



UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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Director of Education

Amendment to

SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN

July, 2007

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INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN AMENDMENTS JULY 2007

The amendment report provides a description of specific aspects of Special Education in the Upper Grand District School Board that have altered from the full review submitted in June 2005 as requested in the November, 2006 Ontario Ministry of Education memorandum.

- Report amendments only rather than prepare a report based on a full review
- Opportunity to begin to reflect and discuss how to measure and report on improved achievement for students who receive special education programs and services
- Must consult with SEAC in preparation of the amendment report
- “in the future school boards’ special education plans will be transformed and aligned with other Ministry reporting requirements so that they focus on target setting and improvement planning that is related to student achievement and program effectiveness”

Student Achievement

As requested, a focus was placed on the measurement and reporting of improved achievement for students who are receiving special education programs and services. In particular the 2005-2006 CODE project “7 Up” and the 2006-2007 CODE project “APPT” (Achieve: Programming by Profiling and Targeting).

Consultation with SEAC

The amendment report was discussed at SEAC during the spring of 2007 on March 21, April 11, May 9, and June 20 for consultation purposes as required in Regulation 464/97. The Majority Report from SEAC is included as part of this submission.

Alignment with Board Plans

Education for All (2005) and *Special Education Transformations* (2006) have guided Special Education planning for the 2007-2008 school year. In addition to this amendment report, planning in special education is reflected in other Ministry reporting requirements. The section of this amended plan includes a description of the alignment of special education plans and other board plans.

The amended report will be added to the Special Education Plan, June 2005 along with the associated appendixes and available on the Upper Grand District School Board website.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: CODE PROJECTS

Project 7Up

Project 7Up was a joint Curriculum and Special Education initiative funded by the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat and the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) in the 2005-2006 school year. This project was designed to raise the achievement of students in literacy and numeracy by using research based effective teaching strategies and assessment for learning. The project focused on differentiated instruction and universal design to enable students to access the curriculum.

The project involved seven students in grades one to six from 21 schools with the goal of raising achievement levels in literacy and numeracy. Achievement was measured using seven different methods in literacy, numeracy and social/emotional with a goal of improving achievement from level 2 to level 3. The results of the 7Up project were used to determine which high leverage instructional practices have the greatest impact on student achievement. Lessons learned from this project were also used as a basis for professional development and instructional practices in the 2006-2007 school year.

Achieve: Programming by Profiling and Targeting (APPT)

APPT was the Special Education initiative funded by Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) in the 2006-2007 school year. The intent of the project was to improve student achievement by establishing effective programming that is based on students' learning profiles with specific targets for achievement outcomes. The method used to foster student achievement centred on the creation of meaningful IEPs with the focus on 5 essential "must learns" that were aided by technology enhanced learning. The five essential "must learns" in the areas of reading and writing were developed in the areas of main idea, inferential thinking, making connections, providing detail or supporting evidence, and test taking skills.

This project focused on learners with mild intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities and giftedness at the grades 7 -10 levels in all schools with these grades in the Upper Grand District School Board. Achievement was measured using specific components of Woodcock-Johnson, the use of CASI, and writing assessment with exemplars. Teacher inservice and support was provided through a large group introduction, focused cluster groups, coaching at the school level. An Itinerant Technology Coach facilitated the application of the "must learns" through the technology provided to the schools by this project. Special Education programs involved in the project received Smart Boards, DANAs or resource materials with an emphasis on OSAPAC software.

Special Education Placements Provided by the Board

Foundations Class

- primary class, grades one to three
- designed to provide 2 years of intensive support in skill acquisition and then student is to return to regular class in home school supported by technology where appropriate
- placement should be reviewed annually to determine the need for continuation
- students are integrated into regular classes as appropriate
- when a student enters the program in grade 3, there is a possibility that the student will remain in the program for an additional year to provide two years of intensive support
- it should not be assumed that a student will move from the Foundations class into a Junior class for students with a learning disability; this should only happen in rare cases and with the recommendation and approval of the IPRC Review committee
- where a junior class placement is absolutely necessary, application should be made for placement in a junior class through the placement process
- Specialized Equipment Amount claims (SEA) should be made if appropriate to support the student in regular classes

Junior Learning Disability Class

- grades four to six
- designed to support students in the core academic areas with integration as appropriate
- emphasis on the use of technology to support the learning disability as appropriate
- placement should be reviewed each year to determine the need for continuation
- at the end of Grade 6, or before if deemed appropriate, the student should return to their home school in regular class with resource support for grades 7 and 8
- it should not be assumed that a student will move from the junior class into an intermediate class at their school; this should only happen in rare cases and with the recommendation and approval of the IPRC Review committee (e.g. language impairment exceptionality)
- where an intermediate class placement is absolutely necessary, application should be made for placement in an intermediate class through the placement process
- Specialized Equipment Amount claims (SEA) should be made if appropriate to support the student in regular classes

Junior Mild Intellectual Disability Class

- grades four to six
- designed to support students in the core academic areas with integration as appropriate
- provides curriculum modifications necessary for success for the student identified as MID
- placement reviewed annually
- at the end of grade 6, the student should return to the home school for grades 7 and 8
- if student continues to require a special education class placement at the intermediate level, application should be made for the placement through the placement process
- placement is for the core academic areas with integration as appropriate

Intermediate Special Education Class Placement

- priority is given to students identified as MID at this level
- placement should be made and approved by the Board Placement Committee
- placement is for the core academic areas with integration as appropriate

Special Education Classes for Students With Developmental Disabilities

- program is called the School, Community, Work Transition Program
- three levels of classes exist - Primary/Junior, Intermediate and Secondary
- students enter these classes at any point in the school year if entry has been deemed appropriate by a CST
- the Special Education Consultant facilitates the placement in consultation with the Coordinator of Special Education
- students transition from the Pr/Jr class to Intermediate in the year that they turn 12
- students transition from the Intermediate class to Secondary in the year that they turn 15
- students graduate from the program when they turn 21
- at all levels the program focus is on the development of functional literacy and numeracy skills, communication skills, social skills, and life skills
- the Secondary level program is a non-credit granting program which incorporates a work experience component in the curriculum

Classes for Students Identified as Gifted

- congregated classes are available for students identified as gifted at the elementary level only
- placement in the class is through the Board Placement Committee
- classes are available beginning in Grade 4 and exist until Grade 8
- some classes are multi-grade classes depending upon enrollment

<p style="text-align: center;">SPECIALIZED SUPPORT PROGRAMS: ASPERGER SYNDROME RESOURCE PROGRAM</p>
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Secondary Intensive Resource Support Program (Asperger)

- this is a Secondary program designed to support students with Asperger Syndrome
- students are integrated into regular classes with resource support
- students must be seen to be able to be successful in Applied or Academic courses at the secondary level with accommodations
- students take a reduced course load to provide for resource support as well as a learning strategies course

<p style="text-align: center;">SPECIALIZED SUPPORT PROGRAMS: AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS RESOURCE HUBS</p>

Rationale

The Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Resource Hubs provide the opportunity to provide consistent support based on evidence-based practices to students and staff of schools that have a specified number of students with ASD in the regular class setting (e.g. 5 or more).

Staffing

- Recommendation of .3 Resource Time be allotted in a case manager role
- School assigned educational assistants are assigned to the “hub” to work collaboratively

Professional Development

- Initial inservice provided to small groups of staff (e.g. classroom teacher, Resource Teacher, Administrators, Child and Youth Counsellor) at the school level by ASD Consultants (Erinoaks School Support Program) and Special Education Staff
- 2-3 half day sessions for the initial inservice; Consultant Supported Team (CST) are encouraged to attend one half day session
- Topics include: ASD essential understandings; evidence-based practices and teaching strategies; TEACCH approach; role of anxiety and behaviour (ASD Consultants)
- Role of the educational assistant; home-school connection; IEPs (Special Education Consultants)
- TEACCH training offered to the Resource Teacher in case manager role at each school

Student Support

- CST Support: recommend that a CST be called to discuss the students as a group to prioritize areas of need and familiarize team with student profiles
- Student Resources: kit be provided to schools based on ASD resource kit developed by ASD Consultants (September 06 and 07)
- Space within the school designated for a home base for students; calming space if available

SCHOOL COMMUNITY WORK TRANSITION PROGRAM WORK EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

In an attempt to provide consistent programming throughout our Board's classes for students with developmental disabilities, guidelines have been developed for the work experience portion of our program.

Students under the age of 16 will not have any work placements outside of the school. Younger students may work in the school on a work activity arranged by the classroom teacher.

Students must be 16 years of age to participate in the out of school work experience. In the semester following the student's 16th birthday, the student may begin work placements. One to two work experience placements may occur during each semester. No more than 40% of the school week may be used for work placements for students of this age.

Older students, 18 and up, beginning the semester following their 18th birthday, may have two to three work placements per semester. No more than 60% of the school week may be used for work placements.

The student's final year will be guided by the transition plan for that student. It is important to meet the needs of the graduating student with flexibility, but with a minimum of one day in school per week. Therefore, no more than 80% of the school week may be used for work placements.

Some students who are medically fragile may be exempt from work experience programs. As well, students with severe behaviours may also be exempt from participating in a work experience. The health and safety of our students and others in the community is paramount.

If a student is suspended from school, then he/she is suspended from all school programs and may not participate in work placements during the time of his/her suspension.

Work placement are designed to support educational goals. Teachers are to document the educational goals (1 to 2) for each placement in the student's IEP.

Board Plan and Special Education

The Special Education Department and the Curriculum Department are working toward an aligned Board Plan. The following outline lists specific areas of emphasis for the 2007-2008 school year with an emphasis on collaboration and alignment between the special education and curriculum departments.

Vision, Beliefs and Values

- Implementation of *Education for All* (Beliefs)
- Learning to 18; credit accumulation
- 75% students at levels 3-4 in literacy

Data

- Assessment from Educational Assessment: Brigance, Woodcock Johnson
- PM Benchmarks
- CASI

Goals and Focus

- Use of differentiated instruction to support students in an inclusive setting
- Increased application of technology enhanced learning
- Support the use of “must dos” and “must learns” (narrowed to 5)
- Use of targeted outcomes and explicit instruction according to learners’ profile(IEPs)

Professional Learning

- Phase 2 of IEP application
- Interdepartmental collaboration

Special Education Staffing

- Shift from Special Education support from partially integrated classes to Resource Model
- Increase in ASD Resource Hubs (5) Model
- Increased Special Education staffing at Secondary Level
- Review of support for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (.5 FTE increase)

Special Education Resources and Programming

- Differentiated Instruction for Gr. 7 & 8 ; Resource Model for LD Learner
- Differentiated Instruction for Secondary level (MID focus)
- IEPs JK- Gr 4
- Transition planning for students with DD and ASD
- Gifted education in partially integrated and regular class

Resources

- Specialized Equipment Amount and training
- Resources to support LD learner in the regular class

Home/School/Community Relationships

- Home Use Protocol for Technology Implementation
- Implementation of A Shared Responsibility

School Climate

- Behaviour Management Systems training
- Continued implementation of beliefs from *Education for All*

System Leadership Roles

- Professional Development Series for Resource Withdrawal Special Education Teachers

<p>MAJORITY REPORT SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2007</p>

The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Upper Grand District School Board is pleased to comment on the Board's Special Education Plan and proposed amendments. Most of these comments are general in nature, reiterating ongoing concerns. However, we will also applaud Board innovations and address some specifics. In all, five areas will be commented on.

Declining enrollment in the Upper Grand is, of course, affecting Board funding. This has an impact on special education, one area where there has not been a decrease. More students are entering school with identified exceptionalities, often of a more severe nature than previously seen. In addition, more precise identification (diagnosis) of certain exceptionalities has led to increased recognition of these conditions. This is particularly true of Autism Spectrum Disorder where there has been an increase of approximately 12 in the number of children being diagnosed.

The incidence of multiple disabilities also seems to be on the increase and requiring more extensive intervention. These higher needs present a challenge for the provision of appropriate services to at risk or identified students.

The Special Education Advisory Committee applauds the Board's efforts to maintain the number of Educational Assistants. As need for support increases, schools do their best to support the students who need this service to participate in the educational process. One of the ongoing concerns which parents report to SEAC members is the need for consistency of personnel for those students who have very special needs requiring that EA s be specially trained for the child's communication, physical and/or emotional and behavioural needs. Parents value the work that the EA does to support their child and often forms a bond of trust with this important person. The ideal would be that any change is made with careful planning and training of new staff to the needs of the child.

Policies for EA assignments are of necessity very strict because of budgetary limits and collective agreements but parents continue to ask for flexibility to ensure the best match for their child. The Special Education plan indicates a shift away from self-contained or partially integrated classes to a Resource Model in keeping with the *Education for All* model. Many parents also prefer and choose an integrated model.

SEAC believes that all students with exceptionalities should have an enabling environment that best meets their educational needs. This means the availability of a suitably broad range of placements to best serve all exceptional learners. The range of placements need to be maintained. Support must be ensured so that the student still has access to the expertise of specialized staff regardless of which placement the student is in. The system of team consultation including

specialized support teams does appear to address some of this. The day to day in class support however may be a challenge due budget limitations. There is a need for more support in the intermediate and secondary levels.

Members of SEAC have concerns about the apparent proliferation of special funding. While good work has been accomplished as a result of special project grants, the concern is the one-time nature of these grants and the difficulty of carrying on initiatives once the project time and funding is completed. It is recognized that some projects were of "one-off" nature (e.g. 7Up). SEAC members have no meaningful part in discussions about proposals and would appreciate more consultation. We recognize the tight timelines for some applications but, nonetheless, feel it is important for the Board to consult SEAC in the advisory capacity for which it is intended. SEAC is pleased with the increase in specialized equipment, but is concerned that the Board may not be able to provide sufficient resources to this area. The need for various forms of technological support for exceptional students would appear to be greatly increasing with demand outstripping the funding.

It cannot be stressed too much how important specialized tools are for most identified students. Learning, self-esteem and independence are all fostered through the use of computers, Alpha Smarts, Kurzweil readers, etc. An increased need for these supports especially for learning disabled students will be a challenge.

Finally, we would like to commend the Board for its effort in training staff to meet the needs of exceptional students. Unfortunately, time and resources do not allow for as much training as is needed.

Additional funding and Professional Development opportunities are both welcome and needed. SEAC thanks the Board and staff for a high level of commitment to special education and all the efforts always being made to find creative solutions when resources are stretched.