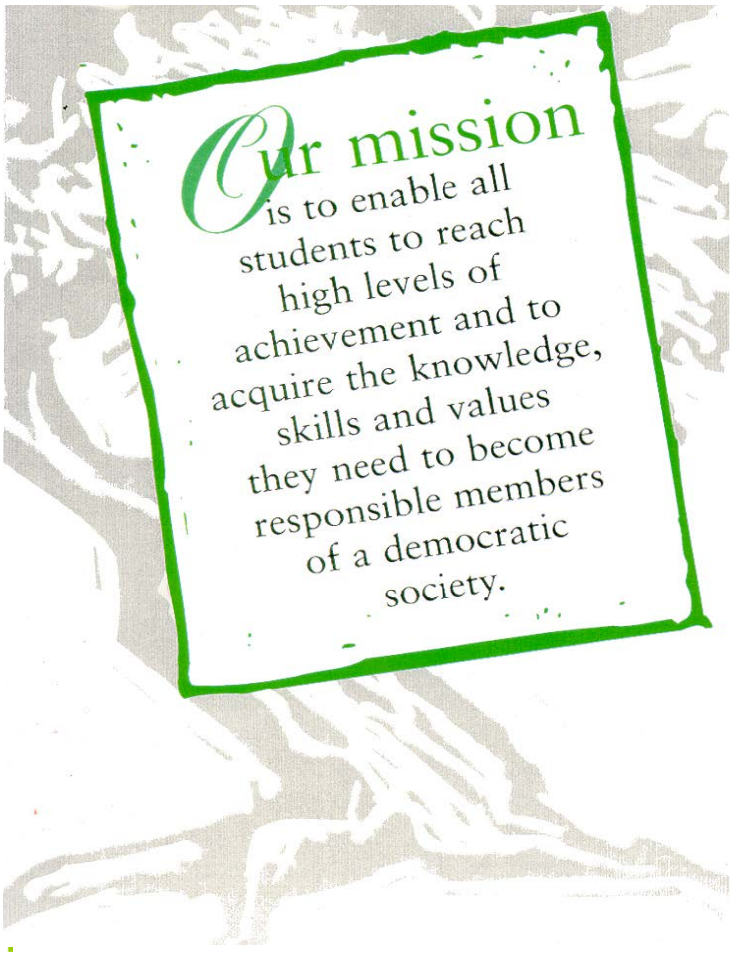
Toronto District School Board

East Office: 140 Borough Drive, Scarborough, Ontario M1P 4N6 (416)396-7968 or (416) -396-9003
West Office: 1 Civic Centre Court, Etobicoke, Ontario M9C 2B3 (416)394-7406 or (416) -394-3763

Serving Our Students, Schools, and Their Communities



we value:

- Each and every student
- A strong public education system
- A partnership of students, schools, family and community
- The uniqueness and diversity of our students and our community
- The commitment and skills of our staff
- Equity, innovation, accountability and accessibility
- Learning environments that are safe, nurturing, positive and respectful

Guiding Principles for the Development of the Toronto District School Board

SPECIAL EDUCATION REPORT

We adhere to the Toronto District School Board Mission and Values Statements.

All exceptional students, their families, and the staff who support them have the right to be treated with respect.

All exceptional students have the right to reach their potential.
A range of placements, programs, and services should be available to meet the needs of exceptional students.

All exceptional students and the staff who support them have the right to a safe, secure, and encouraging environment.

A partnership of students, school, family, and support services is essential to the success of all exceptional students.

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 for parents/guardians 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.

What is an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)?

Students being considered for identification of an exceptionality and special education programs and/or services may be presented to an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC). Regulation 181/98 requires that all school boards set up IPRCs. Resident students enrolled in and attending a TDSB school are eligible for consideration by a TDSB IPRC. An IPRC is composed of at least three persons, one of whom must be a principal or supervisory officer of the board.

What is the role of the IPRC?

The IPRC will:

- Decide whether or not your child should be identified as an exceptional pupil
- 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 placement for your child
- Review the identification and placement at least once in each school year

Who is identified as an Exceptional Pupil?

The Education Act defines an exceptional pupil as "a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, and 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. Categories include Behaviour, Communication, Intellectual and Physical Exceptionalities.

How is an IPRC meeting requested?

The principal of your child's school:

- 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
- Must request an IPRC meeting for your child, upon receiving your written request

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.

May parents/guardians attend the IPRC meeting?

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

- To be present at and participate in all committee discussions about your child
- To be present when the committee's identification and placement decision is made

Who else may attend an IPRC meeting?

- Your representative, that is, a person (e.g., a Special Education Advisory Committee member) who may support you or speak on behalf of you or your child
- 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
- An interpreter, if one is required (You can request the services of an interpreter through the principal of your child's school.)

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.

What information will parents/guardians receive about the IPRC meeting?

Within 15 days of giving you notice of an IPRC, or receiving your request, the principal will provide you with written notification of approximately when the IPRC will meet. At least ten days in advance of the meeting, you will receive 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 or not you will attend.

Before the IPRC meeting occurs, you will receive a written copy of any information about your child that the members of the IPRC have received. This may include the results of assessments or a summary of information.

What if parents/guardians are unable to attend 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 advise the principal of issues that he or she may take forward on your behalf
- 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

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 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 he or she feels 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
- 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.

What will the IPRC consider in making its placement decision?

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
- Be consistent with your preferences

If, after considering all of the information presented to it, 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.

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.

What will the IPRC's written statement of decision include?

The IPRC's written statement of decision will state:

- The IPRC's description of your child's strengths and needs
- 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 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

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. The statement of decision may be signed at the IPRC meeting or taken home and returned.
- If the IPRC has identified your child as an exceptional pupil and you have agreed with the IPRC identification and placement decision, 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.

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
- 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

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 an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?

The IEP must be developed for your child, in consultation with you. It must include:

- Specific educational expectations
- An outline of the special education program and services that will be received
- A statement about the methods for reviewing your child's progress
- For students 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 IEP must be completed within 30 school days after your child has been placed in the program, and the principal must ensure that you receive a copy of it.

Once a child has been placed in a Special Education Program, can the placement 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 parents/guardians, dispensing with the annual review.
- A review IPRC meeting request may be made any time after the child has been in a special education program for three months.

What does a review IPRC consider and decide?

- The IPRC conducting the review will consider the progress your child has made in the special education program and, with your written permission, will reference the IEP.
- 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 parents/guardians 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.
- 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.

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 within 15 days of receipt of the decision from the second meeting described above, give written notification of your intention to appeal the decision to: Director and Secretary Treasurer, Toronto District School Board, 5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, ON, M2N 5N8.

The notice of appeal must:

- Indicate the decision with which you disagree
- Include a statement that sets out your reasons for disagreeing

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 parents/guardians) 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/guardians 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 parents/guardians, 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 ending. 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
- 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 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

What if my child is new to the board and has special needs but has not been to an IPRC?

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is committed to making sure that students with special education needs receive the appropriate programs and/or services as soon as possible when they enter school. Students arriving from outside the TDSB, who may require an intensive support special education program upon enrolment and who are newly registered but not yet attending a TDSB school, may be presented to a Special Education Program Recommendation Committee (SEPRC).

A SEPRC may be convened in cases where the board has information that indicates a student may require special placement upon enrolment. To ensure that children are in the best place to meet their needs from the day they first begin attending a TDSB school, the SEPRC can provide a recommendation for placement in a special education program, which the student may attend until the time at which the formal IPRC process can take place.

The SEPRC / IPRC processes are sequential. The membership of a SEPRC is the same as that of an IPRC. SEPRC recommendations are tracked so that subsequent IPRCs can be planned appropriately. When parents/guardians agree to participate in a SEPRC, they do not forgo their right to request an IPRC once their child is attending school.

What is the function of the SEPRC?

The SEPRC will:

- Determine whether an intensive support special education program would be appropriate for a student upon enrolment in a TDSB school
- For programming purposes, note whether the student meets the requirements for an exceptionality based on TDSB criteria
- Provide a written statement of recommendations outlining the student's strengths and needs and any program/services recommendations of the SEPRC
- Clarify that any recommendation for an intensive support special education program would be for a time period of approximately 3 to 6 months after which an IPRC would be convened, with the exception of students in kindergarten intensive support programs who will generally have an IPRC during their senior kindergarten year in preparation for the primary division.

Is a SEPRC meeting like an IPRC meeting?

The main similarities are:

- You will receive a letter of invitation and will be encouraged to participate in the meeting
- You may invite others to attend with you
- The committee membership is the same

The main differences are:

- The SEPRC process is not based on Ministry Regulation 181/98
- A student may only be referred to a SEPRC by the decision of the home school principal in consultation with parents and members of the School Support Team
- The SEPRC cannot go ahead if parents do not attend
- No decisions about exceptionality and placement are made; only a program recommendation is made
- Parents/Guardians may not appeal the recommendation(s) of the SEPRC

What special education programs and services are provided by the Board?

The Toronto District School Board provides a full range of services to ensure that the needs of exceptional students are clearly identified and that the appropriate educational programs are provided for them, whether in the regular classroom, a specialized setting, or a combination of both.

What organizations are available to assist parents/guardians?

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

Where can parents/guardians obtain information regarding translations?

Contact your school principal for information regarding translators and interpreters.

Where can parents/guardians obtain additional information?

For more information about the services described within this document, please contact the Supervising Principal of Special Education in your local area. Telephone numbers can be found on the front page of this document.

What are the Ministry's Provincial and Demonstration Schools?

The Ministry operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools throughout Ontario for deaf, blind, deafblind, and severely learning-disabled students, as well as those 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.

Demonstration Schools for English-Speaking Students with Severe Learning Disabilities and for Students with Learning Disabilities in Association with ADHD

Sagonaska School 350 Dundas Street West Belleville, ON K8P 1B2 Phone: 613-967-2830	**Trillium School** 347 Ontario Street South Milton, ON L9T 3X9 Phone: 905-878-8428	**Amethyst School** 1090 Highbury Avenue London, ON N5Y 4V9 Phone: 519-453-4408

Schools for the Deaf

Ernest C. Drury School 255 Ontario Street South Milton, ON L9T 2M5 Phone: 905-878-2851 TTY: 905-878-7195	**Robarts School** 1090 Highbury Avenue P.O. Box 7360, Station E London, ON N5Y 4V9 Phone and TTY: 519-453-4400	**Sir James Whitney School** 350 Dundas Street West Belleville, ON K8P 1B2 Phone and TTY: 613-967-2823

School for Students who are Visually Impaired, Blind and Deafblind

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

Francophone School for the Deaf and for Students with Learning Disabilities

Centre Jules-Léger
281 rue Lanark
Ottawa, ON K1Z 6R8
Phone: 613-761-9300
TTY: 613-761-9302 and 761-9304

Provincial Schools Branch, Ministry of Education

Provincial Schools Branch
255 Ontario Street South
Milton, ON L9T 2M5
Phone: 905-878-2851
Fax: 905-878-5405