent disagrees with the decision, he or she may:

- within thirty days of receipt of the IPRC decision, file a notice of appeal with the secretary of the board;
- within fifteen days of the receipt of decision of the second meeting, file a notice of appeal with the secretary of the board.

(See “The IPRC Appeal” below, for more information.)

If the parent does not supply written consent to the identification and/or placement decision, but also does not appeal, the school board may implement the placement decision. In this case, the school board must notify the parent of the action taken.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, section 25](#))

If the IPRC review results in a change to the original IPRC decision on identification or placement of the student, the principal must review the IEP to determine whether it needs to be updated.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 7\(2\) and section 25](#))

The IPRC Appeal

► Filing a Notice of Appeal

A parent who disagrees with the decision stemming from the original or the follow-up meeting of the IPRC may file an appeal with a special education appeal board (SEAB). The parent may appeal:

- the decision that the student is, or is not, exceptional; and/or
- the placement decision, when a student is identified as exceptional.

The notice of appeal must be sent to the secretary of the board and must:

- indicate the decision with which the parent disagrees; and
- include a statement that sets out the nature of the disagreement.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsections 26 \(1\) and \(4\)](#))

If a parent's notice of appeal is incorrectly written or does not accurately describe the area of disagreement, the appeal will not be ignored. In most cases, it is sufficient for parents to indicate their reasons for disagreeing.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 26\(5\)](#))

► Appeal Timeline

The request for an appeal must be filed with the secretary of the board within the following time limits:

- within thirty days of receiving the IPRC's statement of decision; or
- within fifteen days of receiving the IPRC's statement of decision arising out of a follow-up meeting with the IPRC.

The same timelines apply to appeals of decisions arising from an IPRC review.

When a parent files a notice of appeal, the IPRC placement being appealed is not implemented, pending the results of the appeal. However, there is nothing to prevent the parents and the school board from agreeing to the terms of a temporary placement pending the results of the appeal.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsections 26 \(2\) and \(3\)](#))

► The School Board Response to Receiving a Notice of Appeal

After receiving the request for an appeal, the school board sets the appeal process in motion. It is suggested that the board assign one or more staff who are not involved in the appeal to handle the arrangements for setting up the SEAB.

► Selection of Appeal Board Members

Within fifteen days of the school board's receiving the notice of appeal:

- the school board selects one person to be a member of the SEAB; and
- the parent selects one person to be a member of the SEAB.

Though parents will often request that a local association recommend one of its members as their selection for the appeal board, they are not limited to this choice. Where the parents are unfamiliar with the local associations operating within the jurisdiction of the school board, the school board should be prepared to provide the parents with a list of Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) members and/or a list of local associations eligible for membership on SEAC.

Within fifteen days of the selections of the parent and school board representatives, these two appeal board members will select a chair. It may be helpful for a school board, in advance of any requests for an SEAB, to compile a list of people who they believe are suitable and willing to act as chair. The list may include people from other boards, retired educators, or SEAC members from other boards. A prepared list, with résumés, may help the two members select the chair.

If the appeal board members cannot agree on a chair, the manager of the district office of the Ministry of Education may be asked to select the chair.

No appeal board member should have had any prior involvement with the matter under appeal, nor should the member be an employee or member of the school board or an employee of the Ministry of Education.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsections 27 \(1\), \(4\), and \(5\)](#))

► Before the Meeting of the Appeal Board

The school board contact person should, as soon as possible after receiving the request for the appeal, contact the parties (i.e., the parents and the school board) to identify when they will be available for the SEAB meeting and whom they have selected as their respective appeal board members.

In addition, the contact person should:

- inform all parties to the appeal how he or she may be contacted. Questions or concerns about the process should be directed to the contact person rather than to the appeal board members;
- make preparations for the meeting, including finding a facility in which to hold the meeting. The meeting should be held in a neutral location, preferably reasonably close to the parents' home, such as a school that is not involved in the matter, a government office, or a hotel;
- inform both the parents and the school board that any information regarding the student's needs and strengths that was brought up at the IPRC meeting(s) may be submitted to the appeal board for consideration. Although the regulation does not indicate when this information should be sent to the appeal board members, it should be submitted sufficiently in advance of the meeting to permit the members of the SEAB and the other party to read it carefully;
- ensure that the parents and the student (if 16 years of age or older) are aware of their right to have a representative present at the meeting.

The chair of the SEAB:

- must send a notice to the parents, the student (if 16 years of age or older), the school board, and presenters within a reasonable period of time (at least ten days before the meeting) to inform them of the date, time, and location of the appeal board meeting. These details should have been worked out in consultation with the parents, the school board, and the SEAB members. The chair has an obligation to make sure the meeting takes place at a convenient time and place. Although appeal board meetings tend to be scheduled for a single day, there may be circumstances in which everyone agrees that more time is necessary;
- should request that the parents and school board each submit a list of the persons they wish to invite to the meeting, with an estimate of how much time these people will likely need to make their presentations to the appeal board. If time permits, both lists should be distributed to

all parties in advance of the meeting. If the lists are extensive or if the appeal board members believe that certain persons are missing and should be invited, then the chair may convene a conference call with the parties to attempt to resolve any difficulties. Flexibility in scheduling may be needed to accommodate the schedules of the persons invited to provide information to the appeal board.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsections 28 \(1\) and \(2\)](#))

If the SEAB members intend to request material that has not already been submitted by either the school board or the parents, then a request to this effect should be made in writing by the school board contact person and provided to both parties.

The chair of the IPRC who made the original decision will provide the appeal board with documents from the IPRC proceedings, including the statement of decision and any reports, assessments, or other items considered by the IPRC.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 27\(6\)](#))

The chair of the SEAB, in consultation with the other parties, will arrange for a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but no later than thirty days after he or she has been selected, unless the parents and the school board both provide written consent to a later date.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsections 28 \(1\), \(2\), and \(3\)](#))

► The Appeal Board Meeting

The school board will:

- provide the appeal board with secretarial and administrative services for activities such as making telephone calls, sending correspondence, photocopying and distributing material, and preparing copies of the appeal board's recommendations;
- in accordance with board policy with respect to board members, pay the travelling and other expenses of the members of the SEAB while they are engaged in their duties.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 27\(7\)](#))

In addition to the appeal board members, other people are entitled to be present at the appeal board meeting:

- The parents and a student who is 16 years of age or older are entitled to be present for, and to participate in, all discussions.
- The parents and student are permitted to have representatives present to speak on their behalf or otherwise support them. If the parents and/or the school board representative wish to have additional persons with them to assist with note taking, they should raise this matter with the chair of the appeal board either at or in advance of the meeting.
- Any person who, in the opinion of the appeal board chair, may be able to contribute information with respect to the matters under appeal may be invited to attend.
- The parents and the school board may, with the agreement of the appeal board, invite other persons to the meeting to speak about various matters relevant to the appeal.
- If a special education program and/or service has been purchased from another school board, the representative of the board offering the service may attend.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 5\(3\)](#))

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsections 28 \(4\) and \(5\)](#))

The appeal board chair may prepare an agenda for the meeting that provides an overview of the scheduled proceedings. If possible, this agenda should be sent to the parties in advance of the meeting.

Sample Agenda for an SEAB Meeting

1. A call to order
2. An introductory statement by the chair of the appeal board, including:
 - ✧ introduction of the appeal board members
 - ✧ introduction of the participants
 - ✧ a statement of the purpose of the meeting
 - ✧ a description of the procedures to be followed (e.g., order of presentations)
3. The presentations, including:
 - ✧ an opening statement by the parent
 - ✧ an opening statement by the school board
 - ✧ presentation of information by persons invited by the parent
 - ✧ presentation of information by persons invited by the school board
 - ✧ presentation of written information, if any, by parent and school board
 - ✧ a summary by the parent
 - ✧ a summary by the school board
4. A closing statement by the appeal board chair. This statement should provide information about:
 - ✧ the decision date
 - ✧ the powers of the appeal board
 - ✧ the role of the school board following the decision

The SEAB meeting must be conducted in an informal manner. The goal of the meeting is to provide the appeal board members with the information they require in order to make their recommendations.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 28\(2\)](#))

► After the Appeal Board Meeting

The SEAB must make its recommendations to the school board within three days of the end of the meeting. The appeal board may:

- agree with the IPRC and recommend that the IPRC's decisions be implemented; or
- disagree with the IPRC and make a recommendation to the school board regarding the student's identification or placement or both.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 28\(6\)](#))

The regulation requires that the appeal board report its recommendations in writing, including the reasons for its recommendations. This written statement must be sent to:

- the parent;
- the student, if 16 years of age or older;
- the chair of the IPRC whose decision is being appealed;
- the principal of the school;
- the director of the school board; and
- the representative of the purchasing board, if appropriate.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, section 29](#))

The appeal board may report its decision in whatever written form it finds appropriate. The following elements might be included:

- personal information for the purpose of identification (e.g., the student's name and age, the parent's name and address, the name and address of the school);
- the date, time, and place of the appeal board meeting;
- the purpose of the meeting and the issue(s) with which it was concerned;
- the names of the parties, their representatives (if any), and any presenters whom they invited to the SEAB meeting;
- a summary of the facts of the case;
- a summary of the positions of the parties;
- a list of the factors that played a role in the formulation of the recommendations, and, if possible, the weight given to each of these factors;
- the recommendation of the appeal board on the issue before it.

Although it is not required by the regulation, it is effective practice for the person designated as the school board contact to prepare an official file that includes:

- the written communications between the appeal board and the parties;
- the information submitted to the appeal board, including documents, assessments, videos, or other material (unless the parent requests that some of these be returned);
- the appeal board recommendations;
- the school board decision (see “After the Appeal Board Decision” below).

This record should be preserved for future reference, and for forwarding to a tribunal if required.

Note: Any records in the custody or under the control of the school board are subject to the privacy and access requirements of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

► After the Appeal Board Decision

Within thirty days of receiving the SEAB’s written statement, the school board must:

- consider the appeal board’s recommendations;
- decide what action it will take with respect to the student;
- send a written statement of decision to everyone who received the written recommendations from the appeal board and include an explanation of the parent’s right to appeal to the Special Education Tribunal (SET).

In deciding what action to take, the school board is not limited to the actions recommended by the appeal board.

If the parent is not satisfied with the school board decision, he or she has a further right to appeal to the **Special Education Tribunal**.

(See **Ontario Regulation 181/98, section 30**)

The school board decision will be implemented when:

- the parent consents in writing;
- there is no appeal to the SET within thirty days of the parent's receiving notice of the decision; or
- the appeal to the SET has been dismissed or abandoned.

Nothing prevents the school board and the parent from coming to an agreement that differs from the original school board decision. If so, the school board must give notice of the new decision to the same people to whom it sent the original statement of decision.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, section 31](#))

Summary of the IPRC Appeal Timeline

Notice of Appeal	Action
within 15 days of notice being received by the secretary of board	school board and parent each select one member of appeal board
within 15 days of the selections being made	the two members select a chair
within 30 days of selection of chair	appeal board meets (unless parent and board consent in writing to a later date)
Meeting	Action
within 3 days following the meeting	appeal board recommendations sent to relevant parties
within 30 days of receipt of recommendations	school board considers recommendations and sends statement of decision to relevant parties
Board's Decision	Action
within 30 days of receipt OR	parent appeals to Special Education Tribunal
after 30 days and without an appeal by parents	board implements its decision

Summary of the Identification, Placement, and Review Process

IPRC Process and Procedures	Parents and Students	School Principals
Principal refers student to IPRC, either at the request of parent or on own initiative	<p>The parent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may request, in writing to principal, that student be referred to IPRC • may request communication in Braille, large-print, or audio format 	<p>The principal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensures parental request is honoured • provides communication in alternative format, if requested • ensures all timelines are met
Within 15 days of making the referral, principal notifies parent that student has been referred to IPRC	<p>The parent receives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written notification of referral • estimate of when IPRC is likely to meet • parents' guide to special education in appropriate format 	<p>The principal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sends parent required information and parents' guide
<p>Once an IPRC has been requested, the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • obtains an educational assessment • obtains a health and/or psychological assessment, if needed • may consider interviewing the student • must consider any information about the student submitted to it by the parent and, if the student is 16 years of age or older, the student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent may be requested to give permission for a health and/or psychological assessment in accordance with the Health Care Consent Act, 1996 • Parent may be requested to give permission for an interview if the child is under 16 years of age. Parent is entitled to be present for interview 	<p>The principal should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure completion of educational assessment • obtain consent for health and/or psychological assessment, if needed

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IPRC Process and Procedures	Parents and Students	School Principals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 10 days in advance of IPRC meeting, IPRC chair must notify parent and student (if 16 or older), in writing, of the date of IPRC As soon as possible after IPRC chair receives information about student, the chair must send this information to parent and student (if 16 or older) 	<p>Parent and student (if 16 or older) are entitled to receive all information provided to members of IPRC</p>	<p>The principal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> should inform parent and student (if 16 or older) of student's entitlement to participate
<p>The IPRC meets and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> may consider assessment reports, e.g., educational, health, speech and language, psychological may consider the results of an interview with the student may discuss and make recommendations (not decisions) for special education program and services may include these recommendations in the decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The parent and student (if 16 or older) are entitled to have a representative present who may speak on their behalf Parent or student (if 16 or older) may request a discussion about special education programs and services and be present for and participate in discussion 	<p>The principal should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand role of the parent representative and, where appropriate, clarify role for parent, student, and representative explain role of IPRC to parent, student, and their representative(s) prior to IPRC meeting

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IPRC Process and Procedures	Parents and Students	School Principals
<p>The IPRC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decides whether to identify a student as exceptional or not • applies, for exceptional students, category and definition of identified exceptionalities in accordance with ministry list of categories and definitions of exceptionality • describes strengths and needs of student • decides placement of student (must decide upon placement in regular class if satisfied that such a placement meets student's needs and is consistent with parental preferences). If the IPRC decides on placement in special education class, IPRC must set out the reasons for this recommendation in its decision • sends written notice of decision to parent, student (if 16 or older), principal, director of education 	<p>The parent and student (if 16 or older) receive written statement of decision from IPRC chair</p>	<p>The principal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • receives written statement of decision from IPRC chair • understands the elements of the statement of decision • appreciates difference between recommendations and decisions made by IPRC • may begin work on IEP • may review decision with parent and student (if 16 or older)
<p>If parent requests follow-up meeting, second IPRC meeting to be convened as soon as possible</p>	<p>The parent may, within 15 days of receiving statement of decision, request a second meeting with IPRC to discuss the decision further; or, within 30 days of receiving statement of decision, file a notice of appeal with board</p>	<p>The principal arranges for follow-up meeting with IPRC as soon as possible, on request</p>

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IPRC Process and Procedures	Parents and Students	School Principals
<p>Following the second meeting of IPRC, IPRC may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uphold its original decision and notify all relevant parties of this decision, or change its original decision and notify all relevant parties of this decision and reasons for the revised decision 	<p>The parent who does not agree with the upheld or revised decisions of follow-up meeting may request to have matter referred to an SEAB within 15 days of receipt of statement of decision of second meeting of IPRC</p>	<p>The principal ensures parent and student understand upheld or revised IPRC decision</p>
<p>The school board will implement IPRC decision as soon as possible and notify school principal of the decision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When parent receives IPRC final decision in writing, he/she should provide written consent for the placement or file a notice of appeal with the school board If parent neither consents nor appeals, the school board may implement the IPRC decision 	<p>The principal ensures parent and student understand process for appealing</p>
<p>The student is placed in accordance with IPRC decision if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> parent consents, or parent has not consented but has not begun an appeal before end of appeal period 	<p>If parent does not consent to placement and does not appeal, parent is notified in writing that student has been placed</p>	<p>The principal ensures that parent and student understand their rights</p>
<p>Within 30 school days of start of placement, an IEP must be developed for student and provided to parent and student (if 16 or older)</p>	<p>The parent and student (if 16 or older) will be consulted on content of IEP</p>	<p>The principal ensures that parent and student (if 16 or older) are consulted on development of IEP and that IEP is completed and a copy is given to parent and student (if 16 or older)</p>
<p>For students aged 14 or over, IEP must include transition plan for postsecondary activities (except for gifted students)</p>	<p>The parent and student (if 16 or over) will be consulted on content of transition plan</p>	<p>The principal ensures that IEP includes transition plan for students with special education needs, where appropriate</p>

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IPRC Process and Procedures	Parents and Students	School Principals
At least once every school year, IPRC is reconvened to review student's identification and/or placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent may request a review 3 months after placement has begun. A review cannot be requested more than once every three months • Parent may agree in writing to dispense with annual review 	The principal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may initiate IPRC review with notice to parent • if review is held, it follows procedure similar to that of initial IPRC meeting

Special Education Tribunals

Parents who disagree with the identification and/or placement decision made following a meeting of the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) and a subsequent meeting of the special education appeal board (SEAB) have the right to appeal to the Ontario Special Education Tribunal (OSET) or the Tribunal de l'enfance en difficulté de l'Ontario (TEDO). In order to appeal to the tribunals, the parent must have completed the IPRC and SEAB processes, discussed earlier in this part of the guide. The parent's appeal to a tribunal must be made within 30 days of receiving the SEAB decision. To make an appeal, the parent must write to the tribunal, saying that they want to appeal the SEAB's decision.

When filing an appeal to OSET, there are specific timelines and procedures to be followed. At the pre-hearing conference, the OSET invites the parties to consider mediation, a voluntary process that only takes place if both parties agree to it. The goal of mediation is to help the two parties reach a solution that resolves the issues in the appeal.²

Ontario Special Education Tribunals, created by the Education Amendment Act of 1980 (Bill 82), are mandated to provide final and binding decisions to resolve disputes between a parent and a school board concerning the identification and/or placement of an exceptional student.

2. For more information about cooperative dispute resolution processes in special education, see *Shared Solutions: A Guide to Preventing and Resolving Conflicts Regarding Programs and Services for Students With Special Education Needs (2007)*. Parents and school boards may use mediation at any time to help resolve disputes about any issue.

The Education Act: Special Education Tribunals

57(3) Right of appeal

Where a parent or guardian of a pupil has exhausted all rights of appeal under the regulations in respect of the identification or placement of the pupil as an exceptional pupil and is dissatisfied with the decision in respect of the identification or placement, the parent or guardian may appeal to a Special Education Tribunal for a hearing in respect of the identification or placement.

(4) Hearing by Special Education Tribunal

The Special Education Tribunal shall hear the appeal and may,

- (a) dismiss the appeal; or
- (b) grant the appeal and make such order as it considers necessary with respect to the identification or placement.

(5) Decision final

The decision of the Special Education Tribunal is final and binding on the parties to the decision.

(See [The Education Act, subsections 57 \(3\), \(4\), and \(5\)](#))

The Ontario Special Education Tribunal hears appeals regarding the disagreement with a board's decision about the identification and/or placement of students who are enrolled in English-language public and Catholic school boards. The Tribunal de l'enfance en difficulté de l'Ontario hears appeals regarding the disagreement with a board's decision about the identification and/or placement of students who are enrolled in French-language public and Catholic school boards.

The tribunals are independent adjudicative agencies of the Government of Ontario. As of March 2011, the tribunals became part of the Social Justice Tribunals Ontario cluster, accountable to the Ministry of the Attorney General for their operational and business functions. (Prior to that date, the tribunals fell under the Ministry of Education. However, the change from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of the Attorney General has not altered the tribunals' mandate.)

More information about the two Ontario Special Education Tribunals, including information about mediation, can be found on the [OSET website](#).

Appendix D-1: A Sample Parents' Guide to Special Education

District School Board Name

Mission Statement of the Board [optional]

Philosophy of the Board [optional]

Notes:

1. If you wish to receive this parents' guide in Braille, large-print, or audio format, please contact the board at the address or telephone number shown on the last page of this guide.
2. When used in this guide, the word "parent(s)" refers to both parent(s) and guardian(s). It may also be taken to include caregivers or close family members who are responsible for raising the child.

The Education Act requires that school boards provide, or purchase from another board, special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils. The purpose of this parents' guide is to provide you with information about the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), and to set out for you the procedures involved in identifying a pupil as "exceptional", deciding the pupil's placement, or appealing such decisions if you do not agree with the IPRC.

If, after reading this guide, you require more information, please see the board's list of contacts at the end of the document.

What is an IPRC?

Regulation 181/98 requires that all school boards set up IPRCs. An IPRC is composed of at least 3 people, one of whom must be a principal or a supervisory officer of the board.

[School boards may list the members, identifying the member who is a principal or a supervisory officer.]

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Parents are invited and encouraged to attend the meeting.

What is the role of the IPRC?

The IPRC 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 *[here the board should list the full range of placement options offered by the board]*; and
- review the identification and placement at least once in each school year.

Who is identified as an exceptional pupil?

The Education Act defines an exceptional pupil as “a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a special education program...” Students are identified according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education.

What is a special education program?

A special education program is defined in the Education Act as an educational program that:

- is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation; and

- includes a plan (called an Individual Education Plan or IEP) containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil.

What are special education services?

Special education services are defined in the Education Act as the facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.

What is an IEP?

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

- a description of the student's strengths and needs and 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; and
- a transition plan that includes the specific goals, actions required, person(s) responsible for actions, and timelines for each educational transition where the student requires support.

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 it.

How is an IPRC meeting requested?

The principal of your child's school:

- must request an IPRC meeting for your child, upon receiving your written request;
- may, with written notice to you, refer your child to an IPRC when the principal and the child's teacher or teachers believe that your child may benefit from a special education program.

Within 15 days of receiving your request, or giving you notice, the principal must provide you with a copy of this guide and a written statement of approximately when the IPRC will meet.

May parents attend the IPRC meeting?

Regulation 181/98 entitles parents and pupils 16 years of age or older:

- to be present at and participate in all committee discussions about your child; and
- to be present when the committee's identification and placement decision is made.

Who else may attend an IPRC meeting?

- the principal of your child's school;
- other resource people such as your child's teacher, special education staff, board support staff, or the representative of an agency, who may provide further information or clarification;
- your representative – that is, a person who may support you or speak on behalf of you or your child; and
- an interpreter, if one is required. (You may request the services of an interpreter through the principal of your child's school.) *[Boards may wish to list the types of interpreters available, e.g., sign language, oral, specific language.]*

Who may request that they attend?

Either you or the principal of your child's school may make a request for the attendance of others at the IPRC meeting.

What information will parents receive about the IPRC meeting?

At least 10 days in advance of the meeting, the chair of the IPRC will provide you with written notification of the meeting and an invitation to attend as an important partner in considering your child's placement. This letter will notify you of the date, time, and place of the meeting, and it will ask you to indicate whether you will attend.

Before the IPRC meeting occurs, you will receive a written copy of any information about your child that the chair of the IPRC has received. This may include the results of assessments or a summary of information.

What if parents are unable to make the scheduled meeting?

If you are unable to make the scheduled meeting, you may:

- contact the school principal to arrange an alternative date or time; or
- let the school principal know you will not be attending. As soon

as possible after the meeting, the principal will forward to you, for your consideration and signature, the IPRC's written statement of decision noting the decision of identification and placement and any recommendations regarding special education programs and services.

What happens at an IPRC meeting?

- The chair introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting.
- The IPRC will review all available information about your child.
The members will:
 - ✧ consider an educational assessment of your child;
 - ✧ consider, subject to the provisions of the Health Care Consent Act, 1996, a health or psychological assessment of your child conducted by a qualified practitioner, if they feel that such an assessment is required to make a correct identification or placement decision;
 - ✧ interview your child, with your consent if your child is less than 16 years of age, if they feel it would be useful to do so; and
 - ✧ consider any information that you submit about your child or that your child submits if he or she is 16 years of age or older.
- The committee may discuss any proposal that has been made about a special education program or special education services for the child. Committee members will discuss any such proposal at your request or at the request of your child, if the child is 16 years of age or older.
- You are encouraged to ask questions and join in the discussion.
- Following the discussion, after all the information has been presented and considered, the committee will make its decision.

What will the IPRC consider in making its placement decision?

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.

If, after considering all of the information presented to it, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a regular class will meet your child's needs and that such a decision is consistent with your preferences, the committee will decide in favour of placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services.

If the committee decides that your child should be placed in a special education class, it must state the reasons for that decision in its written statement of decision.

What will the IPRC's written statement of decision include?

The IPRC's written statement of decision will state:

- whether the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional;
- where the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional,
 - ✧ the categories and definitions of any exceptionalities identified, as they are defined by the Ministry of Education;
 - ✧ the IPRC's description of your child's strengths and needs;
 - ✧ the IPRC's placement decision; and
 - ✧ the IPRC's recommendations regarding a special education program and special education services;
- where the IPRC has decided that your child should be placed in a special education class, the reasons for that decision.

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.
- If the IPRC has identified your child as an exceptional pupil and if you **agree** with the IPRC identification and placement decisions, the board will promptly notify the principal of the school at which the special education program is to be provided of the need to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child.

Once a child has been placed in a special education program, can the placement be reviewed?

- A review IPRC meeting will be held within the school year, unless the principal of the school at which the special education program is being provided receives written notice from you, the parent, dispensing with the annual review.
- You may request a review IPRC meeting any time after your child has been in a special education program for 3 months.

What does a review IPRC consider and decide?

- With your written permission, the IPRC conducting the review will consider the progress your child has made in relation to the IEP. It will consider the same type of information that was originally considered by the IPRC, as well as any new information.
- The IPRC will review the placement and identification decisions and decide whether they should be continued or whether a different decision should now be made.

What can parents do if they disagree with the IPRC decision?

- If you **do not agree** with either the identification or the placement decision made by the IPRC, you may:
 - ✧ within 15 days of receipt of the decision, request 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 *[boards should fill in the name and address of the secretary of the board]*.
- If you **do not agree** with the decision after the second meeting, you may file a notice of appeal within 15 days of your receipt of 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 do I appeal an IPRC decision?

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 described above, give written notification of your intention to appeal the decision to *[boards should fill in the name and address of the secretary of the board]*.

The notice of appeal must:

- indicate the decision with which you disagree; and
- include a statement that sets out your reasons for disagreeing.

What happens in the appeal process?

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- 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 or she is 16 years old or over, 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 implemented; or
 - ✧ disagree with the IPRC and make a recommendation to the board about your child's identification or placement or both.
 - 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 special education programs and services are provided by the board?

[This section should indicate the extent to which the board provides special education programs and services and the extent to which it purchases them from another board or boards.]

What organizations are available to assist parents?

Many parent organizations are available to provide information and support to parents of exceptional children.

[Boards should list here the local associations eligible for membership on their SEAC. Some boards may need to include the provincial office of a major exceptionality group if there is no local association for that group in the community.]

What are the ministry's Provincial and Demonstration Schools?

The ministry operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools throughout Ontario for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, who are blind or have low vision, who are deafblind, and/or who have severe learning disabilities, 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.

English-language Demonstration Schools for students with severe learning disabilities

Amethyst School

1515 Cheapside Street

London, ON N5V 3N9

Tel: 519-453-4408

www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/amethyst/index.html

Sagonaska School

350 Dundas Street West

Belleville, ON K8P 1B2

Tel: 613-967-2830

www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/sagonaska/index.html

Trillium School

347 Ontario Street South

Milton, ON L9T 3X9

Tel: 905-878-8428

www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/trillium/index.html

Provincial Schools for the Deaf

Ernest C. Drury School

255 Ontario Street South

Milton, ON L9T 2M5

Tel: 905-878-2851

TTY: 905-878-7195

www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/ecd/index.html

Robarts School
1515 Cheapside Street
London, ON N5V 3N9
Tel: 519-453-4400
TTY: 519-453-4400
www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/robarts/index.html

Sir James Whitney School
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
Tel: 613-967-2823 or 1-800-501-6240
TTY: 613-967-2823
www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/sjw/index.html

Provincial School for the blind and deafblind

W. Ross Macdonald School
350 Brant Avenue
Brantford, ON N3T 3J9
Tel: 519-759-0730 or 1-866-618-9092
www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/wross/index.html

French-language Provincial School for the Deaf and Demonstration School for students with severe learning disabilities

Centre Jules-Léger
281 Lanark Avenue
Ottawa, ON K1Z 6R8
Tel: 613-761-9300
TTY: 613-761-9302
<http://www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/cjl.html>

Where can parents obtain additional information?

Additional information can be obtained from:

- the school principal [*provide name, school address, and school telephone number*]; or
- [*provide the name, address, and telephone number of a contact at the district school board*].

PART E

The Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Introduction

This part of the guide sets out the Ministry of Education's standards for the development, implementation, monitoring, and review of Individual Education Plans (IEPs). These standards were introduced in the document *Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation* (2000), and remain unchanged.¹ This part of the guide also provides information on how the transition plan is developed as part of the IEP, and describes effective practices related to various aspects of IEP development. It explains the importance of collaboration when developing an IEP and describes how best to provide accommodations, modify expectations, and plan instruction and assessment. It also suggests how to seek resolution to any disagreements that may arise during the IEP process.

Included at the end of this part is a sample IEP template that is aligned with the provincial standards for developing IEPs (see [Appendix E-2](#)). It was designed to assist school boards in developing their IEPs. Boards that choose to develop their own form must ensure that it addresses all the elements outlined in this part of the guide. While the ministry does not mandate a particular management system for the IEP, most boards use an electronic management system.

1. For background reference, the standards introduced in *Individual Education Plans* (2000) are listed in [Appendix E-1](#).

The ministry has also developed a variety of sample IEPs as a resource for school boards. These samples can be found on the Special Education domain of the [EduGAINS website](#).

Standards for the IEP

The provincial standards for the IEP that were introduced in *Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation* (2000) remain the standards that must be met by school boards across the province today. The components of the IEP standards and the associated responsibilities outlined in that document are the accepted, effective practices of school boards across Ontario. For the benefit of school boards that have relied on the *Standards* document since 2000–01, the numbering of sections in this part of the guide is consistent with the numbering of the standards in the earlier document, from 1 through 14.

► Compliance with the Standards

The ministry will conduct reviews of selected boards' IEPs on an annual basis to assess compliance with the standards. Where the ministry determines that a board has not complied fully with the standards, the ministry will require the board to amend its practices as necessary.

Requirements under Ontario Regulation 181/98 and Policy/Program Memoranda Nos. 140 and 156

Under Ontario Regulation 181/98, “Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils”, principals are required to ensure that an IEP is developed for every student who has been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), within 30 school days of the student’s placement in a special education program. Under this regulation, the IEP must include a transition plan for each exceptional student who is 14 years of age or older who is making the transition from secondary school to postsecondary activities, unless the student was identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness.

Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsections 6(2)–6(8), 7(4)–7(7), and section 8

6. (2) The board shall promptly notify the principal of the school at which the special education program is to be provided of the need to develop an individual education plan for the pupil in consultation with the parent and, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the pupil.
- (3) The individual education plan must include,
 - (a) specific educational expectations for the pupil;
 - (b) an outline of the special education program and services to be received by the pupil; and
 - (c) a statement of the methods by which the pupil's progress will be reviewed.
- (4) Where the pupil is 14 years of age or older, the individual education plan must also include a plan for transition to appropriate postsecondary school activities, such as work, further education, and community living.
- (5) Subsection (4) does not apply in respect of a pupil identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness.
- (6) In developing the individual education plan, the principal shall,
 - (a) consult with the parent and, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the pupil; and
 - (b) take into consideration any recommendations made by the committee [IPRC] or the Special Education Tribunal, as the case may be, regarding special education programs or special education services.
- (7) In developing a transition plan under subsection (4), the principal shall consult with such community agencies and post-secondary educational institutions as he or she considers appropriate.
- (8) Within 30 school days* after placement of the pupil in the program, the principal shall ensure that the plan is completed and a copy of it sent to a parent of the pupil and, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the pupil.
7. (4) Where an individual education plan does not include a plan for transition to appropriate post-secondary school activities and the pupil has attained the age of 14 or will attain the age of 14 within the school year, the principal shall ensure that a transition plan is developed and included in the individual education plan.
- (5) Subsection (4) does not apply in respect of a pupil identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness.
- (6) In reviewing an individual education plan that includes a transition plan or in developing a transition plan under subsection (4), the principal shall consult with such community agencies and post-secondary educational institutions as he or she considers appropriate.

(continued)

(continued)

(7) Within 30 school days of an implementation of a change in placement or, where the placement is confirmed, within 30 school days of receiving the notice under subsection (1), the principal shall ensure that,

- (a) the plan has been reviewed and updated as appropriate;
- (b) a transition plan has been added to the individual education plan where required by subsection (4); and
- (c) a copy of the individual education plan has been sent to a parent of the pupil and, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the pupil.

8. The principal shall ensure that the individual education plan for a pupil is included in the record kept in respect of the pupil under clause 265(d) of the Act, unless a parent of the pupil has objected in writing.

*As amended by Ontario Regulation 137/01.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsections 6\(2\)–6\(8\), 7\(4\)–7\(7\), and section 8](#))

In addition to developing an IEP for every student identified as exceptional by an IPRC, as required by the regulation, school boards *may* also develop IEPs for students who are receiving special education programs and/or related services but who have not been identified as exceptional by an IPRC.

With the release of [Policy/Program Memorandum No. 140, “Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis \(ABA\) Into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders \(ASD\)” \(2007\)](#), it became a requirement for principals to ensure that ABA methods are incorporated into the IEPs of students with ASD, where appropriate. They must also ensure that relevant school board personnel and community personnel who have previously worked and/or are currently working with a student with an ASD are invited to provide input and participate in the IEP process. Given the range of needs for students with ASD, the principal must ensure that staff developing a student’s IEP consider special education program and service options that will best take into account the student’s individual strengths and areas of need in the demonstration of learning.

With regard to transition planning, in addition to what is stated above about the requirements under O. Reg. 181/98, ministry policy requires that a transition plan be developed for *all* students, from Kindergarten to Grade 12, who have an IEP, whether or not they have been identified

as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) and including those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness. For a list of the policy requirements related to transition planning, specifically the additional requirements related to Policy/Program Memoranda Nos. 140 and 156, see the box below.

Policy Requirements for Transition Plans

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 156

With [PPM No. 156, "Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs" \(2013\)](#), the requirement for transition planning is extended to all students, from Kindergarten to Grade 12, who have an IEP, whether or not they have been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) and including those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness. At the discretion of the board, a transition plan may also be developed for students who receive special education programs and/or services but do not have an IEP and have not been identified as exceptional.

PPM No. 156 applies to all the key transitions, including the following: on entry to school, between grades, from one program area or subject to another, when moving from school to school or from an outside agency/facility to a school, from elementary to secondary school, and from secondary school to the next appropriate pathway. In some cases, a student may have no particular need of support during transitions; in those cases, the transition plan should state that no actions are required.

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 140

[PPM No. 140, "Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis \(ABA\) Into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders \(ASD\)" \(2007\)](#), requires transition planning, as appropriate, between various activities and settings for students with autism spectrum disorders.

PPM No. 140 also requires that:

- relevant applied behaviour analysis (ABA) methods be used to support transitions, where appropriate, and
- these methods be recorded in the student's transition plan.

Students with ASD undergo and require support for some or all of the key transitions listed in the previous section, as well as in making the transition from one activity or setting to another in the same classroom or environment.

What Is an IEP?

An IEP is:

- a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student, based on a thorough assessment of the strengths and needs that affect the student's ability to learn and to demonstrate learning;
- a working document that contains the transition plan, a detailed and coordinated plan that helps to ensure that a student has supports in place to facilitate educational transitions;
- a record of any accommodations needed to help the student achieve the learning expectations identified in the IEP, given the student's identified learning strengths and needs;
- a working document that identifies learning expectations that are modified from the expectations for the regular grade level in a particular subject or course, as outlined in the Ministry of Education's curriculum policy documents, if modifications are required;
- a working document that identifies alternative expectations, if required, in areas not represented in the Ontario curriculum;
- a record of the teaching strategies specific to modified and alternative expectations and of assessment methods to be used to determine the student's progress towards achieving these expectations;
- a working document that is developed at the beginning of a school year or semester or at the start of a placement and that is reviewed and adjusted throughout the reporting period;
- an accountability tool for the student, the student's parents, and everyone who has responsibilities under the plan for helping the student meet the stated goals and learning expectations as the student progresses through the Ontario curriculum.

See [Appendix E-3](#) for a detailed checklist of all the components of an IEP.

An IEP is *not*:

- a description of everything that will be taught to the student;
- a list of all the teaching strategies used in regular classroom instruction;
- a document that records all of the student's learning expectations, including those that are not modified from the regular grade level curriculum expectations;
- a daily lesson plan.

The IEP Process

Planning an educational program for a student with special education needs is best accomplished through the combined efforts of, and with close communication among, the student, the student's parents, school staff, members of the community, and other professionals involved with the student. A collaborative IEP process that includes the development of a transition plan provides an opportunity for all who are involved with the student to work together to provide a program that will foster achievement and success. The team process should include the student and the student's parents, as outlined in [sections 9 and 10](#) of this part of the guide. [Appendix E-4](#) provides a detailed description of the roles and responsibilities of educators and other professionals.

Once a student has been placed in a special education program, successful practice suggests that the principal should assign to one teacher the responsibility for coordinating the development, implementation, and monitoring of the student's IEP. In special circumstances, the principal or another teacher may be assigned the responsibility for coordinating the transitions.

Regardless who is coordinating the IEP process, decisions related to program planning (represented in the sample IEP template in [Appendix E-2](#) by the sections covering Current (Baseline) Level of Achievement, Annual Program Goals, Learning Expectations, Teaching Strategies, and Assessment Methods) should be made by the individual who teaches the student and prepares the report card – usually the classroom teacher. This teacher is responsible for instructing the student and for assessing the student's learning in relation to the learning expectations identified in the student's IEP.

A team approach should underlie the IEP process, and the process should focus on how the student is expected to progress through the Ontario curriculum – with or without accommodations, modified expectations, and/or alternative programs (those not described in the Ontario curriculum) – as well as on how the student will make key educational transitions, including the transition to a postsecondary destination.

The IEP process can be broken down into five phases:

1. gathering information
2. setting the direction
3. developing the IEP as it relates to the student's special education program and services
4. implementing the IEP
5. reviewing and updating the IEP

The tasks that need to be undertaken in phases 1 to 3 may be delegated to or assumed by different team members in order to facilitate completion of the IEP within 30 school days of the student's placement in a special education program. Educators on the student's team may focus on the particular subject or course in which they are responsible for direct instruction.

The box below outlines the main steps in each phase of the process and provides a reference to the sections of this part of the guide that deal with the requirements and effective practices connected with the phase.

Overview of the IEP Process

1. Gather Information (*consult sections 1–11*)

- Review the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR) (including the IPRC's statement of decision and/or previous IEPs)
- Consult with parents, the student, school staff, and other professionals
- Gather information through observation of the student
- Conduct further assessments, if necessary
- Consolidate and record information

2. Set the Direction (*consult sections 1–3 and 9–12*)

- Establish a collaborative approach
- Establish roles and responsibilities
- Begin work on the IEP (e.g., record the reason for the IEP, record personal information, list relevant assessment data)
- Indicate the student's strengths and needs on the IEP (as identified in the IPRC's statement of decision, where applicable)

3. Develop the IEP as It Relates to the Student's Special Education Program and Services (*consult sections 4–8*)

- Incorporate program suggestions from the IPRC or Special Education Tribunal (if applicable)
- Incorporate applied behaviour analysis (ABA) methods into the IEPs of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), where appropriate
- Record decisions about program exemptions, course substitutions, and eligibility for a diploma or a certificate
- Determine, for every subject or course, the program option that will best suit the student's needs (i.e., whether the student requires accommodations only or accommodations and modifications) and decide whether alternative programs are needed
- Determine accommodations; record subjects or courses in which the student is to be provided with accommodations only
- Plan and document subjects or courses with modified expectations
- Plan and document alternative programs or courses
- Determine and record teaching strategies and assessment methods for modified and alternative expectations
- Plan for and document required human resources
- Record information about individualized equipment
- Record information about evaluation and reporting
- Record information about provincial assessments
- Develop a transition plan
- Record details of parent/student consultations
- Secure the principal's approval

4. Implement the IEP (*consult sections 6.2, 13, and 14*)

- Share the completed IEP with the student, parents, school staff, and other professionals (providing a copy to parents, and to the student if 16 or older)
- Put the IEP into practice (classroom/subject teachers and support personnel)
- Continuously assess the student's progress
- Adjust the IEP as necessary (recording any changes in goals, expectations, teaching strategies, and other accommodations, etc.)
- Evaluate the student's learning and report the results of the evaluation to the student's parents

5. Review and Update the IEP (consult sections 13 and 14)

- Update the learning expectations at the beginning of each reporting period, on the basis of the results of last period's assessments and/or evaluation
- Review the IEP regularly, including the transition plan, and record revisions
- Store the IEP in the documentation file of the student's Ontario Student Record

Most IEPs follow the timetable of a school year or semester: They are developed in the early fall and cover the time up to the June reporting period or the end of the semester. While the outline of the IEP process in the box above appears linear, it is important to note that the IEP process is *cyclical*. It involves ongoing review, evaluation, and adjustment on a term-by-term basis.

Components of the IEP Standards and Effective Practices

The fourteen sections that follow outline the components of the IEP standards, along with effective practices and supporting examples. The sections follow the order of the sections to be completed in the ministry's sample IEP template.

- The first three sections apply to the completion of the first part of the template (see [Appendix E-2](#)), including the reason the student requires an IEP, the student's general background, and the student's strengths and needs. This information is essential to the development of the student's special education program and services, which is the subject of sections 4 through 8.
- To complete sections 1 through 8, it is necessary to first gather information from a variety of sources and to consult with parents, other educators, and the various individuals and agencies involved with the student, and to begin the coordination of staff and resources for developing the plan. These processes are outlined in sections 9, 10, and 11.

- Sections 12 through 14 address the implementation, monitoring, and review and updating of the IEP.

► 1. Reason for Developing an IEP

An IEP is developed for a student for one of the following reasons. The relevant reason must be indicated in every IEP:

- An IEP *must* be developed for every student who has been identified as an “exceptional pupil” by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), in accordance with Regulation 181/98.
- An IEP *may* be developed for a student who has not been identified by an IPRC as exceptional, but who has been deemed by the board to require a special education program or services in order to attend school or to achieve curriculum expectations and/or to demonstrate learning.

Additional considerations:

- If a school principal determines that a student’s achievement will be assessed on the basis of modified expectations, an IEP is required, even in the absence of identification by an IPRC.
- If a student regularly requires accommodations (including specialized equipment) for instructional or assessment purposes, it is advisable to develop an IEP. Educators should be aware that:
 - ✧ in order to receive accommodations during Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessments, a student must have an IEP that identifies the accommodations required;
 - ✧ if a Special Equipment Amount (SEA) and/or Special Incidence Portion (SIP) funding application is being made to the Ministry of Education for a student, a student must have an IEP, as supporting documentation, that identifies the accommodations required.

For more information on accommodations for participation in provincial assessments, see [section 7](#). For more information on individualized equipment accommodations, see [section 5.3](#). The [Special Education Funding section](#) of Part A provides details on the SEA and SIP funding allocations.

▶ 2. IEP Student Profile

In preparing a student's IEP, essential information about the student must be gathered from a variety of sources to establish a basic profile of the student. (The kinds of sources to be used and requirements associated with the gathering of information are outlined in [section 11](#).) The principal must ensure that all of the required student information has been recorded in the IEP and that it is complete and accurate.

The following items must be included in the IEP:

- **Student data**

- ✧ Student's full name
- ✧ Date of birth
- ✧ Student identification number – Ontario Education Number (OEN)
- ✧ Current school year
- ✧ Name of the school and principal

In addition to these required items, it might be helpful to include:

- ✧ the language spoken by the student at home;
- ✧ the student's enrolment history, last school attended, attendance patterns, school behaviour, and social skills.

- **Date of the student's most recent IPRC (if applicable)**

An IPRC meeting to review the current identification and placement of a student must be held at least once every school year. The date of the meeting should be noted in the IEP. Where the principal of the school at which the special education program is being provided receives written notice from the parents waiving the annual review, the date on which the parents exercised their option to have the annual review waived should be noted on the IEP.

Although it is not a requirement, some school boards also specify that the date of the *initial* IPRC be included in the IEP.

- **Student's exceptionality**

For a student identified as exceptional by an IPRC, the description of the student's exceptionality in the IEP must be consistent with that provided in the IPRC's statement of decision, and must also accord with ministry-accepted categories of exceptionalities and their definitions (see the [Categories of Exceptionalities section](#) of Part A).

For a student who has not been identified as exceptional by an IPRC, a brief statement describing the characteristics of the student that make a special education program and/or services necessary must be included.

- **IPRC placement decision (if applicable)**

The placement indicated in the IEP must be consistent with the placement specified in the IPRC's statement of decision. The possible options are:

- ✧ a regular class with indirect support;
- ✧ a regular class with resource assistance;
- ✧ a regular class with withdrawal assistance;
- ✧ a special education class with partial integration; and
- ✧ a special education class full time.

(See [The IPRC Placement Decision section](#) in Part D for a detailed description of these placement options.)

- **Student's current grade and/or special education class placement**

- **Diploma or type of certificate**

For secondary students, the type of diploma or certificate that the student is working towards – the Ontario Secondary School Diploma, the Ontario Secondary School Certificate, or the Certificate of Accomplishment – should be indicated.

- **Subjects or courses to which the IEP applies**

- **Relevant medical conditions**

Any medical conditions affecting the student's ability to attend school or to learn must be listed in the IEP, along with any related specialized health support services² that the student requires on a constant or intermittent basis. This section of the profile should *not* include:

- ✧ emergency plans (such as those for anaphylactic reactions);³

2. Health support services are services related to health needs that must be addressed on a scheduled basis to enable a student to attend school (e.g., suctioning, injections, tube feeding, personal care – lifting, toileting, feeding). These services are provided by individuals who are specifically assigned to administer the required procedures. See the [School Health Support Services section](#) in Part F of this guide for more information about the provision of these services.

3. Note, however, that for purposes of preparedness, principals are required to communicate relevant information about any medical conditions requiring emergency response procedures to staff who work with students who have health concerns.

- ✧ detailed descriptions of medical condition(s);⁴
- ✧ medical diagnoses *unrelated* to the student’s ability to attend school or to learn;
- ✧ information on the distribution of oral medication.

- **Relevant assessment data**

The IEP must identify the date, source, and results or recommendations of assessment reports that are directly related to the need for a special education program and/or services for the student. The reports may have been prepared or conducted by school or board staff or by outside agencies. Where the student has been identified as exceptional, these reports would have been considered by the IPRC in determining the student’s exceptionality and placement. (See also [section 11, “Information Sources”](#).)

Possible sources of assessment data include educational assessments (e.g., reading assessments, math assessments, benchmarks, provincial large-scale assessments), medical/health assessments (e.g., vision, hearing, physical, neurological assessments), speech/language assessments, occupational/physical therapy assessments, behavioural/psychiatric assessments, and psychological assessments. More information on assessment can be found in the [Assessing Student Learning section](#) of Part C. The following chart suggests what should and what should not be included in the assessment data section of the IEP.

What to include:	What not to include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reports that support the identification of the student’s exceptionality • a brief summary statement of each report’s findings • medical diagnoses that support the identification of the student’s exceptionality • if desired, <i>current</i> achievement and grade-equivalent scores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • every report in the student’s files • numerical scores or percentiles, such as Intelligence Quotient (IQ) scores • medical diagnoses that do not relate to the identification of the student’s exceptionality • personal/family information • achievement or grade-equivalent scores that are not current

4. See note 3, above.

The IEP should reflect the connection between the relevant assessment data and the student's learning strengths and needs. Therefore, for the summary statement of each report's findings (noted in the box above), a comment such as "See the OSR" is not adequate. The following are examples of appropriate summary statements:

- ◇ "Report provides a diagnosis of learning disabilities."
 - ◇ "Report affirms average cognitive functioning."
 - ◇ "Information indicates a mild to moderate hearing loss."
 - ◇ "Report finds significant area of need in expressive language skills."
 - ◇ "Report provides a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder."
- **Elementary school program exemptions or secondary school compulsory course substitutions**

Decisions relating to program exemptions (elementary) and course substitutions (secondary) are to be recorded in the IEP. The educational rationale for such decisions must be stated.

▶ **3. The Student's Strengths and Needs**

A clear understanding of the student's strengths and needs is fundamental to the development of an effective special education program and the provision of appropriate accommodations and services to facilitate the student's learning. A description of the student's strengths and needs must be recorded in the IEP.

For students who have been identified as exceptional by an IPRC, a description of strengths and needs will have been provided in the committee's statement of decision. The description in the IEP must be based on and consistent with the description contained in the IPRC's statement, but may elaborate on it to reflect the results of any further assessments conducted or observations made of the student.

In the case of students who have not yet been identified as exceptional, descriptions of strengths and needs must be developed on the basis of appropriate educational, health, and/or psychological assessments, and on the basis of observations of the student.

The descriptions of the student's strengths and needs must be clear and specific. The student's learning expectations (see [section 4.3](#)) and special education strategies, accommodations, resources, and other

accommodations (see [section 5](#)) must be informed by the student's strengths and needs.

Describing Strengths and Needs

When describing the student's *strengths*, it is appropriate to include information such as the following:

- learning styles and preferences (e.g., visual, auditory, kinesthetic learner)
- previously acquired learning skills (e.g., organizational skills, time-management skills)
- cognitive processing and communication abilities (e.g., expressive language – speaking)

The description of the student's *needs* should make evident the reasons why the student requires a special education program and/or services. When indicating the student's needs, it is appropriate to include information such as the following:

- broad cognitive and/or processing challenges (e.g., in the area of visual memory)
- skill deficits that relate to the student's exceptionality and/or interfere with the student's ability to learn (e.g., in areas such as social skills, attention, emotional control, expressive language – writing)

It is *not* appropriate to include information here about specific supports or services that the student may need or what the student needs to *do*. For example, do not indicate the need for:

- a type or level of human support (e.g., “the student needs an educational assistant” or “the student needs one-to-one assistance”)
- a specific program or service (e.g., “the student needs speech therapy”)
- improvement in a particular subject (e.g., “the student's math skills need to improve”)

Program Options: Accommodations, Modified Expectations, and Alternative Expectations

When planning the student's program, the team should identify which of the following options best suits the student's needs in each subject, course, or skill area in which the student will receive instruction:

- No accommodations or modifications
- Accommodations only
- Modified expectations (with or without accommodations)
- Alternative expectations/programs (with or without accommodations)

A subject or course in which the student requires neither accommodations nor modified or alternative expectations is not included in the IEP.

It is essential that the teacher(s) responsible for providing direct instruction to the student be the primary decision maker(s) in the process of determining the student's programming needs and identifying the appropriate option with respect to each of the relevant subjects, courses, and programs.

All subjects or courses in which the student requires accommodations and/or modified expectations and all alternative programs must be listed in the IEP. Each should be identified as "Accommodated only" (AC), "Modified" (MOD), or "Alternative" (ALT).

"Accommodated only"

The term *accommodations* refers to the special teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and/or individualized equipment required by students with special education needs to enable them to learn and demonstrate learning. The provision of accommodations in no way alters the curriculum expectations for the grade level or course. The accommodations, which are likely to apply to all of the student's subjects or courses, must be described in the designated section of the IEP form. (See [section 5.1](#) for types of accommodations.)

Accommodated only (AC) is the term used on the IEP form to identify a subject or course from the Ontario curriculum in which the student requires accommodations alone in order to work towards achieving the regular grade-level expectations. Because the student is working on regular grade-level or regular course curriculum expectations, without modifications, there is no need to include information on current level of achievement, annual program goals, or learning expectations. In other words, the Special Education Program section of the IEP template does not need to be completed when the student requires accommodations alone.

"Modified"

Modifications are changes made in the grade-level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs. These changes may involve developing expectations that reflect knowledge and skills required in the curriculum for a different grade level and/or

(continued)

(continued)

increasing or decreasing the number and/or complexity of the regular grade-level curriculum expectations.

Modified (MOD) is the term used on the IEP form to identify a subject or course from the Ontario curriculum in which the student requires modified expectations – expectations that differ in some way from the regular grade-level expectations. (See [section 4.3](#) for more information on how to document modified curriculum expectations in the IEP.) Students may also require certain accommodations to help them achieve the learning expectations in subjects or courses with modified expectations.

For each secondary school course with modified expectations, it is important to indicate clearly in the IEP the extent to which the expectations have been modified. Depending on the extent of the modification, the principal will determine whether achievement of the modified expectations constitutes successful completion of the course and will decide whether the student is eligible to receive a credit for the course (see [Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements \(2016\)](#), [section 3.3.1](#).) The principal’s decision must be communicated to the parents and the student.

“Alternative”

Alternative expectations are developed to help students acquire knowledge and skills that are not represented in the Ontario curriculum. They either are not derived from a provincial curriculum policy document or are modified so extensively that the Ontario curriculum expectations no longer form the basis of the student’s educational program. Because they are not part of a subject or course outlined in the provincial curriculum documents, alternative expectations are considered to constitute *alternative programs* or *alternative courses*.

The skill areas in which alternative expectations and programs are often appropriate include gross motor skills, perceptual motor skills, and life skills. Examples of *alternative programs* include speech remediation, social skill programs, orientation/mobility training, and personal care programs. For the vast majority of students, these programs would be given *in addition* to modified or regular grade-level expectations from the Ontario curriculum. Alternative programs are provided in both the elementary and the secondary school panels.

Alternative courses, which are available at the secondary school level, are non-credit courses. The course expectations in an alternative course are individualized for the student and generally focus on preparing the student for daily living. School boards must use the “K” course codes and titles found in the ministry’s [Course Code](#) listings to identify alternative courses. Examples of alternative courses include Transit Training and Community Exploration (KCC), Culinary Skills (KHI), and Money Management and Personal Banking (KBB). (See [section 4.3](#) for more information on how to document alternative expectations in the IEP.)

Alternative (ALT) is the term used to identify an alternative program or an alternative course on the IEP form.

▶ 4. The Special Education Program

The special education program section of the IEP, comprising the student's current level of achievement, annual goals, and learning expectations, is developed:

- if the student is working on modified curriculum expectations;
- if the student is working on alternative expectations.

If the student is working on all curriculum expectations at the regular grade level, the Special Education Program section is not completed.

The elements described in this section, in combination with the elements described in [section 5](#) – special education strategies, resources, and other accommodations – are at the heart of the IEP.

In preparing an IEP, the in-school team will determine the most suitable program option (see the [Program Options box](#) above), develop the student's learning expectations (as appropriate), and determine the appropriate strategies and other accommodations *in each subject, course, or skill area to which the IEP applies*, then record the details on a separate Special Education Program page for the subject, course, or skill area on the IEP form. The sample template in [Appendix E-2](#) is designed to show the student's learning expectations and the corresponding teaching strategies and assessment methods together, creating a clear, practical reference tool.⁵

In documenting the student's special education program in the IEP, the teacher must provide information, under the appropriate subject, course, or skill area heading, on the student's:

- *current achievement level* (section 4.1);
- *annual program goals* (section 4.2);
- *learning expectations* (section 4.3).

5. If the student requires the same types of accommodations in all subjects, courses, and skill areas, the information may be grouped in one separate section in the IEP (the "Accommodations" section), rather than repeated on a Special Education Program page for each subject/course.

4.1 ► The Student’s Current (Baseline) Level of Achievement

Information summarizing the student’s current level of achievement (or “baseline level of achievement”, which is the term used in the IEP template in [Appendix E-2](#)) in each of the subjects, courses, or skill areas to which the IEP applies must be recorded in the IEP. This information will serve as a baseline against which the student’s progress towards achievement of his or her learning expectations and annual goals in each subject, course, or skill area will be measured through subsequent assessment and evaluation. As a record of the starting point, this information remains unchanged for the duration of the IEP – that is, to the end of the school year, or the end of the semester in semestered secondary schools.

The student’s current level of achievement must be described in the IEP in one of the following ways:

- For a student who is working on modified curriculum expectations, the level of achievement must be indicated by a letter grade or percentage mark, as reported on the Provincial Report Card.
- For a student whose needs cannot be met through the Ontario curriculum and who is working on alternative expectations, the level of achievement must be described in terms of the student’s progress towards meeting the learning expectations that form the student’s educational program, as outlined in the IEP and reflected in the most recent report card.

Current Level of Achievement – Elementary Students

For elementary students, the student's current level of achievement is the mark or letter grade for a subject from the most recent Provincial Report Card (typically from the previous school year). This mark/grade must be recorded in the IEP, and the grade level(s) of the modified expectations on which the evaluation was based must be identified. If the modified expectations were based on the regular grade-level curriculum, with changes to the number and/or complexity of the expectations, the notation "MOD", for modified expectations, is added after the mark/grade.

Example

The following example shows how current levels of achievement would be recorded for a Grade 4 student who requires modified expectations in three subjects – language, core French, and science and technology. The student's current level of achievement in these subjects is taken from the student's most recent Provincial Report Card – the Grade 3 report card issued the previous June. Note that, being in Grade 4, [the student] is studying French as a second language (core French) for the first time. In this case, "not applicable" (N/A) is entered in the IEP for current level of achievement.

Subject: Language

Current Level of Achievement:

Letter grade: C+

Curriculum grade level: 2

Subject: Core French

Current Level of Achievement:

Letter grade: N/A

Curriculum grade level: 4 (MOD)

Subject: Science and Technology

Current Level of Achievement:

Letter grade: B

Curriculum grade level: 3 (MOD)

Current Level of Achievement – Secondary Students

For secondary students, the student's current level of achievement is indicated by the student's percentage mark in the prerequisite course. For a student's first course in a subject area (e.g., Introduction to Business, Grade 9) or for a course that has no prerequisite, "not applicable" (N/A) should be entered in the IEP for current level of achievement. The name of the prerequisite course and the course type should be provided along with the student's percentage mark. If the modifications in that course involved changes to the number and/or complexity of the regular curriculum expectations, the notation "MOD", for "modified expectations", should be added after the course information.

Example

Current levels of achievement for a Grade 11 student who requires modified expectations in three courses are recorded as follows:

Course: Foundations for College Mathematics, College Preparation (MBF3C)

Current Level of Achievement:

Prerequisite: Foundations of Mathematics, Grade 10, Applied (MOD)
Percentage mark: 64%

Course: Environmental Science, Workplace Preparation (SVN3E)

Current Level of Achievement:

Prerequisite: Science, Grade 9, Applied (MOD)
Percentage mark: 71%

Course: Raising Healthy Children, Grade 11, Open (HPC3O)

Current Level of Achievement:

Prerequisite: None
Percentage mark: N/A

Current Level of Achievement – Students with Alternative Programs

A student's current level of achievement in an alternative program or course should be indicated in a description taken from the student's latest report card (either a Provincial Report Card or the alternative report that may have been used). A letter grade or percentage mark is neither necessary nor advisable.

Examples – Elementary

- "In social skills, [the student] is able to employ 'Stop, Think, Do', or a similar technique, in an average of two out of ten situations."
- "In personal care, [the student] is able to locate his lunch in the classroom cupboard."
- "In language and communication, [the student] demonstrates functional language skills with the assistance of a speech-generating device, using some words consistently and using a few signs and pictures."

Examples – Secondary

- "In work experience, [the student] has successfully completed two placements within the school and is ready to work in the local community."
- "In mathematics, [the student], with support, demonstrates some money, measurement, and calculation skills."
- "In language and communication, [the student] uses verbal skills to exchange ideas and information in some settings."

Additional examples of current level of achievement in sample IEPs can be found on the website of [EduGAINS](#).

4.2 ► The Student's Annual Program Goals

Annual program goals are statements describing what a student can reasonably be expected to accomplish in a particular subject, course, or skill area by the end of the school year, or by the end of the semester in semestered secondary schools. Annual program goals represent reasonable objectives, not rigid requirements. They may need to be revised as the teacher develops a better understanding of the student's learning processes and/or the student's rate of acquisition of knowledge and skills changes.

In the case of modified expectations, the annual goals may be modified from the overall expectations in the curriculum policy document for a subject at a particular grade level or for a secondary school course.

In the case of alternative expectations, the annual goals will be developed on the basis of the student's identified strengths and needs and will build on previously achieved annual goals. They will constitute a summary of the student's alternative learning expectations.

The annual goals recorded in the IEP must:

- take into account the student's strengths, needs, and current level of achievement in the program area;
- be expressed in terms of realistic and observable achievements.

Annual goals must be recorded in the IEP for each subject, course, or skill area to which the IEP applies.

Annual Program Goals – Elementary Students

For elementary students, annual program goals should be expressed as observable, measurable outcomes and can include observable achievement in the development of thinking skills, such as memory, inquiry, analysis, integration, application, and so on.

Examples

- “In mathematics, by the end of the year, [the student] will use critical/creative thinking processes that are increasingly sophisticated and effective, e.g., strategies that demonstrate precise and elegant proof and reasoning. (Math, Grade 5)”
- “In reading, by the end of the year, [the student] will demonstrate improvement in her ability to read different kinds of selected texts, e.g., literary and graphic, and show that she can use a couple of strategies to construct meaning. (Reading, Grade 7)”

Annual Program Goals – Secondary Students

For a student who is taking a secondary school course with *some* modified expectations, the annual program goal(s) can be developed from the overall expectations or from the broad aims of the course outlined in the course description.

Examples – Some modified expectations

- “In science, by the end of the year, [the student] will be able to relate science to the environment; develop the basic skills, strategies, and habits of mind required for scientific inquiry; and demonstrate an improved understanding of some of the basic concepts of science. (Science, Grade 9, Applied, (SNC1P))”
- “In geography, by the end of the semester, [the student] will demonstrate understanding of some of the unique environmental and political characteristics of two regions. [The student] will also apply the geographic inquiry process and use basic spatial skills to investigate the impact of the travel industry on natural environments and human communities. (Travel and Tourism: A Geographic Perspective, Grade 11, Open, (CGG3O))”

For secondary school courses in which the student requires *significantly* modified expectations, the annual program goals are not derived from the overall expectations. In such cases, the annual program goals should be expressed as observable, measurable outcomes and can include observable achievement in the development of thinking skills, such as memory, inquiry, analysis, integration, application, and so on.

Examples – Significantly modified expectations

- “In mathematics, by the end of the year, [the student] will be able to select and apply a variety of problem-solving strategies related to the Grade 4, 5, and 6 curriculum expectations in all strands. (Numeracy and Numbers, KMM)”⁶
- “In drama, by the end of the semester, [the student] will demonstrate improvement in his understanding of drama and further develop his performance, creative, and communication skills. (Drama, ADA)”

Annual Program Goals – Students with Alternative Programs

For elementary and secondary students who have alternative programs, annual program goals provide a summary of the alternative expectations.

As mentioned earlier (see the [Program Options box](#)), for a student who is taking an alternative course, which does not lead to a credit, school boards must use the course code beginning with “K” given for that course in the ministry’s list of Common Course Codes.

Examples – Elementary

- “In conversational speech, by the end of the year, [the student] will be able to independently state his strengths and needs in social conversations and independently recognize when he has not been understood.”
- “In orientation and mobility, by the end of the year, [the student] will develop safe and efficient orientation and mobility skills to be used in the school and within the neighbourhood of the school.”

6. When expectations for secondary courses are so extensively modified, a “K” course code is applied.

Examples – Secondary

- “In science, by the end of the year, [the student] will demonstrate improvement in her ability to recall and communicate basic concepts, in her inquiry skills, and in her ability to relate science to the world outside the school. (Exploring Our Environment, KSN)”
- “By the end of the semester, [the student], with minimal support, will be able to follow instructions when making various transitions throughout the day – transitions from one activity to another within the special education classroom and transitions to or from a transportation vehicle.”

Additional examples of program goals in sample IEPs can be found on the website of [EduGAINS](#).

4.3 The Student’s Learning Expectations

Learning expectations are statements that describe the specific knowledge and skills that the student should be able to demonstrate within a specified time period during the school year. They represent the learning a student needs to acquire in order to progress from the current level of achievement identified in the IEP to achievement of the related annual goals identified in the IEP. Based on the knowledge and skills the student demonstrates relative to the learning expectations at particular times during the year, parents and teachers will be able to gauge how well the student is progressing towards achieving the annual goals identified in the IEP.

Starting on the student’s first day of placement in the special education program, the educators begin to develop a set of learning expectations for implementation and record them in the IEP.

If the student is working entirely on modified or alternative expectations, a representative sample of the student’s learning expectations in each subject, course, or skill area must be recorded in the IEP.

The learning expectations recorded in the IEP must:

- be clearly identified as modified or alternative expectations;
- if modified, include identification of grade level;
- be based on the student’s learning strengths and needs;
- describe specific, realistic, and observable achievements;

- reflect learning that is focused on the student’s annual program goals in each subject, course, or skill area.

Learning expectations should be expressed in such a way that the student and parents can understand, to the extent possible:

- exactly what the student is expected to know or to be able to do;
- the basis on which the student’s performance will be evaluated.

In developing learning expectations for a student, the teacher should take care to provide an appropriate challenge for the student. The expectations should be designed to develop the student’s literacy, numeracy, and cognitive skills. They should be achievable by the student, with reasonable effort, during the reporting period.

The learning expectations must be reviewed at least once every reporting period and updated as appropriate in view of the student’s progress. These updates must be entered and dated in the IEP (see [section 14, Review and Updating](#).) The student’s parents and the student (if 16 or older) must be advised of any such updates and the parent/student consultation must be recorded in the IEP as well (see [section 9, Parent/Student Consultation](#)).

For each modified or alternative learning expectation, the IEP should indicate:

- the corresponding teaching strategy, if individualized for the student and particular to that expectation;
- the corresponding assessment method.

See [section 5.1](#) below for a discussion of individualized teaching strategies and assessment methods.

Learning Expectations – Elementary Students

An elementary student's modified learning expectations should be listed on the Special Education Program page. The modified expectations should contain an indication of how they differ from the expectations in the ministry's curriculum policy documents.

Example

"[The student] will demonstrate achievement of all of the expectations for Grade 8 history as given in the curriculum document, except for the following, which have been modified:

- describe the impact that differences in legal status and in the distribution of rights had on a few groups and/or individuals living in Canada between 1850 and 1890 [the Grade 8 expectation requires students to 'assess' rather than 'describe', and to assess the impact on 'various' rather than 'a few' groups and/or individuals];
- describe orally a couple of actions that a few groups and/or individuals living in Canada between 1850 and 1890 took to improve their lives [the Grade 8 expectation requires students to 'analyse' rather than 'describe' and no specific format for presentation is stated; it also requires students to analyse 'various' rather than 'a few' actions].

(History, Grade 8 – Modified expectations)"

For elementary students, expectations may also be modified to represent knowledge and skills from a different grade level. In such cases, the grade level must be specified after the expectation.

Example

The expectations for a Grade 4 student whose modified expectations in mathematics and language represent knowledge and skills at a different grade level might be expressed as follows:

- “[The student] will solve problems involving the addition and subtraction of whole numbers to 18, using a variety of mental strategies. (Grade 2 expectation) [the Grade 4 expectation requires students to use a variety of mental strategies to add and subtract ‘two-digit whole numbers’ rather than ‘whole numbers to 18’]”
- “[The student] will improve her ability to read unfamiliar words using cues such as familiar words that build on her prior knowledge of language, and blending and segmenting of individual sounds in words. (Grade 1 expectation) [the Grade 4 expectation requires students to use similar and more complex types of cues to ‘predict the meaning of and rapidly solve unfamiliar words’ rather than ‘improve [their] ability to read unfamiliar words’]”

In some cases, a student's *complete program in a particular subject* may comprise only a small subset of the regular grade-level expectations, revised to reduce the level of complexity.

Example

[The student] is in Grade 4 and his teacher has identified the following social studies expectations, modified from People and Environments: Political and Physical Regions of Canada in the Grade 4 curriculum, as appropriate for evaluating his achievement in the strand:

“[The student] will:

- describe some of the ways that industrial development can have an environmental impact [the Grade 4 expectation requires students to ‘assess’ rather than ‘describe’ aspects of the environmental impact, and to assess the impact in ‘two or more regions of Canada’];
- describe some actions taken by industry and citizens to use land and resources more sustainably [the Grade 4 expectation requires students to describe ‘some key actions’ rather than ‘some actions’, and to ‘assess their effectiveness’];
- explain how people use the land, for both industry and recreation, in various regions of Canada [the Grade 4 expectation requires students to ‘identify some of the main human activities’ rather than to ‘explain how people use the land, for both industry and recreation’].

(Social Studies, Grade 4 – Modified expectations)”

Learning Expectations – Secondary Students

For most secondary school courses, modified learning expectations will be based on the regular curriculum expectations for the course but will reflect changes to the number and/or complexity of the expectations. When modified expectations are developed for secondary school courses, all components of the course must be addressed so that the student does not have gaps in his or her learning.

As stated earlier (see the **Program Options box**), for secondary school courses, it is important to monitor, and to reflect clearly in the IEP, the extent to which expectations have been modified. The principal will determine whether achievement of the modified expectations constitutes successful completion of the course, and will decide whether the student is eligible to receive a credit for the course. This decision must be communicated to the parents and the student.

When a student is expected to achieve most of the curriculum expectations for the course, the modified expectations should identify how they differ from the course expectations.

Examples – Some modified expectations

- “[The student] will demonstrate achievement of all of the science expectations relating to the topic Chemistry: Chemical Reactions and Their Practical Applications, as given in the curriculum document, with the following changes:
 - ✧ formulate scientific questions about observed relationships, ideas, problems, and/or issues to provide focus for inquiries or research [the Grade 10 applied science expectation requires students to ‘formulate scientific questions’ and to ‘make predictions and/or formulate hypotheses’]
 - ✧ write word equations for simple chemical reactions [the Grade 10 applied science expectation requires students to write ‘word equations’ and ‘balanced chemical equations’]
(Science, Grade 10, Applied (SNC2P) – Modified expectations)”
- “[The student] will complete all of the curriculum expectations in the course Canadian History Since World War I (Strand C: 1929–1945), as given in the curriculum document, with the following changes:
 - ✧ describe some key social changes in Canada during this period and explain their impact on different groups [the Grade 10 applied history expectation requires students to ‘identify’ rather than ‘describe’ some key social changes, and to ‘explain the main cause of each social change’ rather than ‘explain their impact on different groups’]
 - ✧ describe the responses of Canada and Canadians to some major international events that occurred during this period [the Grade 10 applied history expectation requires students to describe the responses of Canada and Canadians to some major international events, ‘including their military response to World War II’, and to ‘explain the significance of these responses for Canadian identity and/or heritage’]
(Canadian History Since World War I, Grade 10, Applied (CHC2P) – Modified expectations)”

The examples listed above illustrate modifications that do not have a significant impact on the overall expectations for the course. In such cases, the principal would likely maintain the credit-bearing status of the course, provided that the student successfully demonstrated the knowledge and skills identified in the balance of (unmodified) specific expectations listed in the curriculum as well.

When modifications are so extensive that achievement of the learning expectations is not likely to result in a credit, the expectations should specify the precise requirements or tasks on which the student's performance will be evaluated and which will be used to generate the course mark recorded on the Provincial Report Card.

Examples – Significantly modified expectations

- “In science, [the student] will:
 - ✧ conduct and observe some inquiries related to simple chemical reactions [the Grade 10 applied science expectation requires students to conduct and observe these inquiries and to ‘represent their findings using a variety of formats’];
 - ✧ demonstrate the use of the pH scale (pH paper) to determine the acidity or alkalinity of some common household substances [the Grade 10 science expectation requires students to conduct this inquiry and ‘to classify some common substances as acidic, basic, or neutral’];
(Science, Grade 10, Applied (SNC2P) – Modified expectations)”
- “In Canadian History Since World War I (Strand E: 1982 to the present), [the student] will:
 - ✧ explain ways in which a few individuals, organizations, and/or events have contributed to the arts and popular culture in Canada since 1982 [the Grade 10 applied history expectation requires students to ‘relate’ these individuals, organizations, and/or events to ‘cultural identity, including multiculturalism, in Canada’ rather than to ‘explain’ how they have contributed];
 - ✧ describe a few key developments that have affected Canada’s relationship with the United States since 1982 [the Grade 10 applied history expectation requires students to describe ‘some significant issues and/or developments’ rather than ‘a few key developments’, and to ‘explain the impact of the changes’];
 - ✧ describe some social and cultural trends and developments in Canada since 1982 [the Grade 10 applied history expectation requires students to ‘assess the significance of’ these trends rather than ‘describe’ them, and to ‘assess’ their impact on the ‘lives of different people’].
(Canadian History Since World War I, Grade 10, Applied (CHC2P) – Modified expectations)”

The above lists of expectations represent *all* of the student's learning expectations for these courses for one reporting period. As the lists do not encompass the overall expectations and represent only a small subsection of the regular expectations for the courses, a principal would not, under most circumstances, grant a credit for them.

Learning Expectations – Students with Alternative Programs

Alternative learning expectations should clearly describe specific skills that the student can demonstrate independently, given the provision of appropriate assessment accommodations.

Examples – Elementary

- “In social skills, [the student] will demonstrate, through role playing, the ‘Stop, Think, Do’ technique and employ it or a similar technique some of the time.”
- “In personal care, [the student] will retrieve and open his lunch bag and arrange his food independently, with a maximum of three verbal prompts.”

Examples – Secondary

- “In language and communication, [the student] will independently and accurately retrieve, record, and leave short voice messages in a variety of situations. (KEN, Language and Communication)”
- “In orientation and mobility training, [the student] will move independently from the classroom to the school office during high-traffic times.”

Additional examples of learning expectations in sample IEPs can be found on the website of [EduGAINS](#).

► 5. Special Education Strategies, Resources, and Other Accommodations

Special education strategies, resources, and other accommodations support the student in achieving the annual goals and learning expectations identified in the IEP. Both students who are working on regular grade-level expectations and students who are working on modified or alternative expectations may require accommodations and specialized supports and services. The specific strategies, human resources, and individualized equipment required to facilitate the student's learning must be identified in the IEP. Descriptions and examples of each type of support are given under the corresponding headings below (see [sections 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3](#)).

In its statement of decision, the IPRC may have made recommendations for the special education services needed to facilitate the student's learning. When determining the strategies, resources, and other accommodations to be provided to the student and listed in the IEP, the educators contributing to the development of the plan *must take into account the recommendations regarding special education programs and services made by the IPRC in its statement of decision.*

In addition, PPM No. 140 requires that, where appropriate, relevant applied behaviour analysis (ABA) methods be incorporated into the IEPs of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Relevant ABA methods can support students with ASD in a number of ways. For example ABA methods can help a student to develop positive behaviours, learn new skills, and transfer a positive behaviour or response from one situation to another. ABA methods can also be used to limit the conditions under which problematic behaviours occur.

If the student requires the same types of accommodations in all subjects, courses, and skill areas, the information may be grouped in the IEP in a separate *accommodations section*. Alternatively, if the student's needs relate to particular modified or alternative subjects, courses, or skill areas, the information relevant to each may be included under the appropriate program area headings.

5.1 ► Individualized Teaching Strategies and Other Accommodations

Individualized instructional and assessment strategies are necessary to support students effectively in achieving their learning expectations and in

demonstrating their learning. Effective instructional strategies are tailored to the student's readiness to learn and to the student's strengths and needs, learning style, and interests.

A list of the individualized strategies used with the student, along with any adjustments to the physical environment that are required, should be recorded in the *accommodations section of the IEP template* (see [Appendix E-2](#)).

Examples of the individualized instructional strategies that may be identified in the IEP include the following:

- using special resources such as reading material that is consistent with the student's reading level and learning style, and audio-visual/technical tools that give learning experiences greater breadth and depth
- using learning resources that provide direct experiences of seeing and touching (i.e., tactile materials)
- providing enrichment units, additional readings, and other opportunities (e.g., problems to solve) that extend learning
- providing mnemonic devices to support the student's recall of information
- conferring with the student to assist with the organization of a project
- providing organizers of reading content in advance of reading a text
- simplifying the language of instruction
- providing opportunities for performance in areas of special talent
- having the student work on a team with peers whose strengths and/or interests are complementary to those of the student
- developing an independent study plan for the student
- involving an older student as a tutor

As these examples show, effective individualized instructional strategies often draw on principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiated instruction, and the tiered approach.⁷

Examples of individualized assessment strategies that may be identified in the IEP include the following:

- administering tests individually or in small groups
- providing a quiet environment in which assessment may take place
- allowing extra time for students to write tests or complete assignments

7. For more information about these approaches, refer to the ministry document *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (2013).

- permitting oral responses to test questions
- providing for the use of scribes
- simplifying the language of instructions and questions used in tests

Recording Instructional, Environmental, and Assessment Accommodations in the IEP

Accommodations described in the IEP should include only those strategies and supports that differ from the ones that are regularly provided during classroom instruction. All accommodations documented in the IEP must be made readily available to the student. These accommodations must also be available to the student during provincial assessments (see [section 7](#)), and must be consistent with the accommodations permitted by the Education Quality and Accountability Office [EQAO]).

A student who requires accommodations may need the same accommodations in all subjects or courses, or only in some. The student may need only accommodations in some courses and both accommodations and modified or alternative expectations in others.

The accommodations that the student requires in connection with instruction, assessment, and functioning in the physical environment should be categorized as follows:

- **Instructional accommodations:** Adjustments in teaching strategies required to enable the student to learn and to progress through the curriculum
- **Environmental accommodations:** Changes or supports in the physical environment of the classroom and/or the school
- **Assessment accommodations:** Adjustments in assessment activities and methods required to enable the student to demonstrate learning

It is important to make the above distinctions, and to record all necessary accommodations accurately in the IEP, for clarity for all staff involved in the student's education and also to ensure that students will be eligible to receive the permitted accommodations during provincial assessments.

A summary of examples of accommodations are listed in the chart below. In addition to established accommodations, new strategies and assistive devices are constantly emerging as teaching practice is enhanced through new research findings and technological innovations.

Examples of Accommodations

Instructional Accommodations	Environmental Accommodations	Assessment Accommodations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buddy/peer tutoring • Note-taking assistance • Duplicated notes • Contracts • Scaffolding learning • Clustering learning • Descriptive feedback from peers • Reinforcement incentives • Highly structured approach • Partnering • Ability grouping • Augmentative and alternative communications systems • Assistive technology, such as text-to-speech software • Video recordings of lessons for intensive review at a later time • Graphic organizers • Non-verbal signals • Organizational coaching • Pictorial schedules to assist in making transitions • Time-management aids • Mind maps • More frequent breaks • Concrete/hands-on materials • Manipulatives • Tactile tracing strategies • Gesture cues • Dramatizing information • Visual cueing • Large-size font • Tracking sheets • Colour cues • Reduced/uncluttered format • Computer options • Spatially cued formats • Repetition of information • Rewording/rephrasing of information • Extra time for processing • Word-retrieval prompts • Taped texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative work space • Strategic seating • Proximity to instructor • Reduction of audio/visual stimuli • Study carrel • Minimizing of background noise • Quiet setting • Use of headphones • Special lighting • Assistive devices or adaptive equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended time limits • Verbatim scribing • Oral responses, including recorded responses (audio or video) • Alternative settings • More frequent breaks • Assistive devices or adaptive equipment • Prompts to return student's attention to task • Chunking of assessment tasks over time • Allowing choice as a demonstration of learning • Augmentative and alternative communications systems • Assistive technology, such as speech-to-text software • Large-size font • Colour cues • Reduced/uncluttered format • Computer options • Extra time for processing • Reduction in the number of tasks used to assess a concept or skill

5.2 ► Human Resources

Specific human resources required to facilitate the student's learning must be identified in the IEP. The IEP should contain a record of direct instruction and/or consultation to be provided by special education teachers, as well as support services to be provided by non-teaching support staff.

The IEP of a student for whom a Special Incidence Portion (SIP) claim has been made to the ministry should include a record of the board-paid staff reflected in the claim.⁸

Teaching Staff

Special education teachers provide direct instruction in a regular class, in a resource-withdrawal classroom, or, where required, in a special education class. Special education teachers also provide consultation services for regular classroom teachers and the Kindergarten team, as well as other school and board staff (e.g., career and guidance teachers or psychologists) to assist them in developing programs and learning environments that are appropriate for the child or student.

It is not necessary to list the regular classroom teacher in the human resources section of an IEP.

Non-teaching Support Staff

Professional and/or paraprofessional⁹ special education support staff provide developmental, corrective, and other support services as may be required to meet the needs of the student. Non-teaching support staff may include, but are not limited to, the following: educational assistants, speech pathologists, audiologists, psychologists, autism program providers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, child and youth workers, social workers, Indigenous support workers, and medical professionals.

8. Information about funding for support staff can be found in [Part A](#) of this guide. For more detailed information, see the Ministry of Education's [Special Education Funding Guidelines: Special Incidence Portion \(SIP\)](#).

9. In this document, *paraprofessional support staff* refers to the staff listed in [Appendix B-2: orientation and mobility personnel, oral interpreters, sign interpreters, transcribers, interveners, and auditory-verbal therapists](#).

Recording Human Resource Services in the IEP

For human resources identified in the IEP, the following information must be recorded:

- the type of service provided
- the date on which the service was initiated
- the planned frequency or intensity of the service
- the location in which the service is provided (i.e., regular classroom, resource-withdrawal classroom, or special education classroom)

Examples

- Youth counsellor, 30 minutes, one day a week, conference room;
- Special education teacher, 40 minutes, 4 to 5 days a week, resource room;
- Educational assistant, 30 minutes, daily, playground;
- Educational assistant, 300 minutes daily of support shared with other students, classroom;
- Educational assistant, approximately 1 hour per day for personal care, in a variety of settings, as required;
- Special education teacher, consultation with classroom teacher(s), minimum once per term.

The types of support services provided by *non-board staff* should be noted on the IEP, but the recording of specific information, such as frequency and intensity, is not required. (Service plans for non-board staff are drawn up separately and are not included in the IEP.)

5.3 ► Individualized Equipment

This category includes any type or item of equipment or any electronic product or system commercially produced, modified, or custom-made to maintain, increase, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.¹⁰ Examples of individualized equipment include the following:

- speech analysers
- FM systems
- print enlargers for students with poor vision
- amplification systems
- computer hardware and software
- individually modified desks or work tables
- adjustable desks or computer tables
- Braille writers
- symbol or letter voice translators
- insulated booth and study carrels
- communication aids, such as speech synthesizers
- positioning devices for sitting, standing, and lying down
- other assistive devices or adaptive equipment

Individualized equipment is intended to maintain, increase, or improve the student's ability to learn and demonstrate learning. (The equipment identified in the IEP should not be limited to the equipment for which boards receive additional funding.)

► 6. Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting

6.1 ► Assessment of Student Learning

The student's progress towards achievement of the curriculum expectations and/or the learning expectations and annual goals identified in the IEP should be monitored and assessed continuously, using the processes of assessment *for* learning and assessment *as* learning. (See the [Assessing Student Learning section](#) in Part C, for more information on the

10. Information about funding for individualized equipment can be found in [Part A](#) of this guide. For more detailed information, see the Ministry of Education's [Special Education Funding Guidelines: Special Equipment Amount \(SEA\)](#).

integrated process of assessment and instruction and on the various types of assessment.) As discussed in [section 5.1](#), above, assessment strategies must be adjusted to suit the student’s particular strengths, areas in need of improvement, and needs. This ensures that the student is learning, knows the next steps in his or her learning, and can demonstrate learning and achievement in his or her preferred learning style. The IEP must describe the methods by which the student’s achievement of the learning expectations will be assessed, including any accommodations to regular classroom assessment procedures that may be required. (See the discussion in [section 5.1](#) for examples of assessment accommodations.)

In order for assessment and evaluation to be valid and reliable, educators must identify clear learning goals, and the criteria that describe successful demonstration of the knowledge and skills embedded in the learning goals. To be fair, transparent, and equitable, assessment must be based on the learning goals and the success criteria that are shared with and understood by the student.

6.2 ▸ Evaluation and Reporting of Student Achievement

The evaluation of student learning and reporting on the progress and achievement of students with special education needs must be consistent with the policy outlined in *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools (2010)*. The relevant chapters are Chapter 5, “Evaluation”; Chapter 6, “Reporting Student Achievement”; and Chapter 7, “Students with Special Education Needs: Modifications, Accommodations, and Alternative Programs”.

In all evaluations of student learning, it is important that the student demonstrate learning *independently*, with the provision of appropriate assessment accommodations.

The student’s progress towards achievement of the curriculum expectations and/or the learning expectations and annual goals identified in the IEP is assessed continually, but must be evaluated at least once in every reporting period in which a *Provincial Report Card* is issued.

The IEP must indicate:

- the dates on which evaluations are completed;
- the format used for reporting student progress to parents (the Provincial Report Card or an alternative report).

Alternative programs and courses: In most cases, it is neither required nor advisable to assign letter grades or percentage marks to represent the student's achievement of alternative expectations. Student progress should be reported to parents by means of anecdotal comments on an alternative report. This alternative report should accompany the report card at the regular reporting times. (Some school boards include a section for reporting on the achievement of alternative expectations in the IEP itself.) The student's progress in subjects or courses in which the student has modified expectations and/or accommodations must still be reported on the report card at the regular reporting periods. A very small number of students who are unable to demonstrate the most basic literacy or numeracy skills may receive only an alternative report.

▶ 7. Provincial Assessments

7.1 ▶ Accommodations for Participation in Provincial Assessments

Students who have an IEP must be given the opportunity to participate and demonstrate the full extent of their knowledge and skills in provincial assessments, and school boards are required to provide accommodations to facilitate their participation. Accommodations must not affect the level or content of the assessment, the performance criteria, or the reliability or validity of the assessment. They must also comply with other related policies of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) and the Ministry of Education.

Any testing accommodations recommended to facilitate the student's participation in provincial assessments must already be identified in the IEP as accommodations required in the classroom. These accommodations must be:

- appropriate to the student's particular needs, as identified in the IEP;
- included among the strategies, resources, and other accommodations identified in the IEP as necessary for facilitating the student's learning and demonstration of achievement in regular classroom assessments;
- described in specific rather than general terms (e.g., "use of a word processor" rather than "answers recorded in another manner").

It is helpful to parents if the IEP indicates whether the student is scheduled to participate in a provincial assessment during the current school year.¹¹

Information on permitted accommodations from province-wide assessments can be found in the guides that EQAO publishes annually. When describing accommodations for provincial assessments in the IEP, it is advisable to use wordings that are consistent with the wordings used in these EQAO documents. It is inappropriate, however, to develop an IEP solely for provincial assessments. EQAO documents are available on the [EQAO website](#).

7.2 ■ Exemptions from Provincial Assessments

In a small number of cases, a student may require an exemption from provincial assessment. An exemption may be considered if, even given the full range of permitted accommodations, the student would not be able to provide evidence of learning under the circumstances of the assessment. If it is determined that the student will not participate in a particular provincial assessment, the IEP must include documentation to support an exemption. For secondary students, there must be clear indication that a student is not working towards an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). The final decision must be communicated in writing to the parent, or student if 16 years of age or older, as part of the IEP development process. (See *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements (2016)*, Appendix 3, for details of the policy on exemptions from provincial assessments.)

As with permitted accommodations discussed above, information on permitted exemptions from province-wide assessments can be found in the guides that EQAO publishes annually. When describing exemptions from provincial assessments in the IEP, it is advisable to use wordings that are consistent with the wordings used in these EQAO documents, which can be found on the [EQAO website](#).

11. If the student has been granted a deferral of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), it is also helpful to indicate this on the IEP.

▶ 8. Transition Plans

The transition plan is a detailed and coordinated plan designed to assist the student in making successful educational transitions.

The regulatory and policy requirements concerning the transition plan are set out at the beginning of this part of the guide, in the section entitled **Requirements under Ontario Regulation 181/98 and Policy/Program Memoranda Nos. 140 and 156**. As stated there, with PPM No. 156, “Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs”, the requirement for transition planning is extended to all students, from Kindergarten to Grade 12, who have an IEP, and this policy applies to all the key transitions that students make in the course of their education. (Detailed information on the key transitions can be found in the **Transition Planning section** of Part C of this guide.) In some cases, the student may have no particular need of support during transitions; in those cases, the transition plan should state that no actions are required. At the discretion of the board, a transition plan may also be developed for students who receive special education programs and/or services but do not have an IEP and have not been identified as exceptional.

The specific requirements of PPM No. 156 concerning the development of the transition plan *as part of the IEP* are consistent with requirements that schools and school boards have been meeting since 1998 with respect to the secondary-to-postsecondary transition plan required under O. Reg. 181/98. As with O. Reg. 181/98, the school principal is responsible for ensuring the coordination and development of the transition plan, but not for all the assigned tasks within it.

All transition plans must be:

- developed as part of the student’s IEP;
- developed in consultation with the parent(s), the student (as appropriate), the postsecondary institution (where appropriate), and relevant community agencies and/or partners, as necessary;
- reviewed as part of the review of the IEP, and the results of each review should be used to update the transition plan;
- stored in the Ontario Student Record (OSR) documentation folder.

Components of a Transition Plan

Transition plans must be part of the student's IEP, and must include the following elements, first outlined in the Ministry of Education's policy document *Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation* (2000) and later reiterated more broadly in PPM No. 156:

- specific goals for the student's transition
- the strategies to be used and the actions required, now and in the future, to achieve the stated goals
- the person or agency responsible for or involved in completing or providing assistance in the completion of each of the identified actions
- timelines for the implementation of each of the identified actions

The Student's Transition Goals

Transition goals will vary depending on the student's needs. For example, for a student making the transition to postsecondary activities, the goals will pertain to employment, further education, and/or community living. However, for a student who requires support when making the transition between various activities and settings, the goals will be different. They will pertain to improving behaviour or skills in certain situations.

The transition goals for all students must be realistic and should reflect the strengths, needs, and interests of the student. The goals should also be consistent with what the students have documented and shared with educators and their parents in their Individual Pathway Plans (IPPs) (in Grades 7 through 12) or may have documented and shared in their All About Me portfolios (in Kindergarten to Grade 6).

Where possible, students should assume responsibility for identifying their transition goals and the steps needed to achieve them.

For the student making the transition to postsecondary activities, the goals should strike a balance among the following considerations:

- the student's ideal vision of the future
- the limitations and/or barriers (actual and potential) to the student's realizing this ideal vision
- the extent to which these limitations and/or barriers may be overcome by actions or supports such as appropriate health care and social services, help from family and friends, and accommodations from

employers and further-education institutions, as well as by the student's own efforts

For this student, the considerations are long-term. The transition goals for others, however, may involve more short-term considerations that will lead to increased opportunities at school and in the community. For example, they may involve mastering certain skills, such as language skills, social skills, and motor skills.

The Strategies and Actions Necessary for Achieving the Goals

At the heart of the transition plan is the description of the actions that are required to enable the student to achieve his or her goals. The strategies and actions should build on the student's identified strengths, needs, and interests. For example, for students diagnosed with autism, the relevant applied behaviour analysis (ABA) methods should be listed.

In preparation for defining the appropriate actions, it may be helpful to identify the barriers to the achievement of the student's goals. It may also be helpful to identify the major steps required for the student to achieve his or her goals and then to define specific actions associated with each of the steps.

Each action should be described in clear, unambiguous language so that it will be easy to determine whether and when the action has been undertaken and completed.

The list of actions identified for the current year should include anything that must be done to enable the student to continue to progress towards his or her goals.

If possible, anticipated actions for future years should also be identified, in order to:

- clarify the student's progression towards his or her goals;
- test the appropriateness of the planned steps and actions as ways to help the student achieve the goals;
- alert team members to future responsibilities.

The actions in the transition plan should not limit the student's opportunities to achieve the learning expectations of the Ontario curriculum and to accumulate credits towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

Some students with special education needs will require more time than other students to achieve the maximum possible learning within the curriculum and also attain their transition plan goals.

The Person or Agency Responsible for Completing Each Action

The transition plan should indicate who is responsible for completing, or providing assistance in completing, a given action. The person or agency responsible might include the following: the student, parents, educators, providers of specialized support and services, and/or community agencies. Consent should be obtained from those individuals or organizations named as responsible parties.

All persons or agencies who are responsible for one or more actions in the transition plan should:

- be aware of and understand the nature of their responsibility;
- believe that it will be possible to complete the indicated action(s) within the specified time frame;
- advise the individual who is the lead for transitions if circumstances change and they come to believe that they will not be able to complete the indicated action(s).

Timelines for Each Action

Each action identified on the plan should have a clear timeline or completion date. Planning for transitions should begin early to ensure that each student can make as smooth a transition as possible. Some actions may list timelines that extend into the next school year.

For example, contact with postsecondary institutions a year in advance of a student's transition may help to ensure access for the student to program opportunities and allow time for the institution or department to arrange supports needed by the student with special education needs. As the date of transition approaches, the special education office of the college or university can assist by providing the student and educators supporting the student with information on the accommodations that are available. Once a student is admitted, it is the responsibility of the special education office of that institution to assist the student in obtaining accommodations appropriate to the student's special education needs.

For examples of all the components of a transition plan – specific goals, actions required, person(s) responsible for actions, and timelines – see the transition plans included in the IEP samples that can be found on the Special Education domain of the [EduGAINS website](#).

▶ 9. Parent/Student Consultation

Regulation 181/98 requires the principal to ensure that the parents and the student, if the student is 16 years of age or older, are consulted in the development and review of the student’s IEP, and that a copy of the IEP is provided to the parents and the student on its completion.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 6\(2\)](#))

A form documenting consultations with a parent and the student (if 16 or older) must be prepared and attached to the student’s IEP. (The sample IEP template in [Appendix E-2](#) has a section called “Log of Parent/Student Consultation” for this purpose.) The parent/student consultation form must contain the following information:

- the date of each consultation
- the outcome of each consultation

The parent and the student (if 16 or older) must be asked to sign the form and to indicate whether:

- they were consulted in the development of the IEP;
- they declined the opportunity to be consulted;
- they have received a copy of the IEP;
- any comments they provided are noted on the form.

This form should be reserved for information about parent-student-school interactions relating to the student’s IEP, and should not be used to record interactions about other matters.

The Role of the Student and Parents in the Development of the IEP

Students and parents play an invaluable role in the development of the IEP. Open communication and cooperation between home and school will help ensure that both the parents and school staff have similar expectations with respect to the student’s special education program and services.

It is expected (and required, if the student is 16 years of age or older) that secondary students will be given the opportunity to provide input in the development of the IEP. However, *any* student for whom an IEP is being developed should be consulted to the degree possible. In the information-gathering phase, students should be encouraged to share their perceptions of their learning strengths and needs, their learning styles, and their interests. This information may be gathered through interviews, discussions, and interest inventories. It may also be collected when students share information they have documented in their All About Me portfolios (in Kindergarten to Grade 6) or Individual Pathways Plans (in Grades 7 through 12).

The nature and extent of a student's involvement in the IEP process will vary. However, members of the in-school team should ensure that students understand, to the extent possible, the purpose of their IEP and how the goals and expectations in the plan are individually tailored, evaluated, reviewed, and updated. It is important for students to be aware that their achievement of the learning expectations will be reflected in their Provincial Report Card. Students need to understand that they can participate in the IEP process and that it is important for them to take an active role in their learning.

The student, to the extent possible:

- helps educators identify his or her learning styles, preferences, strengths, and needs;
- understands what accommodations are to be provided (e.g., individualized teaching and assessment strategies, human support, individualized equipment);
- assists in setting annual program goals and learning expectations;
- demonstrates an understanding of the IEP and works actively to achieve the goals and expectations contained therein;
- participates in monitoring progress towards goals and maintains awareness of how grades and/or marks will be generated for the Provincial Report Card;
- considers the information in his or her All About Me portfolio or Individual Pathways Plan (IPP) when developing the IEP.

Parents:

- provide up-to-date information about their child as it relates to the child's learning (e.g., recent assessment reports);
- provide important information that will assist in the development and implementation of their child's educational program (e.g., the talents and skills their child demonstrates in the home and community; their child's likes, dislikes, learning styles/preferences, interests, and reactions to various situations);
- reinforce and extend the efforts of the educators by providing opportunities for their child to practise and maintain skills in the home;
- provide feedback on the child's transfer of skills from school to the home and to community settings;
- maintain open communication with the school.

Ways of Supporting Parental and Student Involvement

In addition to the responsibilities outlined above, parents play an important role in the IEP process by communicating to the in-school team a picture of their child's life thus far, suggesting ways to avoid potential problems, and helping the in-school team achieve continuity of programming for the student.

Principals and teachers can support parental and student involvement by:

- communicating openly and regularly with parents and students in clear, plain language (i.e., language that is free of jargon);
- giving parents and students the opportunity to specify how, and to what degree, they wish to become involved in consultation during the development of the IEP;
- contacting parents by telephone as well as in writing to notify them about meetings of the in-school team regarding the development of the IEP;
- informing parents and students about the topics that will be discussed at the IEP meeting and about who will attend;
- ensuring that parents and students are given the opportunity to provide meaningful input on the development of the IEP;
- checking regularly with parents and students to share effective strategies and gather feedback;
- checking regularly for possible parental or student concerns or confusion (by asking questions, if necessary);

- clarifying information as necessary to ensure that parents and the student understand the IEP and the IEP process, as well as related matters, such as the connection between the IEP and the Provincial Report Card.

► 10. Staff Involvement in Developing the IEP

The school principal is responsible for ensuring that the IEP is developed collaboratively by school and board staff members and others who are familiar with the student. These individuals possess the knowledge and qualifications necessary to develop the most effective plan possible for the student. For more information on this collaborative process, see the section below entitled **Establishing a Collaborative Approach for Developing and Implementing the IEP**.

Although the IEP is developed collaboratively, the principal is ultimately responsible for each student's plan. *The principal must sign the IEP to indicate his or her assurance that the plan is appropriate to the student's strengths and needs and that it meets all of the standards outlined in this document.*

Each member of the team involved in the development of the IEP must be identified in the IEP. The principal must ensure that, collectively, the educators involved in the development of the IEP:

- have knowledge of the student;
- have knowledge of the Ontario curriculum;
- are qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, special education programs and services to meet the needs of the exceptional student and other students who are receiving special education programs and/or services and who have an IEP;
- have knowledge of the special education strategies and resources available in the district school board.

In elementary schools, the principal or vice-principal is expected to coordinate and oversee the work of the in-school team, which may include the special education teacher, the classroom teacher(s), and support staff, in developing, monitoring, and reviewing each student's IEP.

Because of the size and organizational structure of secondary schools, the principal may designate a vice-principal or a staff member to act on her or his behalf in coordinating and overseeing the development of the IEP.

Since the transition plan is part of the student's IEP, the teacher assigned responsibility for the IEP may also be responsible for the transition plan. In special circumstances, or for students with high or complex needs, the principal or another teacher may be assigned this role.

It should be noted that PPM No. 140 specifically requires the principal to ensure that relevant school board and community personnel who have previously worked and/or are currently working with a student with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are invited to provide input and participate in the IEP process.

Establishing a Collaborative Approach for Developing and Implementing the IEP

It is important that the IEP be developed collaboratively. Part C describes some of the functions of in-school teams and some approaches to developing them (see the [In-School Team and Out-of-School Resources section](#) in that part of the guide).

The needs of the individual student determine who will be involved in the IEP's development, implementation, and monitoring. The student, the student's parents, the student's teachers, the guidance teacher/counsellor, the principal, special education staff and support personnel, and staff from community agencies, as appropriate, may have a role. As noted earlier, regardless of who is coordinating and participating in the IEP process, decisions related to the program-planning sections of an IEP should be made by the individual who teaches the student and prepares the student's report card – usually the classroom teacher.

A team approach enables all those who are responsible for and interested in meeting the student's needs to:

- share information and observations about the student's behaviour and learning in a variety of settings;
- develop a common understanding of the student's strengths and needs as they affect the student's ability to learn and demonstrate learning, and the student's educational goals;
- discuss accommodations that can help the student learn and demonstrate learning;
- select and make recommendations about the purchase of individualized equipment, if applicable;
- discuss the type and level of support required from support services personnel;

- plan and outline how the student's learning will be assessed and evaluated so that the connection between the IEP and the report card will be readily apparent to both the student and the parents.

All team members have important roles and responsibilities in the development, implementation, and monitoring of an IEP, and are expected to cooperate in the IEP process. [Appendix E-4](#) outlines roles and responsibilities associated with all aspects of an IEP; however, responsibilities and tasks will vary depending on the circumstances of the individual student and some may not be applicable in all situations.

The following people may also be consulted, to provide information that is relevant to the student's educational programming:

- school administrators
- guidance teachers/counsellors
- speech-language pathologists
- the student's previous teacher(s), previous principal(s), and/or previous service provider(s)
- educational assistants
- early childhood educators
- resource teachers
- cooperative education teachers
- educational consultants
- occupational therapists
- physiotherapists
- Indigenous support workers
- autism program providers
- other medical professionals
- child and youth workers
- social workers
- psychologists and psycho-educational consultants
- Provincial School or Demonstration School personnel
- service providers from appropriate community agencies (e.g., Friendship Centres or other Indigenous partners/organizations)

▶ 11. Information Sources

The quality and effectiveness of an IEP will depend in large part on the gathering and use of relevant information from a variety of sources, and on the sharing of that information with all who are involved in the preparation and implementation of the plan.

The school principal must ensure that the student's IEP is developed on the basis of information obtained from a variety of appropriate sources. Under Regulation 181/98, in developing the IEP, the principal must take into account any recommendations regarding special education programs and services made by the IPRC. Other sources of information that should be reviewed include:

- the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR), including previous report cards and the previous IEP (when applicable);
- classroom observation;
- the student's current work;
- information provided by the student; the parents; school and board staff who have previous experience working with the student, and other professionals and paraprofessionals, including information provided in various types of assessment reports and through diagnostic tests (to be used only with parental permission and as permitted under freedom of information legislation);
- results of further assessments, if needed, undertaken in consultation with parents.

Information used in the development and updating of the IEP should be shared with the student (if 16 or older) and the student's parents, and with members of the in-school team, to enable them to develop a comprehensive view of the student's learning profile and programming and service needs.

In addition to the sources of information listed above, the in-school team might find it helpful to review the student's results in provincial assessments. Information may also be gathered when students share information they have documented in their Individual Pathways Plans (IPPs) (in Grades 7 through 12) or the information they may have documented and shared in their All About Me portfolios (in Kindergarten to Grade 6).

For detailed descriptions of multiple sources of assessment information – including educational, speech and language, health, and psychological – see the [Assessing Student Learning section](#) in Part C.

Information Gathered through Observation

Educators who work directly with the student can supplement the information gathered from written sources and from various consultations with information obtained through direct observation.

Once information from all sources has been gathered, it is reviewed to determine if it is sufficient to enable the team to plan and implement educational programming for the student.

If the information is insufficient, further individual assessments will need to be conducted. Note that educational assessments, especially grade-equivalent achievement scores, must be very current to be useful in the development of an IEP, so it may be necessary to conduct new educational assessments.

Other types of assessments, discussed in greater detail in [Part C](#), may require written parental consent. It is important to help parents understand what each assessment entails – that is, the process their child will go through – as well as the benefits of conducting the assessment and its possible outcomes. Such information will ensure that parents can make an informed decision about whether to consent to an assessment. (See the box below for information on privacy requirements that may be applicable to the information generated by students' assessments.)

When collecting, using, or releasing personal information about a student, the principal must ensure that the requirements of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (in the case of Provincial Schools), the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (in the case of school boards), and any other applicable legislation, as well as the requirements regarding access to student information outlined in [The Ontario Student Record \(OSR\) Guideline \(2000\)](#), have been met.

Principals and teachers should consult with their board's freedom-of-information coordinators about the steps required to obtain access to personal information about the student that is not contained in the student's Ontario Student Record (e.g., from other professionals who work with the student) and about providing information contained in the student's OSR to other professionals.

The information gathered from the various sources consulted needs to be consolidated and analysed to provide a detailed picture of the student's areas of strength and need, and to identify any consistent patterns of successful learning. Assessment data may be checked against information gathered from other sources to determine whether the other information supports the patterns revealed by the assessments. Discrepancies in information from different sources should be investigated and taken into consideration, as appropriate, in preparing the IEP.

► 12. Date of Completion of the IEP

Under Regulation 181/98, an IEP must be developed within 30 school days of the exceptional student's placement in a special education program.

"Placement" will be taken to mean one of the following:

- the first day of a student's attendance in the new special education program specified in the IPRC's statement of decision
- the first day of the new school year or semester in which the student is continuing in a placement subsequent to its confirmation by the annual IPRC review
- the first day of the student's enrolment in a special education program that the student begins in mid-year or mid-semester as a result of a change of placement

The 30-day period must be calculated from the first day of the student's placement in a special education program, as defined above.

The 30-day period for completion of an IEP applies to the IEPs of all students, including those who have not been identified as exceptional by an IPRC but who receive a special education program and/or services.

Both the date on which the student begins his or her placement in a special education program and the date on which the IEP is completed must be recorded in the IEP.

► 13. Implementation and Monitoring

The effectiveness of the student's IEP, including the transition plan, can be assured only with proper implementation and monitoring. Proper implementation and monitoring depend on appropriate sharing of information among those involved with the student and on regular evaluation of the student's achievement and progress towards meeting the goals and expectations set out in the IEP.

The principal must first ensure that the staff member assigned to coordinate the development and implementation of the IEP has:

- reviewed the IEP with the principal;
- met with the student's classroom teachers, special education teacher, guidance teacher/counsellor, and support staff, as appropriate, to discuss implementation of the activities described in the IEP and the responsibilities associated with each of those activities;
- informed classroom teachers, parents, and the student who is 16 years of age or older of the modified or alternative learning expectations in the student's program and of the special education strategies and resources required to facilitate the student's learning, as set out in the IEP (classroom teachers of subjects and courses to which the IEP applies must be made aware of the IEP as it relates to the student's instruction in the subject areas for which they are responsible);
- discussed with the student's classroom teachers the importance of parental involvement in support of the plan;
- established a plan, including a timetable, for evaluating and monitoring the student's progress towards achieving his or her learning expectations;
- shared information about the monitoring plan with parents and the student (if 16 or older) and with school and support staff.

Once the IEP is developed, the staff member assigned to coordinate the development and implementation of the IEP (see [section 10](#)) should ensure that everyone involved in providing programs and services for the student is aware of the IEP's contents. The in-school team should:

- review various individuals' responsibilities for implementing and monitoring the plan; and
- ensure that all staff members directly responsible for instruction, as well as the parents and the student (if 16 or older), have a copy of the IEP.

The classroom teacher and support personnel are directly responsible for implementing the program and services outlined in a student's IEP. Their responsibilities are outlined below.

The Role of Classroom Teachers

Classroom teachers need to become familiar with the instructional, environmental, and assessment accommodations that are recorded in the student's IEP. Some accommodations, such as providing a quiet work space or having a scribe record the student's verbatim responses, require advance planning on the part of the teacher.

The teacher must make all the strategies and other accommodations listed in the IEP available to the student, but is not restricted to using only those that are listed. As the relationship between the teacher and the student develops, the teacher should explore a variety of strategies that could enhance the student's ability to learn, and make note of successful strategies in the student's IEP. However, adjustments to the *assessment* accommodations listed in the IEP should be made only after checking that they conform to the accommodations permitted by the EQAO, so that if the student finds them helpful the student will also be able to benefit from them during provincial assessments.

The classroom teacher must carefully monitor the student's learning in order to detect ineffective instructional strategies or other accommodations and replace them with strategies better suited to the student's learning needs.

When a classroom teacher is responsible for teaching a subject or course in which a student with an IEP is working towards achieving modified and/or alternative expectations, some additional planning is necessary. The teacher should consider incorporating a number of strategies (e.g., group instruction, peer coaching, buddy systems) that can help the student participate in many of the classroom activities.

Classroom teachers are encouraged to promote independence in students who have an IEP by structuring the location of and procedures relating to individualized tasks and assignments in such a way that students can practise skills and prepare performance tasks with a minimum of teacher assistance. At the same time, planning for direct instruction is essential and should focus on helping the student acquire the knowledge and skills recorded in the IEP before the student attempts to move on to additional learning.

The Role of Support Personnel

Many alternative programs – for example, in social skills, anger management, personal care, and orientation/mobility training – benefit from the involvement of support personnel. Support personnel may include educational assistants, who provide support to classroom teachers by assisting students with learning activities and providing appropriate accommodations as described in the IEP. Planning and providing individual timetables and location scheduling for educational assistants and other support staff is a necessary part of the implementation process.

► 14. Review and Updating

The results of regular evaluation and monitoring of the student's achievement and progress towards the goals identified in the IEP may reveal that adjustments are needed in the student's special education program. If the student is not meeting, or is exceeding, the expectations described in the IEP, the student's situation must be reviewed to determine the cause. If it is determined that the cause is related to the student's exceptionality, the IEP must be adjusted. Changes to the IEP may include:

- adjusting the strategies and resources used in instruction, or the level of support the student receives;
- developing new expectations, if learning is proceeding at a faster rate than had been anticipated by the plan;
- breaking expectations down into smaller steps, if learning is proceeding at a slower rate than had been anticipated by the plan.

If revisions to the IEP result in significant changes in the student's learning expectations and/or in the level of special education accommodations and services to be provided, the parent(s) and the student (if 16 or older) must be consulted before the changes are implemented. Information about such consultations must be recorded on the parent/student consultation form (see [section 9](#)).

The date of all revisions to the IEP must be recorded in the IEP.

If the learning expectations for only the first reporting period were included when the IEP was developed, the teacher(s) responsible for teaching each subject or course that has modified expectations and for delivering each alternative program must record in the IEP the learning

expectations that are to be assessed during the second reporting period. These new expectations must be communicated to the student and parents at the start of the second reporting period. The same process is repeated for the third reporting period in elementary and non-semestered secondary schools.

Recording Ongoing Revisions to the IEP

The IEP is a working document. Adjustments to annual program goals, learning expectations, instructional or assessment strategies, individualized equipment, levels of human support, or the transition plan should be noted in the IEP and shared with both the parent and the student. If certain strategies cease to be effective, it is imperative that the staff working with the student seek out and implement new instructional/assessment strategies and/or other accommodations.

Any changes to the learning expectations for a current reporting period should be made while there is still ample time for the student to prepare for the assessment tasks.

Store the IEP in the Documentation File of the Ontario Student Record

A student's IEP must be included in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR). This requirement ensures that the student's relevant assessment data and information about the student's learning strengths and needs, annual program goals, and learning expectations, as well as the accommodations used to help the student learn, are immediately available to teachers new to working with the student.

To ensure that the IEP stored in the OSR is up to date, the working copy of the IEP should replace the filed copy at the end of each school year or semester, or when the student transfers to another school. This procedure will help to keep all partners informed about the most recent adjustments to the IEP and to ensure continuity in programming for the student.

(See [Ontario Regulation 181/98, section 8](#))

Preventing and Resolving Conflicts Regarding IEPs

Students, parents, and educators all play important roles in the planning and implementation of a student's special education program. When they work together in the development of the IEP, experience has shown that they share a common understanding that reduces potential future conflict. However, issues related to the planning and implementation of a student's special education program may become sources of disagreement. As well, poor relationships may develop for a variety of reasons, leading to conflict between parents and educators.

There are many ways of working through conflict, ranging from informal to formal methods. Informal conflict resolution, beginning with problem solving, is often the most effective approach and it enhances the ability of students, parents, and educators to arrive at mutually acceptable solutions. For more information on informal conflict prevention and resolution, see *Shared Solutions: A Guide to Preventing and Resolving Conflicts Regarding Programs and Services for Students with Special Education Needs* (2007).

Appendix E-1: Standards for Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

The following table is based on the IEP standards as set out in the policy document *Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation* (2000).

Standard	Purpose of the Standard
1. Reason for Developing an IEP	To identify clearly for parents, school staff, and the Ministry of Education the reason for developing an IEP for the particular student
2. Student Profile	To provide essential information about the student that was used to support the decision to provide the special education program and services
3. The Student's Strengths and Needs	To identify the student's strengths and needs clearly, as the basis on which an appropriate special education program and services are developed
4. The Special Education Program	
4.1 The Student's Current Level of Achievement	To provide a starting point from which to measure the student's progress towards achieving the learning expectations and annual goals set out in the IEP
4.2 Annual Program Goals	To inform the student, parents, and teachers of the goals towards which the student is progressing through the achievement of the learning expectations set out in the IEP
4.3 Learning Expectations	To provide a focus for learning that is based on the student's strengths, needs, and current level of achievement and to clearly identify the knowledge and skills that the student is expected to acquire while working towards his or her annual goals in a particular subject, course, or skill area
5. Special Education Strategies, Accommodations, and Resources	To ensure that teachers, parents, and the student clearly understand the range of strategies, accommodations, and resources that will be employed to facilitate the student's learning

(continued)

(continued)

Standard	Purpose of the Standard
6. Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting	
6.1 Assessment Methods and Accommodations	To ensure that an appropriate range of methods and strategies is used to give the student the opportunity to demonstrate the full extent of his or her achievement of the learning expectations
6.2 Evaluation and Reporting of Student Achievement	To ensure regular evaluation and reporting of the student's achievement of the learning expectations
7. Provincial Assessments	
7.1 Accommodations for Participation in Provincial Assessments	To ensure that students who have an IEP are given the opportunity to participate and demonstrate the full extent of their knowledge and skills in provincial assessments
7.2 Exemptions from Provincial Assessments	To ensure that any exemption from a provincial assessment is justified for the particular student
8. The Transition Plan*	To ensure that the student is well prepared to meet postsecondary goals that are appropriate to the student's strengths, needs, and interests, and that the student receives the assistance necessary for making a smooth transition
9. Parent/Student Consultation	To ensure that parents and the student, if the student is 16 years of age or older, are consulted in the development and review of the IEP, in accordance with Regulation 181/98
10. Staff Involvement in the Development of the IEP	To ensure that the IEP is developed collaboratively and that the individuals involved in its development bring together the knowledge and experience that will best serve the needs of the student
11. Information Sources	To ensure a sound and reliable basis for the development of every student's IEP through the use of a variety of appropriate sources of information about the student and his or her educational needs
12. Date of Completion of the IEP	To ensure the timely preparation of the student's IEP, in accordance with Regulation 181/98
13. Implementation and Monitoring	To ensure the effectiveness of the IEP through proper implementation and monitoring
14. Reviewing and Updating	To ensure that the student's special education program and services remain effective and appropriate to the student's needs and strengths over time

* As noted earlier, in the section entitled [Requirements under Ontario Regulation 181/98 and Policy/Program Memoranda Nos. 140 and 156](#), there are additional requirements for the transition plan related to the two PPMs.

Appendix E-2: A Sample IEP Template

Individual Education Plan

IEP

REASON FOR DEVELOPING THE IEP

- Student identified as exceptional by IPRC
 Student not identified by IPRC but requires special education program/services, including accommodations and/or modified/alternative learning expectations

STUDENT PROFILE

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
 Student OEN: _____
 School: _____ Semester: _____
 Principal: _____ Current Grade/Special Education Class: _____ School Year: _____
 Most Recent IPRC Date: _____ Date Annual Review Waived by Parent/Guardian: _____
 Exceptionality: _____
 IPRC Placement Decision: _____

ASSESSMENT DATA

List relevant educational, medical/health (hearing, vision, physical, neurological), psychological, speech/language, occupational, physiotherapy, and behavioural assessments.

Information Source	Date	Summary of Results

Relevant Medical Conditions Yes (*list below*) No

Health Support Services/Personal Support Required Yes (*indicate type below*) No

STUDENT'S STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

Areas of Strength	Areas of Need

SUBJECTS, COURSES, OR ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS TO WHICH THE IEP APPLIES

Identify each as Accommodated only (AC), Modified (MOD), or Alternative (ALT). Please identify courses by their codes.

_____ AC MOD ALT
 _____ AC MOD ALT

Elementary Program Exemptions or Secondary School Compulsory Course Substitutions

Yes (provide educational rationale) No

Complete for secondary students only:

Student is currently working towards attainment of the:

Ontario Secondary School Diploma Ontario Secondary School Certificate Certificate of Accomplishment

Reporting Format

Provincial Report Card
 Alternative Report

Reporting Dates: _____

ACCOMMODATIONS

(Accommodations are assumed to be the same for all subjects/program areas unless otherwise indicated.)

Instructional Accommodations	Environmental Accommodations	Assessment Accommodations

Individualized Equipment Yes (list below) No

PROVINCIAL ASSESSMENTS

Provincial Assessment Year: Yes (provide name of the assessment below) No

Name of Assessment: _____

Permitted Accommodations: Yes (list below) No

Exemptions: Yes (provide explanatory statement from relevant EQAO document) No

Deferral of Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT): Yes (provide rationale below) No

Rationale: _____

Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC): Yes No

Special Education Program

To be completed for each subject/course with modified expectations and/or each alternative program with alternative expectations. Please identify courses by their codes.

Subject/Course/Alternative Program:

Baseline Level of Achievement (*refer to previous June report card*):

Prerequisite course (if applicable) _____

Letter grade/Percentage mark _____

Curriculum grade level _____

Baseline Level of Achievement for Alternative Program (*refer to description in previous June report card or alternative report*):

Annual Program Goal(s): A goal statement describing what the student can reasonably be expected to accomplish by the end of the school year (or semester) in a particular subject, course, or alternative program.

Learning Expectations List modified/alternative expectations outlining knowledge and/or skills to be assessed, by reporting period. Identify grade level, where appropriate.	Teaching Strategies List only those that are particular to the student and specific to the learning expectations.	Assessment Methods Identify the assessment method to be used for each learning expectation.

Transition Plan

Actions Required at This Time: Yes No

Goal(s)

Actions Required	Person(s) Responsible for Actions	Timelines

HUMAN RESOURCES (teaching/non-teaching)

Type of Service	Initiation Date	Frequency or Intensity	Location

IEP DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Staff Member	Role

SOURCES CONSULTED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IEP

- IPRC Statement of Decision (if applicable)
 Provincial Report Card
 Previous IEP
 Parents/Guardians
 Student

Other sources (*list below*)

DATE OF PLACEMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (*select the appropriate option*)

- 1) First day of attendance in new special education program
 2) First day of the new school year or semester in which the student is continuing in a placement
 3) First day of the student’s enrolment in a special education program that he/she begins in mid-year or mid-semester as the result of a change of placement

Date of Placement: _____

Completion Date of IEP Development Phase (within 30 school days following the Date of Placement): _____

Appendix E-3: An IEP Checklist

The IEP must include the following items:

- ✓ Reasons for developing the IEP
- ✓ A profile of the student, including the student's name, date of birth, student number, current grade, exceptionality, and placement, as well as the name of the student's school and its principal and the date of the student's most recent IPRC.
- ✓ Relevant assessment data
- ✓ The student's strengths and needs
- ✓ Specialized health support services required by the student
- ✓ The subjects, courses, or alternative programs to which the IEP applies
- ✓ Accommodations required by the student
- ✓ Any accommodations for or exemptions from provincial assessments
- ✓ The student's current level of achievement in every subject or course in which modified expectations are required and in every alternative program
- ✓ Modified or alternative expectations for the reporting period
- ✓ Teaching strategies and other accommodations tailored to the student's strengths, needs, learning style, and interests, to support learning and determine progress in achieving modified or alternative expectations
- ✓ Human resources (both teaching and non-teaching) to be provided
- ✓ Reporting dates for evaluations and an indication of the way in which student progress will be reported to parents
- ✓ A transition plan that identifies the student's goals and the steps and actions required to enable the student to achieve those goals
- ✓ A record of parent/student consultations
- ✓ A record of staff review and updating of the IEP
- ✓ Signatures of the principal, parent, and student if 16 or older

Appendix E-4: Roles of Educators and Other Professionals in the Development and Implementation of the IEP

The principal (the responsibilities that are mandated by Regulation 181/98 are marked with an asterisk):

- assigns to one teacher the responsibility for *coordinating* the collaborative development of (not *developing*) the student's IEP, with input from educators involved in the student's programming;
- facilitates collaborative planning for, and evaluation and updating of, the IEP;
- ensures that an IEP is completed within 30 school days of a student's placement in a special education program;*
- signs the IEP within 30 school days of a student's placement in the program;
- ensures that the IEP includes a transition plan to postsecondary activities for students who are 14 years of age or older and who are not identified solely on the basis of giftedness,* and that the IEP of all students with special education needs, including students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), includes a transition plan regardless of the student's age or other exceptionality (PPM No. 156; PPM No. 140);
- ensures that a student's IEP is implemented and that, as part of implementation, the student's achievement of the learning expectations is evaluated at least once every reporting period in which a Provincial Report Card is issued, and that the expectations are reviewed and updated at the beginning of every reporting period;
- ensures that the recommendations of the IPRC with respect to special education programs and services, such as support personnel, resources, and equipment, are taken into account in the development of the IEP;*
- ensures that relevant applied behaviour analysis (ABA) methods are incorporated, as appropriate, in the IEP of students with an ASD (as required by PPM No. 140);
- ensures that parents, and the student if 16 years of age or older, are consulted in the development of the IEP;*
- ensures that consultation with community agencies and postsecondary institutions that the principal considers appropriate is conducted as part of the preparation of a transition plan to postsecondary activities

for students who are 14 years of age or older and who are not identified solely as “gifted”;

- ensures that relevant school board and community personnel who have previously worked and/or are currently working with a student with an ASD are invited to provide input and participate in the IEP process (PPM No. 140);
- ensures that a copy of the IEP is provided to the parents, and to the student if the student is 16 years of age or older;*
- ensures that the current IEP is stored in the Ontario Student Record, unless a parent of the student objects in writing.*

The classroom teacher:

- contributes first-hand knowledge of the student’s strengths, needs, and interests;
- fulfils the role of the key curriculum expert on how the IEP can be developed to help the student progress through the Ontario curriculum;
- in consultation with a special education teacher, develops any modified or alternative learning expectations required to meet the student’s needs, plans instruction to address those expectations, and assesses the student’s learning in relation to the expectations;
- develops and implements individualized instructional and assessment strategies that will help the student achieve his or her learning expectations;
- reviews and updates learning expectations at the beginning of each reporting period;
- maintains ongoing communication with the student’s parents, other teachers, and other professionals and support staff involved with the student.

The special education teacher:

- provides diagnostic assessments, as appropriate and if required, to determine the student’s learning strengths and needs;
- provides support to the student’s classroom teacher(s) by generating ideas and suggestions for developing modified expectations, alternative programs, or accommodations (e.g., individualized teaching or assessment strategies, human support, individualized equipment);
- takes direct responsibility for certain aspects of the student’s special education program;

- develops any modified or alternative learning expectations that fall within areas for which the special education teacher has direct responsibility;
- plans instruction to address those expectations and assesses the student's achievement of the expectations;
- provides advice about materials and resources;
- works with the classroom teacher(s) to maintain ongoing communication with the student's parents and other teachers.

The educational assistant:

- helps the student with learning activities, under the direction and supervision of the teacher;
- assists with providing appropriate accommodations as described in the IEP;
- monitors and records the student's achievements and progress relative to the expectations described in the IEP, under the direction and supervision of the teacher;
- maintains ongoing communication with the student's teacher(s).

Other professionals:

- participate in the IEP process and serve on the in-school team, if requested;
- help to determine the student's learning strengths and needs;
- develop strategies for use in the school environment to assist the student in acquiring the knowledge and skills described in the learning expectations, and to demonstrate that learning;
- train staff to implement the strategies;
- provide advice about materials and resources;
- provide technical assistance;
- act as a resource and support for the student's family;
- maintain ongoing communication with the student's teacher(s) and the in-school team;
- conduct assessments, as necessary, with informed parental consent.

PART F

Other Programs and Services

Introduction

This part of the guide focuses on additional special education programs and services, including those offered by institutions other than school boards and by ministries other than but related to the Ministry of Education. The responsibilities of various government ministries with respect to health support services are identified. Information is provided about services for children and youth who, for a variety of reasons, require programs outside of or in addition to those provided by school boards, including those offered by care and/or treatment, custody, and correctional facilities; Provincial Schools; and Demonstration Schools. This part of the guide also describes the qualifications required by teachers of students with special education needs, and includes a list of faculties of education accredited by the Ontario College of Teachers.

School Health Support Services

School boards and school staff work collaboratively with agencies of other ministries to provide health support services to students with special education needs. [Policy/Program Memorandum \(PPM\) No. 81, “Provision of Health Support Services in School Settings” \(1984\)](#), outlines the responsibilities of school boards, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, and the Ministry of Community and Social Services for ensuring that students with special education needs receive the health support services they require so that they are able to benefit from an educational program. The School Health Supports Services Program of the Ministry of Health provides services to facilitate the integration of children with special health needs into the regular education system. The role of the Ministry of Community and Social Services is limited to the provision of services in care and treatment facilities.

The following list specifies the division of services among ministries, as stated in PPM No. 81.

- **Ministry of Education (school boards):**
 - ✧ administering oral medication
 - ✧ physical assistance (lifting, positioning, feeding, toileting)
 - ✧ physio/occupational therapy (general maintenance exercises)
 - ✧ speech and language services (Language disorders are the responsibility of school boards. Articulation/speech sound production problems, fluency disorders, and non-speech communication are shared responsibilities with the Ministry of Health. [The Interministerial Guidelines for the Provision of Speech and Language Services \(September 1988\)](#) provides information to assist school boards in the coordination and delivery of specialized speech and language services. [A model for the provision of speech and language services](#) can be found on the Ministry of Education website.)
- **Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care:**
 - ✧ injection of medication
 - ✧ catheterization
 - ✧ manual expression of bladder/stoma
 - ✧ postural drainage/suctioning
 - ✧ tube feeding
 - ✧ physio/occupational therapy (intensive clinical treatment)

- ✧ speech therapy (treatment) and assessment (Voice disorders and resonance problems are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Articulation/speech sound production problems, fluency disorders, and non-speech communication are shared responsibilities with the Ministry of Education.)
- **Ministry of Community and Social Services:**
 - ✧ provision of all health support services in children's residential care and treatment facilities

Educational Programs for Students in Government-Approved Care and/or Treatment, Custody, and Correctional (CTCC) Facilities

The Ministry of Education believes that the education goals of school-age students should continue to be supported if these students are required to attend government-approved facilities for care, treatment, and/or rehabilitative purposes. To the extent possible, these students should attend regular or special education classes in local schools. However, in cases where these students cannot attend local schools because of their need for care, treatment, and/or rehabilitation, suitable educational programs that recognize the primacy of their care, treatment, and/or rehabilitation needs may be provided by the school board within CTCC facilities. It is a fundamental belief of the ministry that all students can succeed when given appropriate supports.

Under the Education Act (subsection 171(1), paragraph 40), school boards have the authority to conduct education programs in CTCC facilities (such as community agencies, youth justice centres, and mental health and/or hospital settings). The education programs provided in these settings are based on a formal agreement between a school board and a CTCC facility. The school board provides the educational programming and the facility provides the care, treatment, and/or rehabilitation. Placement of a child or youth within care and treatment programs is determined by facility admission criteria; placement in custody and correctional settings is ordered by the courts.

Students in CTCC education programs may be among the most vulnerable and may be at risk of not completing an elementary and/or secondary education. Although some of the students served within these programs have primary needs other than education, the ministry recognizes that maintaining continuity of education during periods of care, treatment, and/or rehabilitation complements and supports treatment objectives and contributes to improved life outcomes.

The ministry document *Guidelines for Educational Programs for Students in Government Approved Care and/or Treatment, Custody and Correctional (CTCC) Facilities* provides direction to school boards regarding the approval and delivery of educational programs for students who are clients of a government-approved CTCC facility. This document also includes information on the elements of an agreement between a facility and a district school board. The guidelines will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis, providing the ministry with a medium to support the transformation of CTCC education programs in the coming years.

The ministry provides funding for educational programs in CTCC facilities through the Facilities Amount (FA) allocation of the Special Education Grant (SEG). More information on this funding allocation can be found in the [Special Education Funding section](#) of Part A, or on the [Education Funding page](#) of the ministry website.

Hospital Boards

Section 68 of the Education Act authorizes the Minister of Education to establish, by order, school authorities for elementary and/or secondary purposes on land held by the Crown or on tax-exempt land. These school authorities are distinct from the seventy-two district school boards but have similar powers, duties, and responsibilities. School authorities that are located within treatment centres for children and youth are commonly known as “hospital boards”.¹ In treatment centres ranging in size from small community-based centres to large urban hospitals, hospital boards

1. Six of the ten school authorities are located in treatment centres for children and youth. The other four school authorities manage schools in remote and sparsely populated regions.

provide educational programs for students who have complex medical needs and are unable to attend regular school.

Five of the six hospital boards are affiliated with children's treatment centres that are funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. (More information on the twenty children's treatment centres funded by this ministry can be found on the [Children's Rehabilitation Services page of the ministry's website](#).) One hospital board (Bloorview School Authority) is affiliated with a children's hospital, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, which receives funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

The rehabilitation and treatment services offered at these centres may include nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, social work services, psychological services, orthotic/prosthetic services, and dental services. The programming services offered by the school authorities operating in these centres are described below.

Currently, the six hospital boards are:

- Bloorview School Authority, Toronto
- Campbell Children's School Authority, Oshawa
- John McGivney Children's Centre School Authority, Windsor
- KidsAbility School Authority, Waterloo
- Niagara Peninsula Children's Centre School Authority, St. Catharines
- Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre School Authority, Ottawa

[Appendix F-1](#) includes contact information for these hospital boards.

► Programming

Hospital boards may serve students from Kindergarten through to the end of secondary school, in either residential or day treatment programs. Each hospital board has unique admission criteria for students based on type and severity of special needs, age, sources of referral, and other factors. The hospital board staff cooperate with the treatment centre staff to develop and provide special education programs and services based on educational and therapeutic needs. These programs follow the Ontario curriculum and are modified to provide for each student's individual academic, physical, communication, and social or emotional needs. Programs are designed to help the student make a smooth transition from the treatment centre to the receiving school (the school to which the student is transitioning).

Hospital boards may also serve as a resource to help school boards meet the developmental and/or medical needs of their students who are clients of the treatment centre. Upon request from a district school board or another hospital board, the staff of these centres may:

- facilitate the transition and integration of children into their receiving school;
- provide information to assist in the identification and placement of students;
- provide information to assist in the writing of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for exceptional students;
- assist in identifying the need for and providing special accommodations;
- provide ongoing advice as requested by the teacher, board consultant, and/or principal;
- provide specialized in-service programs and workshops for school staff who are involved in the development and delivery of educational programs and services for students with particular special education needs.

Provincial Schools and Demonstration Schools

Provincial Schools and Demonstration Schools are part of the Provincial Schools Authority (PSA), which was established under the Provincial School Negotiation Act.

These schools are operated by the Ministry of Education and provide education for elementary and secondary school students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, who are blind or have low vision, who are deafblind, and/or who have severe learning disabilities. The schools also provide outreach services and opportunities for professional development for staff working for school boards.

Provincial Schools and Demonstration Schools:

- are operated by the Ministry of Education;
- provide education for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, who are blind or have low vision, who are deafblind, or who have severe learning disabilities;
- provide an alternative education option;

- serve as regional resource centres for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, who are blind or have low vision, who are deafblind, or who have severe learning disabilities;
- provide outreach and home-visiting services to parents of preschool children who are Deaf or hard of hearing, are blind or have low vision, or are deafblind;
- develop and provide learning materials and media for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, are blind or have low vision, or are deafblind;
- provide school board teachers with resource services;
- provide professional development for teachers.

Admittance to a Provincial School is determined by the Provincial Schools Admission Committee in accordance with the requirements set out in [Regulation 296, “Ontario Schools for the Blind and the Deaf”](#). Application for admission to a Demonstration School is made on behalf of students by the school board, with parental consent. The Provincial Committee on Learning Disabilities (PCLD) determines whether a student is eligible for admission.

The following four Provincial Schools in Ontario provide education for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, are blind or have low vision, or are deafblind:

- W. Ross Macdonald School, Brantford
- Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf, Milton
- Robarts School for the Deaf, London
- Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf, Belleville

The language of instruction at the three schools for the Deaf is American Sign Language (ASL). The language of instruction at the W. Ross Macdonald School for the Blind and Deafblind is English.

The Centre Jules-Léger, which functions as *both* a Provincial School and a Demonstration School, provides instruction for the Deaf in Langue des Signes Québécois (LSQ). All other instruction is in French.

The following three Demonstration Schools provide education for students who have severe learning disabilities. Instruction at these schools is in English:

- Amethyst School, London
- Sagonaska School, Belleville
- Trillium School, Milton

Transportation for students enrolled in Provincial Schools is arranged by school boards or Provincial Schools. Transportation for students enrolled in Demonstration Schools is arranged by Provincial Schools.

Below are brief descriptions of the various types of schools. Contact information for all Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario can be found in [Appendix F-2](#). More information on these schools is also available on the [Provincial Schools Branch page](#) of the ministry website.

► **Provincial Schools for Students Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision or Are Deafblind**

The W. Ross Macdonald School in Brantford and the Centre Jules-Léger in Ottawa provide education for students who are blind or have low vision or are deafblind. The language of instruction at the W. Ross Macdonald School is English; at the Centre Jules-Léger, instruction is in French.

The schools, which are also provincial resource centres for visually impaired and deafblind children and youth, provide:

- support to local school boards through consultation and the provision of special learning materials, such as Braille materials, audiotapes, and large-print textbooks;
- professional services and guidance to ministries of education on an interprovincial, cooperative basis.

Programs at these schools:

- are tailored to the needs of the individual student and are designed to help these students learn to live independently in a non-sheltered environment;
- are delivered by specially trained teachers;
- follow the Ontario curriculum developed for all students in the province;
- offer a full range of courses at the secondary level;
- offer courses in broad-based technology and mobility training;
- are individualized to offer a comprehensive “life skills” program;
- provide home visiting for parents and families of preschool deafblind children to assist in preparing these children for their future education.

► Provincial Schools for Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

The following Provincial Schools offer services for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing:

- Centre Jules-Léger, Ottawa
- Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf, Milton
- Robarts School for the Deaf, London
- Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf, Belleville

The Centre Jules-Léger serves francophone students and families throughout Ontario.

These schools provide elementary and secondary school programs for students from Kindergarten to the end of high school. The programs follow the Ontario curriculum and parallel courses and programs provided in school boards. Each student's special education needs are met as set out in his or her IEP. Provincial Schools for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing:

- provide rich and supportive educational environments that facilitate student's language acquisition, learning, and social development through American Sign Language (ASL) and English, or through Langue des Signes Québécois (LSQ) and French;
- operate day and residential programs;
- provide residential facilities five days per week for those students who do not live within reasonable commuting distance from the school.

Each Provincial School has a resource services department that provides:

- consultation and educational advice to parents of children who are Deaf or hard of hearing and to school board personnel;
- information brochures;
- a wide variety of workshops for parents, school boards, and other agencies;
- an extensive home-visiting program delivered to parents of preschool children who are Deaf or hard of hearing by teachers trained in preschool and Deaf education.

Additional information can be obtained from the resource services departments of the Provincial Schools.

► **Demonstration Schools for Students Who Have Severe Learning Disabilities**

Although the primary responsibility to provide appropriate educational programs for students with learning disabilities remains with school boards, the ministry recognizes that some students require a residential school setting for a period of time. The Demonstration Schools were established to:

- provide special residential education programs for students between Grades 4 and 11;
- enhance the development of each student's academic and social skills;
- develop the abilities of the students enrolled to a level that will enable them to transition back to their local school within the same school year.

The Ministry of Education provides services for children with severe learning disabilities at four Demonstration Schools:

- Amethyst School, London
- Centre Jules-Léger, Ottawa
- Sagonaska School, Belleville
- Trillium School, Milton

Each Demonstration School has an enrolment of not more than forty students. The language of instruction at the Amethyst, Sagonaska, and Trillium Schools is English; at the Centre Jules-Léger, instruction is in French.

Teacher Qualifications

The qualifications for teaching special education and for teaching students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, are blind or have low vision, or are deafblind are set out in [Ontario Regulation 176/10, “Teachers’ Qualifications”](#), made under the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996. Qualifications are obtained in two stages:

- through pre-service teacher education programs offered by faculties of education across the province; and
- through courses leading to additional qualifications (AQs) in special education and for teaching students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, are blind or have low vision, or are deafblind offered by faculties of education and other registered course providers in various locations across the province. These courses are regulated by the Ontario College of Teachers.

When assigning or appointing a teacher to be in charge of or to teach in a special education class as a resource or withdrawal teacher, or in a class for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing or who are blind or have low vision, principals must do so (1) with the aim of providing the best possible program and protecting the safety and well-being of students and (2) in accordance with the qualifications recorded on the teacher’s Certificate of Qualification and Registration (see [Regulation 298, “Operation of Schools – General”, section 19](#)).

In those instances when a principal needs to assign a teacher who does not have the required qualifications but who is otherwise competent, Regulation 298 allows for such assignments to be made, in specified circumstances, under the authority of a Temporary Letter of Approval (TLA) granted by the Minister of Education (section 19.2). A TLA authorizes a school board to assign a teacher to teach a subject, to teach in a division, or to hold a position for up to one year, even though the teacher does not have the required qualifications. [PPM No. 153, “Applications for Temporary Letters of Approval” \(2010\)](#), provides school boards with information on the requirements for submitting an application for a TLA to the Ministry of Education. All TLA applications must be sent to the regional offices of the ministry.

Teacher Assignment in Ontario: A Resource Guide (revised edition, March 2011) provides information on the assignment of teachers to teaching positions in Ontario's publicly funded elementary and secondary schools.

Further information about teacher education programs and special education qualifications can be obtained from the [Ontario College of Teachers](#), or from specific faculties of education. [Appendix F-3](#) includes links to the faculties of education at universities accredited by the Ontario College of Teachers.

► **Obtaining Additional Qualifications (AQs) in Special Education and for Teaching Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Are Blind or Have Low Vision, or Are Deafblind**

Courses leading to additional qualifications (AQs) in special education and for teaching students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, are blind or have low vision, or are deafblind are offered at various faculties of education, subject to the determination of the individual faculty of education. Information on which faculties are offering specific AQ courses can be found on the [Find an AQ page](#) of the Ontario College of Teachers website.

Appendix F-1: Contact Information for Hospital Boards

Bloorview School Authority

150 Kilgour Road, Toronto,

ON M4G 1R8

Tel: 416-424-3831

www.bloorviewschool.ca

Campbell Children's School Authority

600 Townline Road South, Oshawa,

ON L1H 7K6

Tel: 905-728-1673

<http://campbellchildrenschool.ca/school-information/>

John McGivney Children's Centre School Authority

3945 Matchette Road, Windsor,

ON N9C 4C2

Tel: 519-252-7281

www.jmccentre.ca/school/

KidsAbility School Authority

500 Hallmark Drive, Waterloo,

ON N2K 3P5

Tel: 519-886-8886

www.kidsability.ca/aboutourschool

Niagara Peninsula Children's Centre School Authority

567 Glenridge Avenue, St. Catharines,

ON L2T 4C2

Tel: 905-688-3550

<http://niagarachildrencentre.com/school>

Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre School Authority

395 Smyth Road, Ottawa,

ON K1H 8L2

Tel: 1-800-841-8252

www.octc.ca/school.php

Appendix F-2: Contact Information for Provincial Schools and Demonstration Schools

Provincial Schools

Centre Jules-Léger

281, rue Lanark, Ottawa,
ON K1Z 6R8
Tel: 613-761-9300
TTY: 613-761-9302

www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/cjl.html

Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf

255 Ontario Street South, Milton,
ON L9T 2M5
Tel: 905-878-2851
TTY: 905-878-7195

www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/ecd/index.html

Robarts School for the Deaf

1515 Cheapside Street, London,
ON N5V 3N9
Tel: 519-453-4400
TTY: 519-453-4400

www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/robarts/index.html

Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf

350 Dundas Street West, Belleville,
ON K8P 1B2
Tel: 613-967-2823
TTY: 613-967-2823

www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/sjw/index.html

W. Ross Macdonald School

350 Brant Avenue, Brantford,
ON N3T 3J9
Tel: 519-759-0730

www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/wross/index.html

Demonstration Schools

Amethyst School

1515 Cheapside Street, London,
ON N5V 3N9
Tel: 519-453-4408

www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/amethyst/index.html

Centre Jules-Léger, *see Provincial Schools, above*

Sagonaska School

350 Dundas Street West, Belleville,
ON K8P 1B2
Tel: 613-967-2830

www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/sagonaska/index.html

Trillium School

347 Ontario Street South, Milton,
ON L9T 3X9
Tel: 905-878-2851

www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/trillium/index.html

Appendix F-3: Contact Information for Faculties of Education

English Campuses

Brock University

St. Catharines and Hamilton, ON

www.brocku.ca/education

Lakehead University

Thunder Bay and Orillia, ON

www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/education

Laurentian University

Sudbury, ON

www.laurentian.ca/faculty/education

Niagara University

Niagara Falls, NY

www.niagara.edu/education

Nipissing University

North Bay, ON

www.nipissingu.ca/education

**Ontario Institute for Studies in Education,
University of Toronto**

Toronto, ON

www.oise.utoronto.ca/

Queen's University

Kingston, ON

www.educ.queensu.ca/

Redeemer University College

Ancaster, ON

www.redeemer.ca/programs/education/

Trent University

Peterborough, ON

www.trentu.ca/education/

Tyndale University College

Toronto, ON

www.tyndale.ca/education

**University of Ontario Institute of
Technology**

Oshawa, ON

www.education.uoit.ca

University of Ottawa

Ottawa, ON

www.education.uottawa.ca

University of Windsor

Windsor, ON

www.uwindsor.ca/education

Wilfred Laurier University

Waterloo, ON

www.wlu.ca/academics/faculties/faculty-of-education/index.html

York University

Toronto, ON

www.futurestudents.yorku.ca/program/education

French Campuses

Université Laurentienne

Sudbury, ON

www.laurentienne.ca/faculte/education

Université d'Ottawa

Ottawa, Toronto, and Windsor, ON

www.education.uottawa.ca/fr

Glossary

The definitions provided in this glossary are specific to special education.

accommodations. Special teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and/or individualized equipment required to enable a student to learn and to demonstrate learning. The provincial curriculum expectations for the grade are not altered for a student receiving accommodations only.

alternative learning expectations. Statements on the IEP describing expectations developed to help students acquire knowledge and skills that are not represented in the Ontario curriculum expectations. Because they are not part of a subject or course outlined in the provincial curriculum documents, alternative learning expectations are considered to constitute alternative programs or alternative courses (i.e., secondary school courses). Examples of alternative programs/courses include speech remediation, social skills, orientation/mobility training, and personal care programs. Alternative programs/courses are provided in both the elementary and the secondary panels.

alternative report. A report that records student achievement of alternative expectations. Student progress should be reported to parents by means of anecdotal comments on an alternative report. It is not required, nor is it advisable, for grades or marks to be assigned for the achievement of alternative expectations. The anecdotal comments should indicate the student's progress/achievement relative to the expectations identified in the IEP, and should comment on the student's strengths and next steps for improvement. This alternative report should accompany the Provincial

Report Card at the regular reporting periods. (Some school boards include a section for reporting on the achievement of alternative expectations in the IEP itself.)

annual program goals. Statements on the Individual Education Plan (IEP) describing what a student can reasonably be expected to accomplish by the end of the school year in a particular subject, course, or skill area. Annual goals must be developed if the student's learning expectations are modified from the curriculum expectations for a particular subject or course, or if the student's learning expectations are alternative learning expectations.

applied behaviour analysis (ABA). An effective instructional approach that uses methods based on scientific principles of learning and behaviour to build useful repertoires of behaviour and reduce problematic ones. For example, ABA methods can help a student to develop positive behaviours, learn new skills, and transfer a positive behaviour or response from one situation to another.

assessment. The process of gathering information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the curriculum expectations in a subject or course and/or the learning expectations identified in the student's IEP. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning. Assessment for the purpose of improving student learning is seen as both "assessment *for* learning" and "assessment *as* learning". Evaluation of student learning is based on "assessment *of* learning" that provides evidence of student achievement at strategic times throughout the grade/course/program, often at the end of a period of learning.

community agency. An agency that may be not-for-profit or funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services or the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The mandate of such an agency includes the provision of services or support for preschool children with special needs (e.g., the Preschool Speech and Language Program, Infant Hearing Program, Ontario Autism Program).

current (baseline) level of achievement. Information on the IEP summarizing the student's current level of achievement in each of the subjects, courses, or skill areas to which the IEP applies. This information serves as a baseline against which the student's progress towards achievement of his or her learning expectations and annual goals in each subject, course, or skill area will be measured.

Demonstration Schools. Schools operated by the Ministry of Education that provide special residential education programs for students with learning disabilities.

differentiated instruction (DI). A method of teaching that attempts to adapt instruction to suit the differing strengths and needs, interests, learning styles, and readiness to learn of individual students.

equity. A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

exceptional pupil (student). As defined in the Education Act, “a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a special education program by a committee [the IPRC], established under subparagraph iii of paragraph 5 of subsection 11 (1), of the board....”

exceptionalities. The Education Act sets out five categories of exceptionalities in the definition of an exceptional pupil including: behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical, and multiple. These broad categories are designed to address the wide range of conditions that will affect a student’s learning needs. For more information see the [Categories of Exceptionalities section](#) in Part A of this guide.

government-approved care and/or treatment, custody, and correctional (CTCC) facilities. Facilities in which school boards offer educational programs for students who cannot attend local schools because of their need for care, treatment, and/or rehabilitation. The education programs provided in these settings are based on a formal agreement between a school board and a CTCC facility. The school board provides the educational programming and the facility provides the care, treatment, and/or rehabilitation services.

health assessment (or medical assessment). An assessment carried out by a medical doctor or other licensed health professional (such as an audiologist or ophthalmologist). A health assessment may be included as a part of the assessment package for a referral to an IPRC. Informed parental consent must be obtained before the assessment can be done.

Individual Education Plan (IEP). A written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student, including a record of the particular accommodations needed to help the student achieve his or her learning expectations. An IEP must be developed for a student who has been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), and may also be developed for a student who has special education needs but has not been identified as exceptional. An IEP is a working document that identifies learning expectations that may be modified from or alternative to the expectations given in the curriculum policy document for the appropriate grade and subject or course. It outlines the specific knowledge and skills to be assessed and evaluated for the purpose of reporting student achievement. See [Part E](#) of this guide for more information on IEPs.

individual educational assessment. An assessment that consists of multiple sources of information and is often conducted by, or under the direction of, the in-school team. Depending on the components of the assessment, parental consent in writing may be required. An individual educational assessment is required by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) to make a decision about the identification of a student as exceptional and the placement of a student in a special education program.

intervention. The provision of assistance to children and students who are at risk or who have special education needs that may affect their development. Intervention can be remedial or preventive and involves strategies that are designed to improve student learning and growth.

Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC). A committee of a school board that decides whether or not a child should be identified as exceptional, identifies the areas of a student's exceptionality according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the ministry, decides an appropriate placement for a student, and reviews the identification and placement at least once in each school year. See [Part D](#) of this guide for more information on the IPRC.

learning expectations. Statements on the IEP describing the specific knowledge and skills that the student should be able to demonstrate within a specified time period during the school year. Learning expectations represent the learning a student needs to acquire in order to progress from his or her current level of achievement to achievement of the related annual goals identified in the IEP.

modifications (modified expectations). Statements on the IEP that reflect the changes made to the grade-level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs. Modifications may include the use of learning expectations at a different grade level and/or an increase or decrease in the number and/or complexity of expectations relative to the curriculum expectations for the regular grade level. At the secondary level, a credit may or may not be granted for a course, depending on the extent to which the expectations in the course have been modified.

Ontario Special Education Tribunal (OSET). A tribunal that hears appeals by parents who disagree with the identification and/or placement decision made following a meeting of the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) and a subsequent meeting of the special education appeal board (SEAB). Parents have the right to appeal to the OSET or to the Tribunal de l'enfance en difficulté de l'Ontario (TEDO). Ontario Special Education Tribunals, created by the Education Amendment Act of 1980 (Bill 82), are mandated to provide final and binding decisions to resolve disputes between a parent and a school board concerning the identification and/or placement of an exceptional student.

Provincial Schools. Schools operated by the Ministry of Education for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, are blind or have low vision, or are deafblind.

psychological assessment. An assessment carried out by a member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario – either a psychologist or psychological associate. A psychological assessment may be included as a part of the assessment package for a referral to an IPRC. Informed parental consent must be obtained before the assessment can be done.

special education appeal board (SEAB). A group of three individuals to which parents have a right to appeal the decision of the IPRC. The three individuals, one of whom is selected by the parents, have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal.

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). A committee of a school board that provides important advice on special education. A SEAC may make recommendations to the board on any matter affecting the establishment, development, and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional students in a board. Each school board in Ontario must establish a SEAC.

Special Education Grant (SEG). One of the special purpose grants allocated by the Grants for Student Needs (GSN). In addition to foundation grants, the ministry provides funding to school boards for students with special education needs through the Special Education Grant. The SEG supports the incremental costs of the additional programs, services, and equipment required to meet the educational needs of students with special education needs and to support positive outcomes for them. In this way, it ensures equity for all students with special education needs.

special education plan. A plan based on province-wide standards that describes the special education programs and services provided by a school board. In accordance with Regulation 306 under the Education Act, each board is required to maintain a special education plan, to review it annually, to amend it from time to time to meet the current needs of its exceptional students, and to submit any amendment(s) to the Minister for review. The plan must also be made available to the public.

special education program. As defined in the Education Act, “an educational program [for an exceptional pupil] that is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation and that includes a plan [the IEP] containing specific objectives and an outline of educational services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil”.

special education services. As defined in the Education Act, “facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program”.

speech and language assessment (or communication assessment). An assessment carried out by a speech-language pathologist registered with the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario. A speech and language assessment may be included as a part of the assessment package for a referral to an IPRC. Informed parental consent must be obtained before the assessment can be done.

the tiered approach. A systematic, sequential instructional approach that uses specific instructional interventions of increasing intensity to address students’ needs. It can be used to address either the academic or the behavioural needs of students who are having difficulty.

transition plan. The school’s written plan to assist the student in making a successful transition. The transition plan is developed as part of the IEP. Under O. Reg. 181/98, the IEP must include a transition plan for

each exceptional student who is 14 years of age or older who is making the transition from secondary school to postsecondary activities, unless the student was identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness. In addition to the requirements under O. Reg. 181/98, ministry policy (Policy/Program Memorandum No. 156) requires that a transition plan be developed for all students who have an IEP, whether or not they have been identified as exceptional by an IPRC and including those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness.

transition planning. The process of coordinating a set of activities that prepare students for change and help them adapt to a variety of settings. The starting point for transition planning should be the student's goals. The transition-planning process itself may assist the student in developing and refining his or her goals.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL). A teaching approach that focuses on creating a learning environment that is open and accessible to all students, regardless of age, skills, or situation. Instruction based on principles of universal design is flexible and supportive, can be adjusted to meet different student needs, and enables all students to access the curriculum as fully as possible.



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