



## SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 50 HAIDA GWAI BOARD POLICY MANUAL

**Policy C.1 (Formerly 3000)**

**Policy: Learning Assistance**

**Date Passed: November 2014**

### **POLICY**

The Board of Education confirms its commitment to the principle of inclusion by which students with special needs participate fully in the educational process and are placed in regular classrooms with students who do not have special needs, except when other educational programs or settings are appropriate, taking into account the best interests of the student with special needs and other students. The Board strongly encourages the provision of a learning environment that is safe and inviting for all students.

The Board believes that the development of an Individual Education Plan (hereinafter referred to as an "IEP") for each student with special needs is the best means of providing a quality education. The Board supports planning processes that require meaningful consultation with parents or guardians, educators, person in the community, and, where appropriate, the student. Parents/guardians are recognized as valued contributors to support the needs of their child. The Board encourages parents/guardians to participate in processes related to their child.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

The process described below outlines the key responsibilities of district personnel and describes in a sequential manner, guidelines and practices which are designed to ensure that the necessary support for the student is provided at each stage of the process.

The process may not apply in its entirety in all cases. Often, school based support will have a positive result, eliminating the need for a referral to the district. Also, if a student registers with documented learning challenges and an identification which appears to meet the Ministry criteria, the case may be presented directly to the district screening committee.

#### **1. Key Responsibilities of District Personnel:**

##### **a) School Principals**

- Schools should be organized in ways which allow flexibility in order to accommodate students with special needs. School principals should ensure that teachers receive the information they need to work with students with special needs who are assigned to them, and that the school is organized to provide some first-line resource support on-site.
- School principals should ensure that a school-based team is operational in the school and facilitate the collaborative efforts of the team members in meeting the special needs of students.

##### **b) Teachers**

- Teachers will often be the first to identify the need for additional support
- The teacher responsible for a student with special needs designs, supervises and assesses the educational program for that student. Where the student requires specialized instruction, this is best done in consultation with resource personnel available, with the parents and with the student.
- Where the student's program involves specialized instruction by someone other than the classroom teacher, collaborative processes are required to make best use of the expertise of the specialists



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available to assist and to ensure a coordinated approach. The Learning Resource Teacher is contacted.

- In secondary schools, where several teachers may be involved in the student's program, coordinated planning is especially important.

### c) Learning Resource Teachers

- Learning resource teachers coordinate and consult with the school based team in the development and implementation of Student Learning Plans and Individual Education Plans.
- In consultation with the school based team and the classroom teacher the learning resource teacher documents and evaluates student's progress.
- The learning resource teacher coordinates requests by the school-based team for additional support services involving other school personnel, community or regional services/agencies.

### d) Education Assistants

- While teachers are expected to design programs for students with special needs, education assistants play a key role in many programs for students with special needs, performing functions which range from personal care to assisting the teacher with instructional programs. Under the direction of a teacher they may play a key role in implementing the program.
- While education assistants may assist in the collection of data for the purpose of evaluating student's progress, teachers are responsible for evaluating and reporting on the progress of the student to parents.
- In cases where education assistants perform health-related procedures, they should be given child-specific training by qualified health professionals.

### e) The District Student Services

- The District Student Services Principal or Senior Administrator reviews referrals from the school based team and provides resources, including district specialists, where appropriate.
- The District Student Services Principal or Senior Administrator consults with the school-based team on whether a case should be referred to the district screening committee for designation as a student with special needs.

## 2. Classroom – Identification and Support

With the support of the school principal, classroom teachers:

- Conduct careful observations of any apparent learning challenges;
- Consider the questions or concerns of parents and of the student;
- Consider the need for a classroom based assessment and Prescribed Learning Outcomes;
- Adapt the curriculum, environmental conditions and learning opportunities as necessary;
- Where concerns are continuing, consult relevant school based support personnel such as the Learning Resource Teacher;
- If there are continuing concerns after implementation of any changes based on the above consultation, and it appears that additional support is necessary, consult with the School Student Services Team.

### Consultation with the School Student Services Team



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The School Student Services Team usually includes:

- The School Principal;
- The learning resource teacher;
- Other persons who can provide relevant advice, including other teachers, medical personnel, psychologists, speech and language pathologists and District Student Services Department personnel. The composition of the team may vary from school to school and between the elementary and secondary levels. A request for consultation with the team may be made by the classroom teacher, a parent of the student or another member of the school staff.

The team:

- Consults with the classroom teacher regarding the need for additional support and a student learning plan;
- Co-ordinates the development and implementation of the plan with the school based team (see below).

### **Implementation of School Based Team's Recommendations**

The school-based team generally includes the student's parent or guardian, the classroom teacher, a support teacher (e.g. learning resource, a school principal, and other persons who can provide relevant advice).

The School Based Team:

- Is coordinated by the learning resource teacher who assists the classroom teacher;
- Identifies the student's strengths and needs;
- Recommends appropriate educational and behavioral strategies and support;
- May develop a student learning plan;
- Monitors, documents and evaluates the student's progress;
- Considers whether additional assessments or support services are necessary, and, if so, initiates a referral for District Services through a district student tracking form completed by the learning resource teacher;
- May recommend the need for additional support services involving other school personnel, community or regional services/agencies.

### **Referral for District Services**

- The learning resource teacher completes the district tracking form to request district services.
- The tracking form will be referred to the appropriate district principal or administrator responsible for student services.
- District specialists may work directly with the student in consultation with the school based team.

### **Referral to District Psychologist for Designation as a Student with Special Needs**

- If the Ministry criteria for designation appears to be met, the learning resource teacher should complete the district student tracking form.
- The district psychologist will review the form and relevant documentation from the school to determine whether the student meets the Ministry criteria for designation as a student with special needs.



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- If a student is designated as a student with special needs, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed. In some cases the IEP may involve the use of an Education Assistant to assist the teacher in the implementation of the plan. Appendix I contains guidelines on IEPs.

### **3. Administration**

#### **a) Financial Responsibilities**

The Board of Education assumes financial responsibility for Special Education in the school district. The principle of reasonable accommodation will be applied, taking into account the demands placed on the Board in providing programs.

#### **b) Budgets and Planning**

- The planning of budgets for special education programs in the district, prior to Board approval, will be the responsibility of the Secretary-Treasurer, the Superintendent of Schools and the Principal or Senior Administrator of Student Services.
- The planning of budgets for distribution to schools is the responsibility of the Principal or Senior Administrator of Student Services and will be made in consultation with representative(s) from district staff and school-based principals.
- The planning of budgets for programs within the schools will be the responsibility of principals in each school.
- The provision of funds by other ministries and agencies to support the education of students with special needs in the district, will be encouraged and coordinated by the Principal or Senior Administrator of Student Services

#### **c) Physical Facilities**

Appropriate physical facilities will be provided for students with special needs as quickly as school buildings can be modified, with the approval of the Ministry of Education, as needed. Students' special needs will be taken into consideration in the design of new school buildings and in the renovation of existing buildings.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Individual Education Plans (IEPs)**



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The Ministry of Education Manual on Special Education Services and Ministerial Order 150/89 provide for the following guidelines on IEPs:

### **What is an IEP?**

An IEP is a documented plan developed for a student with special needs that describes individualized goals, adaptations, modifications, the services to be provided, and includes measures for tracking achievement.

It serves as a tool for collaborative planning among the school, the parents, the student (where appropriate) and, as necessary, school district personnel, other ministries and/or community agencies.

Typically an IEP includes individualized goals with measurable objectives, adaptations and/or modifications where appropriate, the strategies to meet these goals, and measures for tracking student achievement in relation to the goals. It also documents the special education services being provided as these relate to the student's identified needs.

Some students require small adaptations and minimum levels of support; other students with more complex needs may require detailed planning for educational modifications, adaptive technologies, or health care plans. The IEP will reflect the complexity of the student's need and, accordingly, can be brief or more detailed and lengthy.

### **What is an IEP for?**

The development of an IEP serves a number of purposes:

- It formalizes planning decisions and processes, linking assessment with programming;
- It provides teachers, parents and students with a record of the educational program for an individual student with special needs, and serves as the basis for reporting the student's progress;
- It serves as a tool for tracking individual student learning in terms of agreed-upon goals and objectives;
- It documents the relationships between any support services being provided and the student's educational program;
- It provides parents and students with a mechanism for input into the individualized planning process.

IEP documentation provides evidence that:

- The parent and/or student were offered the opportunity to be consulted about the preparation of the IEP;
- The student is receiving learning activities in accordance with the IEP;
- The IEP is reviewed at least once each school year.

### **What must an IEP contain?**



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The IEP document does not describe every aspect of the student's program. It makes reference to those aspects of those aspects of the education program that are adapted or have been modified, and identifies the support services to be provided. IEP learning outcomes are often described as goals and objectives.

An IEP must have one or more of the following:

- The goals or outcomes set for that student for that school year where they are different from the learning outcomes set out in an applicable educational program guide; or
- A list of the support services required to achieve goals established for the student; or
- A list of the adaptations to educational materials, instructional strategies or assessment methods.

An IEP should also include the following:

- The present levels of educational performance of the student;
- The setting where the educational program is to be provided;
- The names of all personnel who will be providing the educational program and the Support services for the student during the school year;
- The period of time and process for review of the IEP;
- Evidence of evaluation or review, which could include revisions made to the plan and The tracking of achievement in relation to goals;
- Plans for the next transition point in the student's education (including transitions Beyond school completion).

Where the goals established for the student are different from the expected learning outcomes for the age or grade, these should:

- Be set at a high but attainable level to encourage parents, students and staff to hold high expectations;
- Be accompanied by measurable objectives developed for each goal to enable IEP review and evaluation.

The IEP may be brief, or it may be more detailed and complex, depending on the complexity of the student's needs. For example, the IEP for student who needs examinations with adaptations and support with note taking can be relatively simple. In contrast, a student with multiple disabilities who requires the involvement of a variety of professionals, adaptive technologies and major curricular modifications will require a much more extensive IEP.

### **The Role of Parents/Guardians**

Parents/guardians are recognized as valued contributors to collaborative processes to support the developmental and learning needs of their child. As such parents/guardians:

- Are included as members of the school-based team;
- Authorize recommendations for student services and additional support when they sign the district services tracking form;
- Have a right to privacy. Information pertaining to them, and their child, will be discussed privately by educators responsible for the student's program on a need-to-know basis. Confidential material will be released only with the written consent of the parents/guardians.



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- May object to assessment reports and/or recommendations regarding their child; parents/guardians are entitled to provide written comments to be attached to reports and/or the student tracking form;
- Are entitled to have access to information in their child's file. This information can be reviewed by arrangement with an administrator, in the presence of a counselor or teacher who is qualified to interpret the contents of the file. Notwithstanding this regulation, student files, permanent records, and other related student information are the property of the Board;
- May object to assessment, documentation, or confidential reports in the student's file. If they deem such materials to be inaccurate or harmful, parents/guardians may request that such documents be deleted from the child's school file. Upon this parental request, the Superintendent will review the report with the author of the district report, and consider the objections. If the author agrees, the comments/paragraphs in question will be deleted. If the author of the report deems the report to be accurate, the report will remain unchanged and placed in the central student services file.