



Research Report

**IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND
REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC) AND
INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)
REVIEW: 2005-06**

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Project Co-ordinator**

**06/07 – 02
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and General Editor**

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Research and Information Services**

Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) and Individual
Education Plan (IEP) Review: 2005-06
Janet O'Reilly

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2005, the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) asked for the support of Research and Information Services to review the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). The purpose of the review was to generate data that could be used to recommend improvements to the process and in so doing, improve services and supports for students with special needs and their families.

Research and Information Services staff worked with the TDSB SEAC Liaison to develop a survey for parents and students (over the age of sixteen). The survey questions were designed to measure how consistently the requirements of *Regulation 181/98 – The IPRC Process* were being implemented, and to gather parent and student feedback about the IPRC process. Research staff also worked with Information Technology staff to extract a list of all students who had participated in an initial IPRC meeting during the 2005-06 school year.

The survey and an accompanying memo were mailed out to the homes of 1,722 students. In total, 1,691 were sent to parents and thirty-one were sent to students over the age of sixteen.

Respondents were given one month to complete the survey and were provided with a self-addressed, postage paid envelope to return their completed survey. About one-third of parents (30%) and one-quarter of students (23%) returned a completed survey. This response rate is low, but not atypical for a mailed survey of this kind. Due to the small number of student responses received (n=7), this report focuses on parent responses. Student responses can be found in the Appendices. The findings are presented below.

Parents most often learned that their child could have an IPRC meeting from their child's teacher (57%). The school principal (45%) and Special Education staff (29%) were also often a source of this information. Principals more often request the IPRC meeting (58%). However, in almost half of the cases the parent/guardian requested the IPRC meeting (42%).

In terms of compliance with the regulation, almost all parents (95%) report receiving notification prior to the initial IPRC meeting inviting them to attend and advising them of the date, time and

location of the meeting. Three-quarters of parents (76%) said they received a copy of the Parents' Guide to Special Education prior to the meeting, and 80% said they received a copy of all documentation to be considered at the IPRC in advance of the meeting. For children placed in a Special Education Program, over three-quarters of parents (82%) received a copy of their child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) within thirty school days. For the latter three areas, there is room for improvement for 20-25% of parents. Where their child was over the age of sixteen, 21% of parents reported that he/she was invited to attend and participate in the IPRC meeting. To ensure the TDSB's compliance with the regulation, all of these areas warrant further examination.

Parent feedback about the IPRC process was very positive. Almost all parents (90%) who received the Parent Guide said it was easy to understand. Almost all parents (90%) said their questions about the IPRC process were answered in a way that was helpful to them, and 92% felt their views and thoughts were respected and listened to during the IPRC meeting. Finally, over three-quarters of parents (84%) felt that their concerns and input were thoroughly considered and reflected in the development of their child's IEP.

This study has two major limitations. First, due to the way data is currently entered into the Student Information System, it was not possible to extract students who had an IPRC meeting *but were not* identified with an exceptionality. These students and their parents represent a segment of the population whose feedback is not reflected in the survey findings. It could be argued that these students and parents would be more likely to be dissatisfied with the IPRC process. This potential bias represents a major limitation of this study and should be considered when interpreting the very positive parent and student feedback received.

Second, the data that could be extracted may not completely reflect all students who had an IPRC meeting and were identified with an exceptionality in the 2005-06 school year. The number of students appears to be lower than would be expected, with perhaps as many as 1,000 students missing (see the Study Limitations section of the report for further information). In addition, the data extraction identified thirty-one students over the age of sixteen, while the survey results suggest the number was five times higher. Finally, a small number of parent

comments suggest that some of the meetings were review meetings and not initial IPRC meetings.

Despite these limitations, the survey findings do suggest some areas for improvement. It is recommended that:

- The department's action plan include strategies for process improvements to ensure that all parents and students receive service consistent with the guidelines of *Regulation 181/98*.
- All current fields in the Student Information System relevant to the IPRC process be reviewed to improve data quality.
- If this survey is repeated, that it be administered onsite to ensure that the complete student and parent population is included.

The Special Education and Support Services Department is planning for a broad review of special education programs and supports. If this survey is undertaken in future it should be part of this larger review and be designed to complement other aspects of the review.

INTRODUCTION

In June 2005, the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) asked for the support of Research and Information Services to review the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB).

The purpose of the review was to generate data that could be used to recommend improvements to the process and in so doing, improve services and supports for students with special needs and their families.

The SEAC had already designed a draft survey to collect feedback from parents/guardians of students and from students aged sixteen and over with special needs who had participated in an initial IPRC meeting during the 2005-06 school year. Specifically, the SEAC asked research staff to:

- Review and provide input to the draft survey;
- Make the survey available for administration to parents/guardians and students who had an initial IPRC during the 2005-06 school year;
- Analyze the data from the survey returns; and
- Prepare a summary of findings in fall 2006.

METHODOLOGY

Research and Information Services staff worked with the TDSB SEAC Liaison to further develop the draft survey. A version was prepared for both parents and students over the age of sixteen. The survey questions were designed to measure how consistently the requirements of *Regulation 181/98 – The IPRC Process* were being implemented, and to gather parent and student feedback about the IPRC process (see Appendices 1 and 2 respectively).

Research staff also worked with Information Technology staff to extract a list of all students who had participated in an initial IPRC meeting during the 2005-06 school year. Due to how the data is currently entered in the Student Information System (SIS), only those students who had participated in an IPRC *and* who were identified with an exceptionality were able to be extracted from the system. There were 1,730 such students (see Appendix 3 for more discussion on Student Information System issues).

On May 1, 2006, the survey and an accompanying memo (see Appendix 4) were mailed to the homes of 1,722 students¹. In total, 1,691 were sent to parents and thirty-one were sent to students over the age of sixteen. Respondents were given one month to complete the survey and were provided with a self-addressed, postage paid envelope to return their completed survey.

Thirty percent (30%) of parents (n=501) and 23% of students (n=7) returned a survey. The response rate is low, but not atypical for a mailed survey of this kind.

¹ Eight students did not have an address entered in the Student Information System. Theoretically this should not be possible as “address” is a required field in the SIS to register a student.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

This study has two major limitations. First, due to the way data is currently entered into the Student Information System, it was not possible to extract students who had an IPRC meeting *but were not* identified with an exceptionality. These students and their parents represent a segment of the population whose feedback is not reflected in the survey findings. It could be argued that these students and parents would be more likely to be dissatisfied with the IPRC process. This potential bias represents a major limitation of this study and should be considered when interpreting the positive parent and student feedback about the IPRC process.

Second, the data that could be extracted may not completely reflect all students who had an IPRC meeting and were identified with an exceptionality in the 2005-06 school year. The number of students appears to be lower than would be expected. As of October 31, 2005, there were 19,766 students in the TDSB with an identified exceptionality. Assuming that most students are identified over a seven year period (Grades 4-10), and that the number of students in 2005-06 (1,730 or 8.75%) reflects an average year, over a seven year period one would only expect to see approximately 12,000 identified students in the system overall which is about 60% of the true total. Therefore, either the 2005-06 year was an anomaly or approximately 40% of the students (1,000) are missing from the data extraction. In addition, the data extraction identified thirty-one students over the age of sixteen, while parent responses suggest the number was five times higher (see Figure 5). Finally, a small number of parent comments suggest that some of the meetings were review meetings and not initial IPRC meetings.

The limitations of the data should be kept in mind when examining the results, which are presented in the following section.

RESULTS

The main findings from the parent survey are highlighted below. As the number of student respondents was very small² (n=7), their results are presented in an appendix (see Appendix 5).

Background Information

How do parents learn about the IPRC process?

Parents most often learn that their child can have an IPRC meeting from their child's teacher (57%). The school principal (45%) and Special Education staff (29%) are also often a source of this information (see Table 1).

TABLE 1 – HOW DID YOU LEARN THAT YOUR CHILD COULD HAVE AN IPRC?		
Source of Information	# Parents	% Parents
Child's teacher	288	57%
School principal	226	45%
Special Education staff	146	29%
Friend	63	13%
Outside agency	66	13%
Family doctor	19	4%

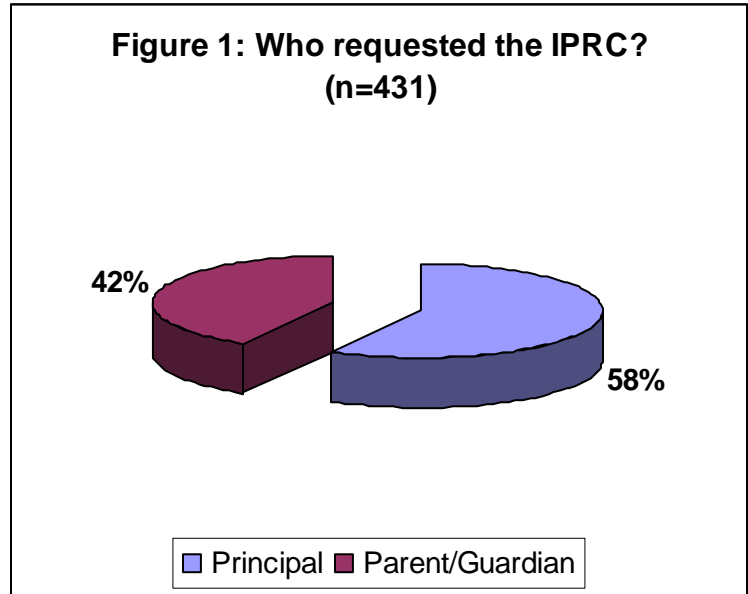
Other sources of information included:

- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) own knowledge (21)
- Psychologist/Educational Testing Consultant (16)
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) is an educator/works in education system (13)
- Guidance staff (6)
- Staff from former school (3)
- Child already on IEP or IPRC'd (3)
- Family (3)
- Another parent (3)

² Comments written on some of the Student Surveys suggest parents may have completed these.
R10(SpecEdSurvey\2005-06\Reports\Identification,PlacementandReviewCommittee(IPRC)
andIndividualEducationPlan(IEP)Review:2005-06)jo.3457

Who most often requests an IPRC meeting?

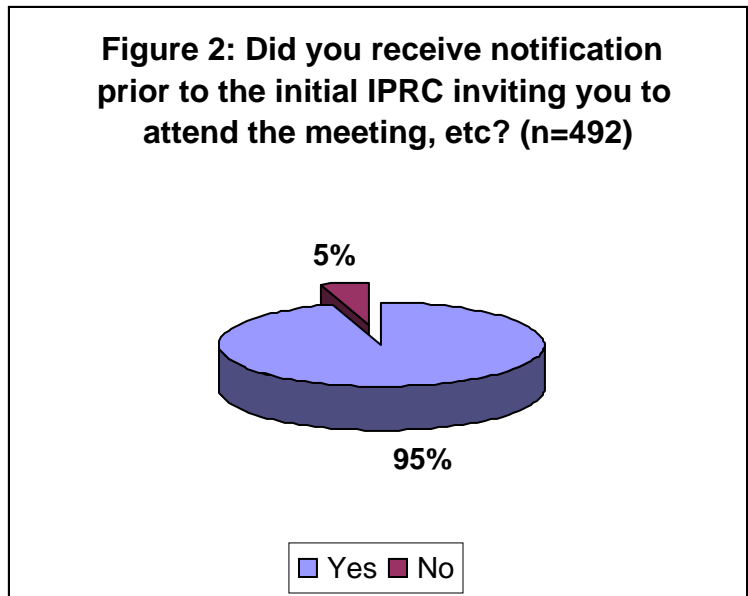
Principals most often requested the IPRC meeting (58%). However in almost half of the cases, the parent/guardian requested the meeting (42%) (see Figure 1).



Compliance with Regulation 181/98

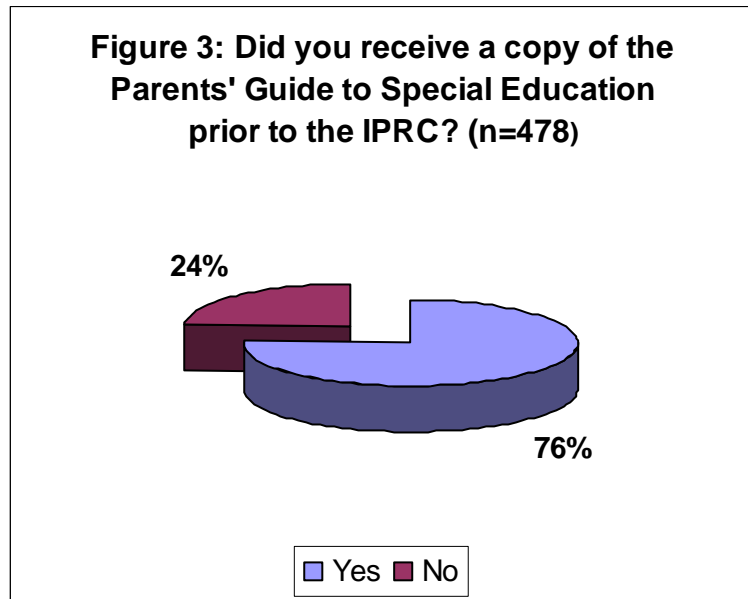
Do parents receive notification prior to the initial IPRC meeting?

Almost all parents (95%) report receiving notification prior to the initial IPRC meeting inviting them to attend the IPRC meeting and advising them of the date, time and location of the meeting (see Figure 2).



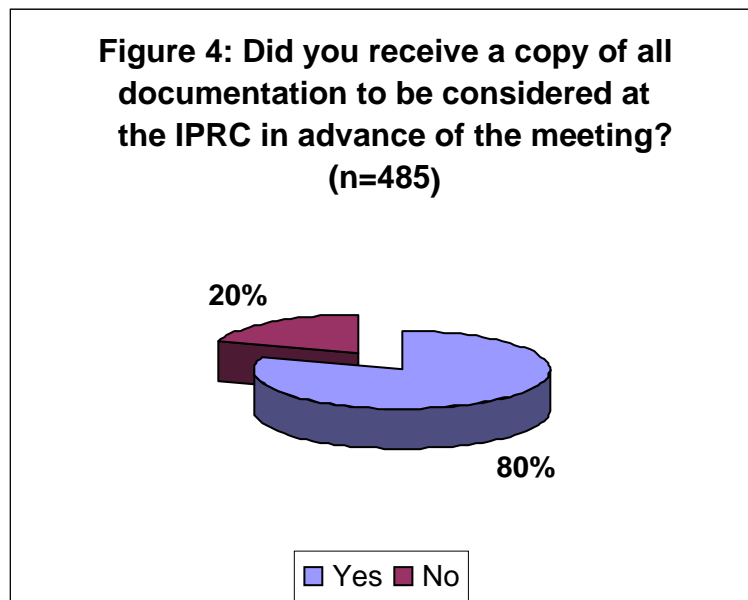
Do parents receive a copy of the Parents' Guide to Special Education prior to the IPRC meeting?

Three-quarters of parents (76%) said they received a copy of the Parents' Guide to Special Education prior to the IPRC meeting (see Figure 3).



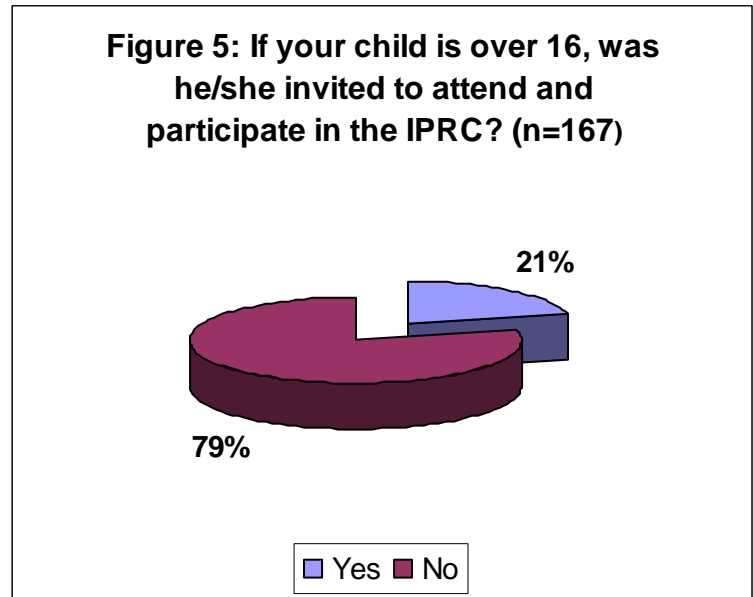
Do parents receive a copy of all documentation to be considered at the IPRC in advance of the meeting?

Just over three-quarters of parents (80%) said they received a copy of all documentation to be considered at the IPRC meeting in advance of the meeting (see Figure 4).



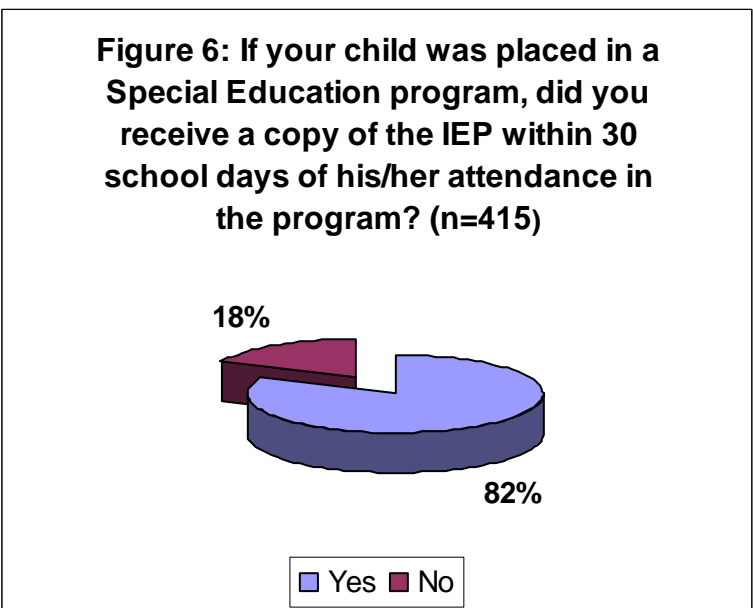
If their child is over the age of 16, is he/she invited to attend and participate in the IPRC?

Less than one-quarter of parents (21%) reported that their child was invited to attend and participate in the IPRC meeting (see Figure 5).



If their child is placed in a Special Education program, do parents receive a copy of their child's IEP within 30 days of their attendance in the program?

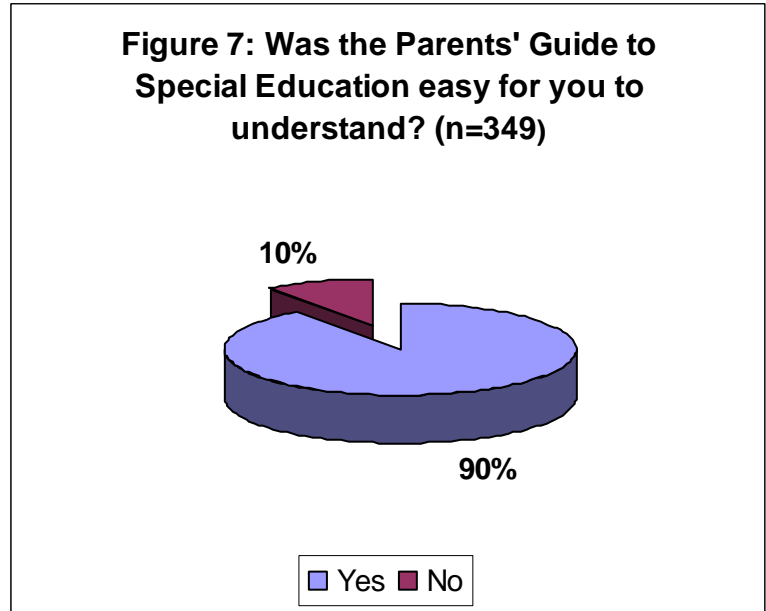
Over three-quarters of parents (82%) received a copy of their child's IEP within 30 school days (see Figure 6).



Parent Feedback Regarding the Process

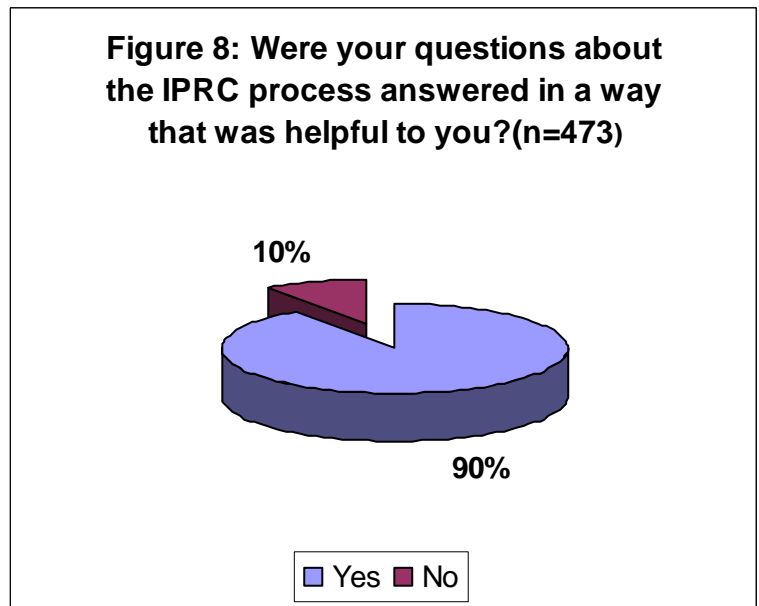
Is the Parents' Guide to Special Education easily understood by parents?

Almost all parents (90%) who received the Parent Guide said it was easy to understand (see Figure 7).



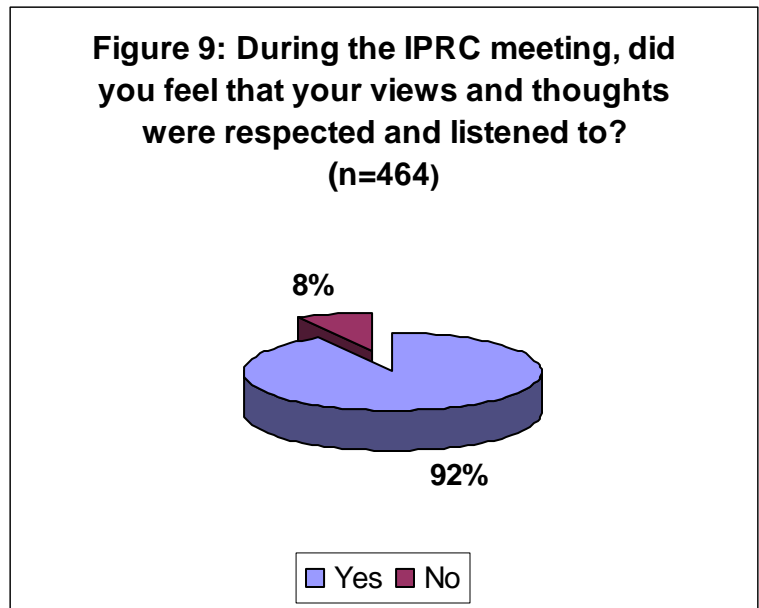
Are parents' questions about the IPRC process answered in a way that is helpful to them?

Almost all parents (90%) said their questions about the IPRC process were answered in a way that was helpful to them (see Figure 8).



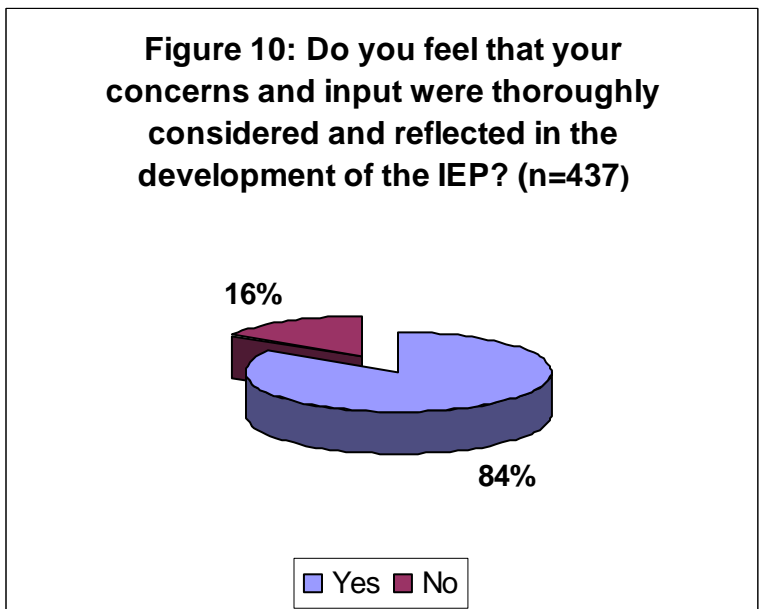
Do parents feel that their views and thoughts are respected and listened to during the IPRC meeting?

Almost all parents (92%) felt that their views and thoughts were respected and listened to during the IPRC meeting (see Figure 9).



Do parents feel that their concerns and input are thoroughly considered and reflected in the development of their child's IEP?

Over three-quarters of parents (84%) felt that their concerns and input were thoroughly considered and reflected in the development of their child's IEP (see Figure 10).



Parents were also provided with an opportunity to provide comments and suggestions and this data was analyzed for themes. Their feedback was most often positive, thanking their child's teachers, schools and the system as a whole for helping their children. A small number of parents however, did use the space to express frustrations with their experience. These parents said that:

- The IPRC process took too long (24);
- Their children should have been assessed earlier in their schooling (19);
- The IPRC meeting was too short and the outcome seemed pre-determined (17);
- There was no follow through and/or follow-up with the IEP (14);
- The IPRC process was unclear (13);
- The IEP was inadequate and did not seem tailored to their child (9).

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- The department's action plan include strategies for process improvements to ensure that all parents and students receive service consistent with the guidelines of *Regulation 181/98*.
- All current fields in the Student Information System relevant to the IPRC process be reviewed to improve data quality. This review should include an analysis of how each field is currently used. It should be noted that there is already a mechanism in place for this as the SAP Customizing Records Management process is moving forward to include the IPRC process.
- If this survey is repeated, that it be administered onsite to ensure that the complete student and parent population is included.

The Special Education and Support Services Department is planning for a broad review of special education programs and supports. If this survey is undertaken in future it should be part of this larger review and be designed to complement other aspects of the review.



Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) And Individual Education Plan (IEP) Review Parent Survey

The Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is reviewing the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) and Individual Education Plan (IEP) processes of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) in an effort to improve the consistency of the process.

This survey has been designed to collect your input regarding the process. Please take a few minutes to share your feedback. The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

Instructions for filling out form: For optimum accuracy, please use a black pen or dark pencil.

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Not Like This--> ~~○~~ ✓

Part A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Please provide the name of the school your child was attending at the time of the IPRC.

School Name

Part B: IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

1. How did you learn that your child could have an IPRC? (Choose all that apply.)

- School principal
- Child's teacher
- Family doctor
- Special Education staff
- Friend
- Outside Agency
- Other, please specify

2. Who requested the IPRC? Principal
 Parent/Guardian

3. Did you receive notification prior to the initial IPRC inviting you to attend the meeting and advising you of the date, time and location of the IPRC?

- Yes
- No

4. If your child is over 16, was he/she invited to attend and participate in the IPRC?

- Yes
- No

Part C: PARENTS' GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. Did you receive a copy of the Parents' Guide to Special Education prior to the IPRC?
 Yes
 No
2. Was the Parents' Guide to Special Education easy for you to understand?
 Yes
 No
3. Did you receive a copy of all documentation (i.e., pertinent assessments, developmental history form, attendance records, report card, students strengths and needs etc.) to be considered at the IPRC in advance of the meeting?
 Yes
 No
4. Were your questions about the IPRC process answered in a way that was helpful to you?
 Yes
 No
5. During the IPRC meeting, did you feel that your views and thoughts were respected and listened to?
 Yes
 No

Part D: INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN

1. If your child was placed in a Special Education program, did you receive a copy of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child within 30 school days of his/her attendance in the program?
 Yes
 No
2. Do you feel that your concerns and input were thoroughly considered and reflected in the development of (before, during and after) the IEP?
 Yes
 No
3. Do you have any comments or suggestions that you would like to share?

Thank you for your feedback!



Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) And Individual Education Plan (IEP) Review Student Survey

(For Students Over Age 16 At Time of IPRC)

The Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is reviewing the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) and Individual Education Plan (IEP) processes of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) in an effort to improve the consistency of the process.

This survey has been designed to collect your input regarding the process. Please take a few minutes to share your feedback. The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

Instructions for filling out form: For optimum accuracy, please use a black pen or dark pencil.

Shade Circles Like This--> ●
Not Like This--> ~~○~~ ✓

Part A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Please provide the name of the school you were attending at the time of the IPRC.

School Name

Part B: IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

1. How did you learn that you could have an IPRC? (Choose all that apply.)

- School principal
- Teacher
- Family doctor
- Special Education staff
- Friend
- Outside Agency
- Other, please specify

2. Who requested the IPRC?

- Principal
- Parent/Guardian
- Yourself

3. Did you receive notification prior to the initial IPRC inviting you to attend the meeting and advising you of the date, time and location of the IPRC?

- Yes
- No

4. Were you invited to attend and participate in the IPRC?

- Yes
- No

Part C: PARENTS' GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. Did you receive a copy of the Parents' Guide to Special Education prior to the IPRC?
 Yes
 No
2. Was the Parents' Guide to Special Education easy for you to understand?
 Yes
 No
3. Did you receive a copy of all documentation (i.e., pertinent assessments, developmental history form, attendance records, report card, students strengths and needs etc.) to be considered at the IPRC in advance of the meeting?
 Yes
 No
4. Were your questions about the IPRC process answered in a way that was helpful to you?
 Yes
 No
5. During the IPRC meeting, did you feel that your views and thoughts were respected and listened to?
 Yes
 No

Part D: INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN

1. If you were placed in a Special Education program, did you receive a copy of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) within 30 school days of attendance in the program?
 Yes
 No
2. Do you feel that your concerns and input were thoroughly considered and reflected in the development of (before, during and after) the IEP?
 Yes
 No
3. Do you have any comments or suggestions that you would like to share?

Thank you for your feedback!

Appendix 3

Student Information System Issues

Currently, the SIS cannot produce a list of all students who have had an IPRC meeting during a given time period. This is because the “meeting date” field is not used exclusively for the purposes of recording an IPRC meeting date. It can represent:

- a) Non-identified students receiving programming;¹
- b) An IPRC meeting where a student was identified with an exceptionality;
- c) An IPRC meeting where a student was identified with an exceptionality but the exceptionality has not yet been entered; and
- d) An IPRC meeting where a student was not identified with an exceptionality.²

As noted in the methodology section of this report, only those students who had participated in an IPRC meeting and who were identified with an exceptionality were extracted from the system (as described in b). This was done by querying for all students with both a meeting date and an exceptionality. It should be noted that this may have missed students as described in c) above. That is, those who had a meeting date and an exceptionality, but where the exceptionality had not yet been entered into the system. It also misses those students who participated in an IPRC meeting but were not identified with an exceptionality as described in d) above. The issue remains unresolved at this time.

¹ The Trillium module will not allow any program data to be entered unless a meeting date is also entered.

² However, it is not possible to separate these students from non-identified students receiving programming.
R10(SpecEdSurvey\2005-06\Reports\Identification,PlacementandReviewCommittee(IPRC)
andIndividualEducationPlan(IEP)Review:2005-06)jo.3457

Appendix 4 – Memo



Special Education and Support Services
5050 Yonge Street, 2nd Floor
Toronto ON M2N 5N8
Tel: 416-393-8926 Fax: 416-393-8959
Adrienne.johnson@tdsb.on.ca

**TO: Parents/Guardians,
Students over the age of 16**

May 1, 2006

**FROM: Karen Gravitis, Executive Officer
School Services: Special Education & Support Services**

RE: IPRC/IEP Survey

Members of the Toronto District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee are requesting a few moments of your time to complete the attached survey which has been developed to determine your level of satisfaction with the Identification, Placement and Review Committee Process (IPRC) in which you were engaged this year.

The survey is intended for parents/guardians and students over the age of 16 who had an initial IPRC during the 2005-2006 school year. Results of the survey will be used to determine if changes to the TDSB IPRC process are required.

This survey is anonymous so you do not need to put your name on the survey. Your feedback will only be presented in a summarized form with the feedback of others who have completed the survey.

For your convenience, a self-addressed, postage paid envelope has been provided. Please return your completed survey in the envelope by June 2, 2006.

Please direct questions or matters requiring clarification to:
Adrienne Johnson at 416-393-8926 or by e-mail to: adrienne.johnson@tdsb.on.ca

Thank you in advance for your participation.



Appendix 5 – Student Survey Results

Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) And Individual Education Plan (IEP) Review Student Survey (For Students Over Age 16 At Time of IPRC)

The Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is reviewing the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) and Individual Education Plan (IEP) processes of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) in an effort to improve the consistency of the process.

This survey has been designed to collect your input regarding the process. Please take a few minutes to share your feedback. The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

Part A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. Please provide the name of the school you were attending at the time of the IPRC.

School Name _____

Part B: IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

1. How did you learn that you could have an IPRC? Choose all that apply.

School principal (1)
Teacher (3)
Family doctor
Special Education staff (2)
Friend
Outside Agency (1)
Other (1), please specify: TDSB employee

2. Who requested the IPRC?

Principal (1)
Parent/Guardian (4)
Yourself

3. Did you receive notification prior to the initial IPRC inviting you to attend the meeting and advising you of the date, time and location of the IPRC?

Yes (7)
No

4. Were you invited to attend and participate in the IPRC?

Yes (5)
No (1)

Part C: PARENTS' GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. Did you receive a copy of the Parents' Guide to Special Education prior to the IPRC?
Yes (6)
No (1)
2. Was the Parents' Guide to Special Education easy for you to understand?
Yes (6)
No (1)
3. Did you receive a copy of all documentation (i.e., pertinent assessments, developmental history form, attendance records, report card, students strengths and needs etc.) to be considered at the IPRC in advance of the meeting?
Yes (5)
No (2)
4. Were your questions about the IPRC process answered in a way that was helpful to you?
Yes (7)
No
5. During the IPRC meeting, did you feel that your views and thoughts were respected and listened to?
Yes (7)
No

Part D: INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN

1. If you were placed in a Special Education program, did you receive a copy of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) within 30 school days of your attendance in the program?
Yes (6)
No
2. Do you feel that your concerns and input were thoroughly considered and reflected in the development of (before, during and after) the IEP?
Yes (7)
No
3. Do you have any comments or suggestions that you would like to share?