



DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ONTARIO NORTH EAST

SPECIAL EDUCATION GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

The Education Act requires that School Boards provide Special Education programs and services for the “exceptional” students. This guide has been designed 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 student as “exceptional”, deciding the student’s placement, or appealing such decisions if you do not agree with the IPRC. If, after reading this guide, you require more information, please contact the principal of your child’s school or visit our website:

<http://www.dsb1.edu.on.ca/program/specialeducation.php>

If you wish to receive this guide in Braille, large print, or audiocassette format, please contact the principal of your child’s school. When used in this guide, the word “parent” includes guardian.

What is an IPRC?

Regulation 181/98 requires that all school boards set up Identification, Placement, and Review Committees (IPRCs). An IPRC is composed of at least three people, appointed by the Board, one of whom must be a principal or supervisory officer of the Board.

What is the function of an IPRC?

An 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 provided by the Ministry of Education and Training);
- decide an appropriate placement for your child; and
- review the identification and placement at least once in each school year, unless waived by the parent.

Who is identified as an exceptional student?

The Education Act defines an exceptional student 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 provided by the Ministry of Education. A copy of these can be made available by the principal of your child’s school.

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 student and include a range of placement options.

What are Special Education services?

Special Education services are the people and resources necessary for developing and implementing the Special Education program.

What is an IEP?

An IEP is an Individual Education Plan developed (in consultation with parents and the student, where the student is 16 years of age or older) for each student who has been identified as exceptional by the IPRC process. The development of an IEP will consider the recommendations of IPRC and Special Education tribunals regarding programs and services. 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 with an Autism Spectrum Disorder or those 14 years and older (except those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness), a plan for transition to appropriate post-secondary school activities, such as work, further education, and community living. The transition plan may require consultation with community agencies and post secondary institutions.

The IEP must be completed within 30 days of your child's placement in the program. The IEP will be placed in the student's Ontario School Record (OSR) and you will be sent a copy.

An IEP may be developed for students who have not been formally identified as "exceptional".

For more information on the IEP, please refer to the *IEP Resource Guide* (at your child's school).

How can parents be involved in developing their child's IEP?

Parents can assist with the development of the IEP by:

- participating in the IEP process;
- advocating for their child's best interests;
- providing information about their child's likes, dislikes, learning styles, interests, and reactions to situations, and about the talents and skills their child demonstrates in the home and community;
- reinforcing and extending the educational efforts of the teacher by providing opportunities to practise and maintain skills in the home; and
- maintaining open communication with the school.

How is an IPRC meeting requested?

The principal of your child's school:

- shall convene an IPRC meeting for your child, upon receiving your written request;

- may (with written notice to you) hold 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 shall 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 and 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 the 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;
- any person you may wish to speak on your behalf or support you and your child; and
- an interpreter, if one is required. (You can request the services of an interpreter through the principal of your child's school.)

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 the meeting 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.

Either you or the principal of your child's school may make a request for the attendance of others at the IPRC meeting. As a courtesy, the Chair of the IPRC should be notified in advance of any representative or additional resource personnel invited to 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 and 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, and as soon as possible after the meeting, the principal will forward to you, for your consideration and signature, the IPRC's written statement 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. They will:

- consider the results of a learning assessment of your child;
- consider (subject to the provisions of the Health Care Consent Act, 1996) any health or psychological assessments of your child conducted by a qualified practitioner if the committee feels 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;
- 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; and
- consider any additional relevant information submitted. All information relevant to determining identification or placement will be shared with parents.

The Committee may discuss any proposal for Special Education programming or services for your child and shall discuss any such proposal at your request (or at the request of your child if the child is 16 years of age or older). Please ask questions and join in the discussion. After all information has been presented and following discussions, the Committee will make its recommendations.

What will the IPRC consider in making its placement decision?

The Committee may discuss any proposal for Special Education programming or services for your child and shall discuss any such proposal at your request (or at the request of your child if the child is 16 years of age or older). Please ask questions and join in the discussion.

Where regular class placement with Special Education services will

- meet your child's needs; and
- be consistent with your preferences;

regular class placement will be considered before placing your child in a Special Education program.

After all information has been presented, and following discussions, the Committee will make its recommendations.

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 or not exceptional;
- where the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional:
 - the categories and definitions of any exceptionalities identified (as defined by the Ministry of Education and Training)
 - a description of your child's strengths and needs;
 - the placement decision; and
 - any recommendations regarding a Special Education program and services;
- where the IPRC has decided that your child should be placed in a Special Education class, the reasons for that decision; and

- the IPRC may consider recommendations regarding Special Education services.

What happens after the IPRC has made its decision?

You will receive a copy of the Statement of Decision.

If you agree with the IPRC decision, you will be asked to sign the Statement of Decision.

If the IPRC has identified your child as an exceptional student, and you have agreed with the identification and placement decision, the Chair of the IPRC will promptly notify the principal of your child's school of the need to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child.

No IPRC decision regarding placement can be implemented unless:

- you agree with the decision; or
- the time limit for filing an appeal has passed.

Once a child has been placed in a Special Education program, can the placement be reviewed?

An IPRC review meeting will be held every school year, unless the principal of the school at which the Special Education program is being provided receives written notice from you, the parent, agreeing not to hold the annual review. You may request an IPRC review meeting any time after your child has been in a Special Education program for 3 months.

What does the IPRC Review consider? What does it decide?

The IPRC review considers the same type of information that was considered for your child's previous identification and placement. In addition, the review will consider the progress your child has made in relation to their IEP. The IPRC will review the current placement and identification and decide whether they should be continued or changed.

How does a parent appeal an IPRC decision?

If you do not agree with either the identification or 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 written Notice of Appeal with the Secretary of District School Board Ontario North East, Box 1020, Timmins, ON P4N 7H7

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.

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 (one of whom is to be selected by you, the parent) who have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal.
- The Chair of the Appeal Board will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but not later than 30 days after the Chair has been selected (unless parents and Board both 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 or older, are entitled to be present at, and to participate in, all discussions.
- The Appeal Board must make its recommendation within 3 days of the meeting. 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, 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.

Appeal action:

Within 30 days of receiving the Appeal Board's written statement, the Board will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations (Boards are not required to follow the Appeal Board recommendation).

Parents may accept the decision of the Board, or 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.

Who should parents contact for more information?

Parents are encouraged to contact the principal of their child's school for additional information. If parents require further clarification, the principal will direct them to the appropriate District School Board Ontario North East personnel.

Parents are also invited to visit the Special Education section of the Board's website:

<http://www.dsb1.edu.on.ca/program/specialeducation.php>