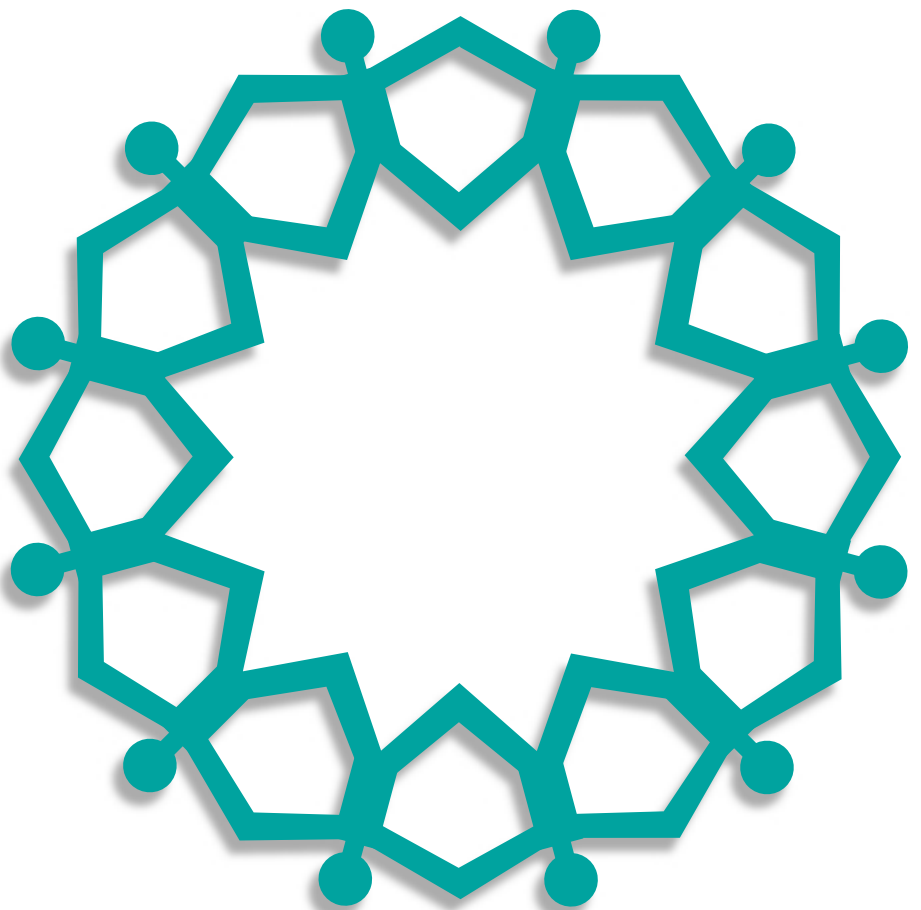


Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans



CONTENTS

Introduction	3
The Board's Consultation Process	4
Special Education Programs and Services	5
The Board's General Model for Special Education	5
Roles and Responsibilities	5
Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies	6
The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process and Appeals	7
Educational and Other Assessments	7
Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings	8
Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities	9
Special Education Placements Provided by the Board	9
Individual Education Plans (IEPs)	10
Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario	11
Special Education Staff	11
Staff Development	12
Equipment	12
Accessibility of School Buildings	13
Transportation	13
The Board's Special Education Advisory Committee	15
Coordination of Services With Other Ministries or Agencies	16
Submission and Availability of School Board Plans	17
Appendices	
Appendix A: Roles and Responsibilities in Special Education	19
Appendix B: Sample Parents' Guide to Special Education	23
Appendix C: Specialized Health Support Services	31
Appendix D: Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities	32
Appendix E: Provincial Schools and Demonstration Schools	35
Appendix F: Special Education Staff	39

Cette publication est également offerte en français sous le titre suivant :
Normes concernant les plans de l'enfance en difficulté des conseils scolaires.

This publication is available on the Ministry of Education's website at
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>.

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 boards¹ 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, parents², 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.

1. In this document, "school board" and "board" refer to district school boards and to school authorities.

2. In this document, "parent(s)" refers to parent(s) and guardian(s).

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 details, see Appendix A to this document):

- 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

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 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 B to this document. 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), school board staff, or other service providers. The board must provide this information using the form supplied in Appendix C to this document.

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.

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 Appendix D to this document), 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
- 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 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 deaf-blind, 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 Appendix E to this document
- 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 F to this document, 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, treatment, 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 Native 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, treatment, and correctional programs
- 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, treatment, 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 an Internet 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. The complete plan must be submitted along with the following documents:

- a letter from the director of the school board³ that confirms that the school board's special education plan is being submitted in compliance with the requirements of Regulation 306 and of this policy document
- 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. In the case of school authorities, this letter would be provided by the secretary of the school authority.

APPENDIX A: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education has begun to define roles and responsibilities in elementary and secondary education in several key areas:

- legislative and policy framework
- funding
- school system management
- programs and curriculum

It is important that all involved in special education understand their roles and responsibilities, which are outlined below.

The Ministry of Education:

- defines, through the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda, the legal obligations of school boards regarding the provision of special education programs and services, and prescribes the categories and definitions of exceptionality;
- ensures that school boards provide appropriate special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils;
- establishes the funding for special education through the structure of the funding model. The model consists of the Foundation Grant, the Special Education Grant, and other special purpose grants;
- requires school boards to report on their expenditures for special education;
- sets province-wide standards for curriculum and reporting of achievement;
- requires school boards to maintain special education plans, review them annually, and submit amendments to the ministry;
- requires school boards to establish Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs);
- establishes Special Education Tribunals to hear disputes between parents and school boards regarding the identification and placement of exceptional pupils;
- establishes a provincial 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, blind, or deaf-blind, or who have severe learning disabilities.

The district school board or school authority:

- establishes school board policy and practices that comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- monitors school compliance with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- requires staff to comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- provides appropriately qualified staff to provide programs and services for the exceptional pupils of the board;
- obtains the appropriate funding 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 pupils of the board;
- reviews the plan annually and submits amendments to the Minister of Education;
- provides statistical reports to the ministry as required and as requested;
- prepares a parent guide to provide parents with information about special education programs, services, and procedures;
- establishes one or more IPRCs to identify exceptional pupils and determine appropriate placements for them;
- establishes a Special Education Advisory Committee;
- provides professional development to staff on special education.

The Special Education Advisory Committee:

- makes recommendations to the board with respect to any matter affecting the establishment, development, and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils 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;
- provides information to parents, as requested.

The school principal:

- carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda, and through 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 pupils, through an IPRC, is done according to the procedures outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and board policies;
- consults with parents and with school board staff to determine the most appropriate program for exceptional pupils;
- ensures the development, implementation, and review of a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), including a transition plan, according to provincial requirements;
- 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 the delivery of the program as set out in the IEP;
- ensures that appropriate assessments are requested if necessary and that parental consent is obtained.

The teacher:

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

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

- holds qualifications, in accordance with Regulation 298, to teach special education;
- monitors the student's progress with reference to the IEP and modifies the program as necessary;
- assists in providing educational assessments for exceptional pupils.

The parent/guardian:

- becomes 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;
- becomes acquainted with the school staff working with the student;

- supports the student at home;
- works with the school principal and teachers 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/ program memoranda;
- complies with board policies and procedures;
- participates in IPRCs, parent-teacher conferences, and other activities, as appropriate.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE PARENTS' GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

<p>District School Board Name</p> <hr/>
<p>Mission Statement of the Board [optional]</p> <hr/>
<p>Philosophy of the Board [optional]</p> <hr/>

Notes:

1. If you wish to receive this parents' guide in Braille, large print, or audio-cassette 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" includes guardian.

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:

- 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
- for students 14 years and older (except those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness), a plan for transition to appropriate postsecondary school activities, such as work, further education, and community living.

The IEP must be completed within 30 days after your child has been placed in the program, and the principal must ensure that you receive a copy of 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 deaf, blind, deaf-blind, and severely learning-disabled students, as well as those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Residential programs are offered at the schools Monday to Friday, for students who live too far from school to travel daily.

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

Amethyst School
 1090 Highbury Avenue
 London ON N5Y 4V9
 Telephone: (519) 453-4408

Sagonaska School
 350 Dundas Street West
 Belleville ON K8P 1B2
 Telephone: (613) 967-2830

Trillium School
 347 Ontario Street South
 Milton ON L9T 3X9
 Telephone: (905) 878-8428

Schools for the deaf

Ernest C. Drury School
255 Ontario Street South
Milton ON L9T 2M5
Telephone: (905) 878-2851
TTY: (905) 878-7195

Robarts School
1090 Highbury Avenue
P.O. Box 7360, Station "E"
London ON N5Y 4V9
Telephone and TTY: (519) 453-4400

Sir James Whitney School
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville ON K8P 1B2
Telephone and TTY: (613) 967-2823

School for the blind and deaf-blind

W. Ross Macdonald School
350 Brant Avenue
Brantford ON N3T 3J9
Telephone: (519) 759-0730

French-language school for the deaf and Demonstration School for French-speaking students with severe learning disabilities, including learning disabilities associated with ADHD

Centre Jules-Léger
281 rue Lanark
Ottawa ON K1Z 6R8
Telephone: (613) 761-9300
TTY: (613) 761-9302 and 761-9304

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]*.

APPENDIX C: SPECIALIZED HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES

Specialized Health Support Service	Agency or position of person who performs the service (e.g., CCAC, board staff, parent, student)	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 D: CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS OF EXCEPTIONALITIES

Behaviour

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.

Communication

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 the following:
 - 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

A learning disorder evident in both academic and social situations that involves one or more of the processes necessary for the proper use of spoken language or the symbols of communication, and that is characterized by a condition that:

- a) is not primarily the result of:
 - impairment of vision;
 - impairment of hearing;
 - physical disability;
 - developmental disability;
 - primary emotional disturbance;
 - cultural difference; and
- b) results in a significant discrepancy between academic achievement and assessed intellectual ability, with deficits in one or more of the following:
 - receptive language (listening, reading);
 - language processing (thinking, conceptualizing, integrating);
 - expressive language (talking, spelling, writing);
 - mathematical computations;
- c) may be associated with one or more conditions diagnosed as:
 - a perceptual handicap;
 - a brain injury;
 - minimal brain dysfunction;
 - dyslexia;
 - developmental aphasia.

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 supportive service;
- 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 pupils without exceptionalities who are of the same age or developmental level.

Blind and Low Vision

A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.

Multiple

Multiple Exceptionalities

A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities, that is of such nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.

APPENDIX E: PROVINCIAL SCHOOLS AND DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS

Provincial Schools and provincial Demonstration Schools:

- are operated by the Ministry of Education;
- provide education for students who are deaf or blind, or who have severe learning disabilities;
- provide an alternative education option;
- serve as regional resource centres for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind;
- provide preschool home visiting services for students who are deaf or deaf-blind;
- develop and provide learning materials and media for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind;
- provide school board teachers with resource services;
- play a valuable role in teacher training.

W. Ross Macdonald School: School for the Blind and Deaf-Blind

W. Ross Macdonald School is located in Brantford and provides education for students who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind. The school provides:

- a provincial resource centre for the visually impaired and deaf-blind;
- 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 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 special subject areas such as music, broad-based technology, family studies, physical education, and mobility training;
- are individualized, to offer a comprehensive “life skills” program;
- provide through home visiting for parents and families of preschool deaf-blind children to assist in preparing these children for future education.

Provincial Schools for the Deaf

The following Provincial Schools offer services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students:

- Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf in Belleville (serving eastern Ontario)
- Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf in Milton (serving central and northern Ontario)
- Robarts School for the Deaf in London (serving western Ontario)
- Centre Jules-Léger in Ottawa (serving francophone students and families throughout Ontario)

(For contact information, see page 37.)

Admittance to a Provincial School is determined by the Provincial Schools Admission Committee in accordance with the requirements set out in Regulation 296.

These schools provide elementary and secondary school programs for deaf students from preschool level to high school graduation. The curriculum follows the Ontario curriculum and parallels courses and programs provided in school boards. Each student has his or her special needs met as set out in his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP). Schools for the deaf:

- provide rich and supportive bilingual/bicultural educational environments which facilitate students' language acquisition, learning, and social development through American Sign Language (ASL) and English;
- operate primarily as day schools;
- provide residential facilities five days per week for those students who do not live within reasonable commuting distance from the school.

Transportation to Provincial Schools for students is provided by school boards.

Each school has a Resource Services Department which provides:

- consultation and educational advice to parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children and 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 deaf and hard-of-hearing preschool children by teachers trained in preschool and deaf education.

Provincial School Contacts

Teachers may obtain additional information from the Resource Services departments of the Provincial Schools and the groups listed below.

Provincial Schools Branch, Ministry of Education

Provincial Schools Branch
255 Ontario Street South
Milton, Ontario
L9T 2M5
Tel.: (905) 878-2851
Fax : (905) 878-5405

Schools for the Deaf

The Ernest C. Drury School
for the Deaf
255 Ontario Street South
Milton, Ontario
L9T 2M5
Tel.: (905) 878-2851
Fax: (905) 878-1354

The Robarts School for the Deaf
1090 Highbury Avenue
London, Ontario
N5Y 4V9
Tel.: (519) 453-4400
Fax: (519) 453-7943

The Sir James Whitney School
for the Deaf
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, Ontario
K8P 1B2
Tel.: (613) 967-2823
Fax: (613) 967-2857

School for the Blind and Deaf-Blind

W. Ross Macdonald School
350 Brant Avenue
Brantford, Ontario
N3T 3J9
Tel.: (519) 759-0730
Fax: (519) 759-4741

School for the Deaf, Blind, and Deaf-Blind

Centre Jules-Léger
281 rue Lanark
Ottawa, Ontario
Tel.: (613) 761-9300
Fax: (613) 761-9301

Provincial Demonstration Schools

The Ministry of Education provides the services of four provincial Demonstration Schools for Ontario children with severe learning disabilities.

These schools are the following:

Amethyst School
1090 Highbury Avenue
London, Ontario
N5Y 4V9
Tel.: (519) 453-4408
Fax: (519) 453-2160

Centre Jules-Léger
281 rue Lanark
Ottawa, Ontario
K1Z 6R8
Tel.: (613) 761-9300
Fax: (613) 761-9301
TTY: (613) 761-9302 and 761-9304

Sagonaska School
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, Ontario
K8P 1B2
Tel.: (613) 967-2830
Fax: (613) 967-2482

Trillium School
347 Ontario Street South
Milton, Ontario
L9T 3X9
Tel.: (905) 878-8428
Fax: (905) 878-7540

Each provincial Demonstration School has an enrolment of forty students. The language of instruction at the Amethyst, Sagonaska, and Trillium schools is English; at Centre Jules-Léger, instruction is in French.

Application for admission to a provincial 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.

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 the ages of 5 and 21 years;
- 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 return to programs operated by a local school board within two years.

In addition to providing residential schooling for students with severe learning disabilities, the provincial Demonstration Schools have special programs for students with severe learning disabilities in association with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD). These are highly intensive, one-year programs.

The Trillium School also operates Learning for Emotional and Academic Development (LEAD), a special program for students with severe learning disabilities who require an additional level of social/emotional support.

Further information about the academic, residential, LEAD, and LD/ADHD, programs is available from the Demonstration Schools through the Special Needs Opportunity Window (SNOW) website at <http://snow.utoronto.ca>.

An in-service teacher education program is provided at each Demonstration School. This program is designed to share methodologies and materials with teachers of Ontario school boards. Information about the programs offered should be obtained from the schools themselves.

APPENDIX F: 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)		
5.3 Sign interpreters (for deaf students)		
5.4 Transcribers (for blind students)		
5.5 Interveners (for deaf-blind 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		
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 deaf-blind students)		
5.6 Auditory-verbal therapists		
5.7 Subtotal		



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