



UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Parents' Guide to Special Education

The Identification, Placement and Review Committee Process

DRAFT

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What are the Upper Grand District School Board's Beliefs about Special Education?

- We believe all students can learn.
- We value each student's unique ability, individuality, learning style and pace of learning.
- We believe that the growth, the development and the learning of each student is enhanced in the most enabling environment.
- We believe that the inclusion of exceptional students in the school community provides a valuable learning experience for all children.
- We deliver programs which incorporate realistic goals and objectives through individualized teaching and assessment methods.
- We respect the rights of parents to make informed decisions in the best interests of their children.
- We respect, value and encourage collaborative partnerships with parents, community agencies and professionals.
- We provide a diversity of placements and resources which reflect effective programs and strategies for exceptional pupils.
- We recognize the wealth of learning opportunities in the community which assist students with transitions, to offer work experiences and to allow their pursuit of special abilities or talents.
- We value early intervention for all students experiencing difficulties in school and/or needing enrichment.

Introduction

This guide was written for parents to explain Special Education Services before an Identification, Placement and Review Committee meeting is held for your child. If after reading this guide, you require more information, please see the board contact information at the end of this booklet.

Notes:

1. If you wish to receive this parent's guide in Braille, a large print, or in an electronic format, please contact the board at the address or telephone number shown on the last page of this guide.
2. When used in this guide, the word "parent" includes guardian.

More information about Special Education Services can be found on the Upper Grand District School Board website in the [Special Education Report](#).

1. How are special education concerns about students handled?

The first and most important intervention is a discussion between teacher and parents which results in a plan developed to address concerns. The school staff discusses student progress and the results of plans at regularly scheduled In-School Team (IST) meetings. The teacher, parent and/or principal may at any point decide to seek the advice of program consultants available to all schools through a Consultant Support Team (CST) meeting. These meetings involve key staff from the school along with the school's Special Education Consultant, Speech and Language Pathologist, school Psychologist and Counseling and Attendance Services staff. Concerns may be resolved or successfully managed at each stage of the process or there may be recommendations to further investigate the educational needs of the student. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) may be created to support the student. Throughout the process parents are kept informed.

2. What is a special education program?

As 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 pupil.

3. 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.

4. What is an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?

An IEP is:

- a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a student based on assessments that show the student's strengths and needs that affect the ability to learn
- a description of the key features of the program and/or services not a daily plan or outline of everything that will be taught to the student

The special education program may have:

- **accommodations** to help the student achieve the grade level curriculum expectations
- **modifications** from the expectations for the grade level in a particular subject or course
- **alternative expectations**, if required, in program areas not represented in the Ontario curriculum

5. What must be included in the IEP?

An IEP must include:

- students' strengths and needs according to assessment
- an outline of the special education program and services that will be provided
- specific educational expectations, teaching strategies and assessment methods for modified and alternative curriculum
- transition plans for students 14 years and older (except those identified as gifted) to appropriate post-secondary school activities such as work, further education, and community living will be developed

6. 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 persons, one of whom must be a supervisory officer of the board (or designate) or principal. The teams will usually include:

System Level:

1. Principal
2. One other member (Principal/Vice-Principal, Special Education Teacher)
3. Special Education Consultant (Chair)

School Level:

1. Principal (Chair)
2. Special Education Teacher
3. Regular Education Teacher

7. What is the role of the IPRC?

The 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 of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education;
- decide an appropriate Upper Grand District School Board placement for your child:
 - Regular class with Indirect Support
 - Regular class with Resource Assistance
 - Regular class with Withdrawal Assistance
 - Special Education class with Partial Integration
 - Special Education class Full Time
- review the identification and placement at least once in each school year.

8. Who is identified as an exceptional pupil?

The Education Act defines an exceptional pupil as “a pupil whose behavioural, communication, 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.

9. How is an IPRC meeting requested?

The principal of your child's school:

- must request an IPRC meeting for your child, upon receiving your written request;
- or may, with written notice to you, refer your child to 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 must provide you with a copy of this guide and a written statement of approximately when the IPRC will meet.

10. May parents attend the IPRC meeting?

Regulation 181/98 entitles parents and pupils 16 years of age or older:

- to be present at and participate in all committee discussions about your child/yourself;
- to be present when the committee's identification and placement decision is made.

11. 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 where possible;
- 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 of decision noting the decision of identification and placement and any recommendations regarding special education programs and services

12. Who else may attend an IPRC meeting?

Others who may attend the IPRC meeting could include:

- 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,
- your representative – that is, a person who may support you or speak on behalf of you or your child,
- an interpreter; if one is required. (You can request the services of an interpreter through the principal of your child's school).

13. Who may request that others attend?

Either you or the principal of your child's school may make a request for the attendance of others at the IPRC meeting.

14. What information will parents receive about the IPRC meeting?

At least 10 days in advance of the meeting, you will receive 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.

15. 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 review the educational assessment information of your child and consider any information that you have previously submitted about your child or that your child has submitted if he or she is 16 years of age or older. The committee may discuss any proposal that has been made about a special education program or special education services for the child. Committee members will discuss any such proposal at your request, or at the request of your child if the child is 16 years of age 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.

16. What will the IPRC consider in making its placement decision?

If the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a regular class will meet your child's needs and that such a decision is consistent with your preferences, the committee will decide in favour of placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services. 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 (50% or more of the day), it must state the reasons for that decision in its written statement of decision.

17. 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;
- 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's description of your child's strengths and needs;
 - the IPRC's placement decision;
 - the IPRC's recommendations regarding a special education program and special education services;
- where the IPRC has decided that your child should be placed in a special education class, the reasons for that decision.

18. What happens after the IPRC has made its decision?

If you agree with the recommendations about your child's identification and placement, you will be asked to sign the IPRC form. The school will forward you this form following the IPRC meeting. The school will be notified that you agree with the decision and that an IEP will be developed within 30 school days of placement.

19. Once a child has been placed in a special education program, can the placement be reviewed?

Identified students have their exceptionality and placement reviewed by a school level committee once a year. You may request a review IPRC meeting any time after your child has been in a special education program for 3 months.

20. What does a review IPRC consider and decide?

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.

21. What can parents do if they disagree with the 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 notice of appeal with the Director of Education and Secretary-Treasurer, Upper Grand District School Board, 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph, ON N1E 6K2

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 and you do not appeal it, the board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

22. How do I appeal an IPRC decision?

If you disagree with the IPRC's identification of your child as exceptional or with the placement decision of the IPRC, you may, within 30 days of receipt of the original decision or with 15 days of receipt of the decision from the second meeting described above, give written notification of your intention to appeal the decision to the Director of Education and Secretary-Treasurer.

The notice of appeal must:

- indicate the decision with which you disagree; and
- include a statement that sets out your reasons for disagreeing.

23. 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 no later than 30 days after he or she 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 old or over, 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 recommendation in writing, to you and to the school board, providing the reasons for its recommendations.
- Within 30 days of receiving the appeal board's written statement, the school board will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations (boards are not required to follow the appeal board's recommendation).
- You may accept the decision of the school board, or you 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.

24. What special education programs and services are provided by the board?

Students who need special education programs and services usually receive support through the Classroom Teacher and the Special Education Resource Teacher. However, there are other special education placements if additional support is needed. Specialized class programs in Upper Grand District School Board include; Developmental Disability, Learning Disability, Mild Intellectual Disability and Gifted.

25. What are the ministry's provincial and demonstration schools?

The Ministry operates provincial and demonstration schools throughout Ontario for deaf, blind, deaf-blind, and severely learning-disabled students, as well as severely learning disabled students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Residential programs are offered at the schools Monday to Friday, for students who live too far from school to travel daily.

Provincial and Demonstration schools for English-speaking students with severe learning disabilities and for students with learning disabilities in association with ADHD:

Sagonaska Demonstration School
 350 Dundas Street West
 Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
 Phone: 613-967-2830

Trillium Demonstration School
 347 Ontario Street South
 Milton, ON L9T 3X9
 Phone: 905-878-2851

Amethyst Demonstration School
1515 Cheapside Street
London, ON N5Y 3N9
Phone: 519-453-4400

Schools for the Deaf:

Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf
255 Ontario Street South
Milton, ON L9T 2M5
Phone: 905-878-2851
TTY: 905-878-7195

The Robarts School for the Deaf
1515 Cheapside Street
London, ON N5Y 3N9
Phone and TTY: 519-453-4400

Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
Phone and TTY: 613-967-2823

School for the blind and deaf-blind:

W. Ross Macdonald School for the Blind
350 Brant Avenue
Brantford, ON N3T 3J9
Phone: 519-759-0730

Francophone school for the deaf and for those with learning disabilities:

Centre Jules-Leger
281 rue Lanark
Ottawa, ON K1Z 6R8
Phone: 613-761-9300

26. What organizations are available to assist parents?

Many parent organizations are available to provide information and support to parents of exceptional children.

Parent support groups currently represented on the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) are listed below. [Please click here for the Special Education Advisory Committee brochure.](#)

- Ø Association for Bright Children of Ontario (ABC)
- Ø Autism Society of Ontario
- Ø Community Living Guelph Wellington
- Ø Easter Seals Ontario
- Ø FASworld Canada - Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
- Ø Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County
- Ø Parents for Children's Mental Health
- Ø VIEWS for Children Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision
- Ø VOICE
- Ø Members-at-Large Associated with Community Care Access

27. Where can parents obtain additional information?

Additional information can be obtained from the Special Education Department of the Upper Grand District School Board located at 40 Amelia Street, Orangeville, Ontario, L9W 3T8. Telephone: 519-941-6191.