



# The Parents' Guide to Special Education

## The Education Act

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 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 contact your child's principal.

### 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 a special education program?

This is an educational program that is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation; and includes an Individual Education Plan (IEP) containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil.

#### Individual Education Plan (IEP)

All children learn differently. Program modifications may be incorporated into a formalized IEP which focuses on the child's strengths as well as areas of need. The IEP must be developed by the school, in consultation with the parent and must include:

- Specific educational expectations;
- An outline of the special education programs 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 a plan for transition to appropriate post-secondary school activities, such as work, further education and community living.

*The IEP must be completed within 30 days of placement and the principal will ensure that you receive a copy*

#### Exceptional Students

The Education Act defines an exceptional student as one "whose behavioral, 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.

*Initial IPRC: usually principal, system resource personnel and SET  
Review IPRC: principal, SET, and classroom teachers*

#### IPRC Meetings

#### Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)

Regulation 181/98 requires that all school boards set up an IPRC, composed of at least 3 people, one of whom must be a principal or a supervisory officer of the board. The IPRC's role is to:

- 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 on an appropriate placement for your child within the SGDSB: regular class; regular class with assistance to classroom teachers and/or students.

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

### 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 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 and:

- 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 they are 16 years 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.

## Who attends an IPRC and/or IPRC Review?

Regulation 181/98 entitles parents and students 16 years of age or older to be:

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

Either you or the principal of your child's school may make a request for the attendance of others including:

- The principal of your child's school;
- Other resource people such as your child's teachers, 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 (request this service through the school principal).

If you are unable to make the initial meeting, you may contact the school principal to arrange an alternative date or time.

For an IPRC review meeting, let the principal know if 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 written statement of decision noting the decision of identification and placement and any

### What will the IPRC consider?

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 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, and written statement includes:

- 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 description of your child's strengths and needs;
- The IPRC placement decision;
- The IPRC recommendations regarding a special education program and special education services; and
- 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 it 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 & 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 a parent 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 SGDSB.

If you do not agree with the decision after the second meeting, you may file a notice of appeal within 15 days of receipt of the decision (see *Parents' Guide to Special Education, Appeals, Support Organizations and Board Contacts*).

#### Notes:

1. To receive this guide in Braille, large print, or audiocassette format, please contact the board office.
2. When used in this guide, the word parent includes guardian.

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