

## **Section 8**

### ***Special Education Placements Provided by NPSCDSB***

In accordance with the direction of the Ministry of Education, the NPSCDSB is committed to the principle that the integration of exceptional pupils should be the norm, provided the placement meets the pupil's needs and is in accordance with parents' preferences.

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board acknowledges the necessity for a full range of placement options to meet these varying needs of students.

Placement of a student in a regular classroom setting is the first option considered by the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC).

- 1. A regular classroom**  
The student is placed in a regular classroom for the entire day, and the teacher provides program modifications.
- 2. 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.
- 3. A regular class with resource assistance**  
The student is placed in a regular class for most or all of the day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified special education teacher.
- 4. A regular class with withdrawal assistance**  
The student is placed in a regular class and receives instruction outside the classroom, for less than 50 percent of the school day, from a qualified special education teacher.
- 5. A special education class with partial integration**  
The student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class in which the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regular 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.
- 6. 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 Regular 298, section 31, for the entire school day.

Other options than these exist to meet the students' needs. Students may need to apply for admission to a provincial school for students who are blind, deaf or deaf-blind or a provincial demonstration school for students who have severe learning disabilities. Consideration of a facility that provides the necessary care or treatment appropriate to the students' condition.

Application to Provincial schools and Provincial Demonstration Schools are coordinated and submitted by the school board. Applications to care and treatment facilities are made by the parent directly to the facility, although school board staff may be able to assist in gathering the appropriate documentation.

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board is fortunate to have an active Special

Education Advisory Committee. This committee provides advice to the Board on determining the range of placements offered. Through regular open monthly meetings, annual school tours, and holding occasional meetings at individual schools, SEAC receives input which enables it to make recommendations on the special education programs offered each year. SEAC also receives important input from Special Education Administrative Review Committee (SEARC), made up of elementary and secondary school principals, Special Education Coordinator and administration who meet each term to discuss staffing, resources, service delivery models, and current issues and needs. SEAC considers input from all of these stakeholders to set priorities for the annual special education budget developed in the spring each year for the following school year.

The following graphic chart depicts our service delivery model for each exceptionality:

## Service Delivery for Exceptional Pupils in the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board

EXCEPTIONALITY		PLACEMENT OPTIONS:		
		Regular Classroom (program modifications and/or accommodations)	Regular Classroom - CRT support (resource/withdrawal)	Special Program/Class
<b>Communication:</b>	Autism	✓	✓	Learning Assistance Centres: Elementary -- J23, SA, SH, OLS, Secondary – SJSH
	Speech Impairment	✓	✓	
	Language Impairment	✓	✓	
	Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing	✓	✓	Teacher of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing
	Learning Disability	✓	✓	Jr. & Int. Learning Skills Classes (½ time): Elementary -- OLS, MSB; Secondary -- SJSH (3 sections with GLE course in first semester)
<b>Behaviour:</b>		✓	✓	Section 20 - Day treatment: SJ, OLS
<b>Physical:</b>	Blind & Low Vision	✓	✓	Teacher of the Blind
	Deaf Blind	✓	✓	Learning Assistance Centres: Elementary -- J23, SA, SH; Secondary – SJSH
<b>Multiple Exceptionalities:</b>		✓	✓	Learning Assistance Centres: Elementary – J23, SA, SH; Secondary – SJSH
<b>Intellectual:</b>	Giftedness	✓	✓	Junior gifted modules
	Mild Intellectual Disability	✓	✓	LAC
	Developmental Disability	✓	✓	Learning Assistance Centres: Elementary – J23, SA, SH, OLS; Secondary – SJSH

Key: OLS= Our Lady of Sorrows; MSB= Mother St. Bride; SH= St. Hubert; SA= St. Alexander; SJ= St. Joseph; J23= John XXIII ; SJSH= St. Joseph-Scollard Hall

**a) Special Education Programs and Services Specific to an Exceptionality**

The guidelines for application to special education classes can be found in Appendix 12.

- i) ***Learning skills programs for students with severe learning disabilities***  
Currently, two learning skills programs for students identified with severe learning disabilities are operating to accommodate students who would benefit from more highly structured intervention in a specialized setting.

Determining the severity of a child's needs and identifying him or her as a child in need of a special class placement requires careful consideration of information acquired from formal assessments and outside resource people as well as the relevant academic, social, medical and behavioural histories gathered by the school staff.

- The program at Mother St. Bride School (for the Learning Skills Program) provides two half-day intensive language-based programs for 8 students at the junior level, and 8 students at the intermediate level. These students are integrated half-time in a regular age-appropriate classroom at that school, and placement will be for a two-year period, but reviewed twice annually. Computer-assisted software (Kidspiration at the Junior level and Kurzweil at the Intermediate level) which enhances students' access to print materials and helps them to organize their writing, is an important component of the programs.
- The Maamwi-Enchiyang program at Our Lady of Sorrows School was developed in partnership with Nipissing Band #10. As a support program to meet the unique needs of Native youth, the morning program provides specialized instruction in practical academic and life skills with the goal of encouraging youth to stay in school and preparing them for active participation as contributing community members.

Serving 20 students, the program focuses on math, language, self-esteem, arts, recreation, life skills and drug and alcohol awareness, and provides a controlled learning environment with an active 'hands on' approach as well as learning strategies specifically for learning disabled children. Participants in the program are students from grades five to eight with long standing academic, social and self-esteem difficulties who require an alternative curriculum. Various aspects of Native culture permeate the program to promote the students' sense of belonging and cultural esteem.

- At the secondary school level a learning skills program is offered for students identified with severe learning disabilities. This study skills course is offered as a support course for students in grade 9 and the content enables students to develop skills in resource management, decision-making and human relations. The course also provides support which enables students to increase their motivation, confidence and ability to learn in all aspects of life.

ii) **Severe and Multiple Exceptionalities**

*Programs for students with intellectual handicaps, communication and physical handicaps and multiple exceptionalities*

Recognizing that full integration does not meet all the needs of our most severely challenged students, the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board provided four congregated programs called **Learning Assistance Centres (LAC)** for students with severe exceptionalities, including children with intellectual disabilities, multiple exceptionalities, conditions of medical fragility, physical challenges, pervasive developmental disorders and deaf/blindness.

The LAC programs provide a continuum of service through the primary, junior, intermediate and secondary levels.

The maximum class size in the LACs is 16. Each setting is unique and each program incorporates as much purposeful integration with the whole school and age peer classrooms as possible. Care is taken to address the spiritual and social belonging needs of the students as well as the physical, cognitive and academic. These programs have specialized staff trained in using alternative/augmentative communication systems for enhanced academic skills acquisition.

Special areas are available at the elementary level for support staff to provide occupational and physio therapy. These spaces allow access to children from all classrooms to specialized equipment and resources, special projects and celebrations within the LAC and afford meaningful interactions with the students. Peer volunteer groups (e.g., Care Kids) in each setting promote informal social interactions and friendship building opportunities through recreational activities.

Community-based activities are included in all programs to provide life skills development opportunities such as shopping, and regular field excursions including sessions in the Snoezelen Room and visits to the toy lending library.

The NPSCDSB allocates funds for a YMCA swim program for our students in the Learning Assistance Centres and other special needs students. In addition, special needs students take part in weekly free skating at City of North Bay Memorial Gardens during the winter months. Transportation for these two programs is provided by the Board.

- The LAC at St. Alexander School is a unique support program for children with multiple needs at the primary level. The students are registered in regular classrooms, and special education staff support students and classroom teachers to maximize learning experiences and developmental skills success in the integrated setting.
- The LAC at John XXIII School provides a nurturing and stimulating environment and for children with multiple needs at the primary/junior/intermediate levels including those children who are medically fragile or who require the services of deaf/blind programming. Students are cared for by highly specialized staff. A Snoezelen Room is a recent acquisition and allows sensory-motor integration as well as quality leisure and recreational choices.
- The LAC at St. Hubert School offers learning opportunities for children in the areas of self-care, life skills, functional academics, motor skills and community awareness. Within the K-8 setting, access to Family Studies, Music and Design & Technology programs are an asset for meaningful integration with age-appropriate

peers. Transition planning with the high school is an integral part of this class.

- The LAC at Our Lady of Sorrows School offers a unique educational program for junior/intermediate children in the areas of functional academics, life-skills, as well as learning and organizational skills. Integration with age-appropriate peers and community involvement are integral components of this placement.
- The LAC at St. Joseph-Scollard Hall Catholic Secondary School provides diverse programming to accommodate both those students with multiple exceptionalities with a relatively high level of independence as well those students who are medically fragile and/or who require on-going care and/or support with basic life skills. Program innovations include basic academics, hospitality, independence skills, recreation and leisure skills, design & technology, computer skills and a community-based job coaching component. In order to more fully meet the needs of students aged 14-21, a second LAC facility was opened in September 2000. During the 2004 summer months, major renovations and an expansion was completed to the initial LAC classroom. A physio room was also re-designed. With increased numbers of identified high needs students a third LAC was established in September 2004.
- Essential Mathematics (MAT 14)  
This Grade 9 course provides students who have experienced significant difficulties in previous Mathematics courses an opportunity to obtain sufficient background and skill development to prepare them for Grade 11 and Grade 12 workplace preparation courses. Whenever possible, ideas will be presented in a real-life context, providing student with the opportunity to explore, organize, interpret and use mathematical models to solve problems. Technology and manipulative materials will be used wherever appropriate. Assessment and evaluation will be done using a wide variety of strategies.
- Essential English (ENG 14)  
This Grade 9 course emphasizes the key reading, writing, oral communication and thinking skills students need for success in secondary school and in their daily lives. In particular, the program works toward preparing students to enter the Grade 11 course in English workplace and to complete the literacy test successfully. Students read a variety of narrative and expository forms, poetry and drama and practice the skills necessary for clear and accurate spoken and written language. In particular, course activities will help develop confidence and self-esteem and provide motivation to succeed in school and life.
- Essential Science (SCI 14)  
For the 2001-2002 school year, the Board introduced an essential science course to provide a wider range of courses to meet student needs. This course enables students to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the basic concepts in biology, chemistry, earth and space science, and physics; to develop practical skills in science investigation; and to apply their knowledge and skills to everyday situations. Students conduct investigations into practical problems and issues related to cells and reproduction, the structure and properties of elements and compounds, static and current electricity, and astronomy and space exploration. A variety of hands-on activities assist students to acquire concepts. Students use different reporting strategies to facilitate the development of communication skills.

The staff at SJSH have developed a “relaxation” room for their students with severe and multiple exceptionalities. This environment provides a sensitive and indirect approach to

optimizing the effect therapeutic intervention, enhancing quality of life, and encouraging freedom and choice.

iii) ***Programs for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students***

Currently the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board provides one elementary class at St. Hubert School for students with hearing impairments in the severe/profound range, under Alternative Education Funding (ISA3). The teacher also works with a child at St. Victor School in Mattawa. The students are integrated with support. Students are also withdrawn for direct auditory verbal therapy as well as speech therapy provided by the teacher of the deaf. The teacher of the deaf is instrumental in programming for these students. Students in regular classrooms can access FM systems, easy listeners, or sound field systems.

Four pupils identified by the IPRC as hard of hearing or deaf are being served.

iv) ***Gifted Programs***

In the spirit of providing appropriate learning opportunities for all children entrusted to our care, the NPSCDSB has committed to continue offering two or more one-week Gifted Modules for children in the Junior Division (Grades 4, 5 and 6). Participants should be either identified by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) as exceptional in the area of Intellectual: Giftedness or be in the “tracking process” for such a determination.

The benefits of participation include:

- Five days of intensive enrichment activities for each Gifted candidate for each of three Learning Modules (usually one module per term) with expectations consistent with Ministry of Education Curriculum guidelines and in accordance with Gospel values.
- Pre- and post-activities which extend the learning process from home to learning module to home school and offer opportunities to include the home school classmates and teacher.
- Opportunities for sharing experiences with other bright children which foster new peer groups, friendships and encourage development of self confidence and esteem.
- Opportunities for leadership which are offered in all areas of the program including pre- and post-activities and through the actual module experience.
- Opportunities for personal growth and an awareness of the uniqueness of individual gifts, tolerance for others and a responsibility for sharing our blessings.
- Opportunities to recognize and develop attitudes, skills and knowledge in accordance with a spiritual context of experience.

The locations vary according to numbers of participants and the need to provide specialized locales according to specific topic areas. Schools are our first choice with the option of Nipissing University when available. Transportation is provided by the parents.

**b) Other School Support Providers**

i) ***Volunteers***

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board is fortunate to have a large number of volunteers working in its schools. These volunteers work as “Parent Reading Partners”, assist with the “Breakfast for Learning Program”, make calls for the “Safe Arrival” program, staff libraries, participate on Catholic School Advisory Councils or Parent Associations, assist with school liturgies, help with fund raising and provide support to students and staff for curriculum activities when required. The volunteers

are key to providing safe enriched learning environments that foster student achievement. As per Government of Ontario regulations and Board policy, all volunteers who work directly with students are required to produce for the principal of the school a Criminal Background Check.

**ii) Safe Schools**

In accordance with the Ministry of Education's Violence-Free Schools policy 1994, the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board developed its Safe Schools policy. This policy requires every school to have a Code of Behaviour which is to be developed in cooperation with parents and School Advisory Councils. Also, the policy required the implementation of the **Second Step** social skills program for all primary students. This program has since been extended to students in the Junior and Intermediate levels. Under the Safe Schools Act 2000, the Board policy and procedures are being revised to meet new requirements.

Under a school-based services grant funded by the Ontario Women's Directorate through the Ministry of Education, the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board received funds for a program to support child witnesses of wife assault. Workers from the Nipissing Transition House have implemented the VISIONS program in all schools. This program focuses on anger management, conflict resolution and self-esteem issues. The workers from the Nipissing Transition House also provide seminars to students in grades seven and eight related to violence in dating and developing healthy personal relationships.

**iii) Critical Events Response**

Currently a Board committee has developed a staff procedure CERT manual and First Response folder to assist individuals in dealing with crisis situations resulting from unexpected deaths and/or traumatic situations. Orientation and in-service is provided for select Board staff on an annual basis. CERT materials are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. The core CERT committee developed a CERT kit for each school to assist in efficient response to individual school crisis. The core CERT committee consists of Darlene Truchon (CERT Coordinator), Norm Clement (Board Chaplain), Theresa Bitonti (Coordinator of Special Education), Donna Lowe (Behaviour Management Consultant) and Lois David/Nancy Ann Hedican (SJSH Chaplain). CERT has responded to three critical events in 2004-2005. In October 2004, some of the CERT team attended the 'Life and Loss' workshop. School teams were in-serviced in January 2005.

**iv) Crisis Intervention**

To assist staff in working with children who may exhibit out-of-control behaviours, the Board had an individual certified as a trainer for Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Strategies. He has trained educational assistants and other staff in techniques to calm children and keep them safe. Educational assistants have also received in-service/training in The Prevention & Management of Aggressive Behaviour (PMAB).

**v) Rainbows**

Children are a most precious gift, carrying a message of hope and a continuation of life. The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board supports the RAINBOWS program which provides a support group curriculum for children who have suffered significant loss in their lives through death, divorce or other painful transitions. The goal of the support group is to assist the children in expressing and understanding their feelings, accepting what has happened and experiencing a sense of belonging and love.

A registered director coordinates volunteer facilitators who are required to participate in

a six hour training session. The school principal requests the programs for the school through the registered director. Small groups are established through a process of choosing students requiring support with the assistance of parents and according to the directives of the RAINBOWS program.

The facilitator meets with a small group (no more than five) once a week for 12 weeks. Through their personal journals, the children discuss various topics related to the change in their family such as SELF, TRUST, ANGER and FAMILY. The program ends with a "Celebrate Me" celebration for all RAINBOWS participants. In-service for new facilitators is held when numbers are warranted.

**vii) Supervised Alternative Leave for Excused Pupils**

Under regulation 308 of the Education Act, the Board has established a Supervised Alternative Leave for Excused Pupils program to assist students who may require an alternative program to meet their educational needs. (See policy in Appendix 21).

When required, the Board accesses the services of the Futures program and YES Employment Services Inc.

**viii) Tutors in the Classroom**

Under the Ministry of Education "Tutors in the Classroom" program, the Board had four post-secondary students working in local classrooms to assist students in the areas of mathematics, science and computer technology during the 2004-2005 school year. These tutors work with students in the regular program as well as some students identified as having exceptional needs, as directed by the classroom teacher.

**ix) LOTF High School Mentorship Program**

This program provided support for resource teachers and students with learning disabilities at SJSH. This project explored ways to support students with learning disabilities in their understanding of their disabilities, in their ability to self-advocate, and in their use of adaptive technology.