



**WINDSOR-ESSEX CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

A Parent's Guide



to  
Special Education

*"Learning together in faith and service"*



# A Prayer...

*Lord Jesus - teach us solidarity!  
Teach us to serve you as you deserve.*

*To give and not to count the cost...*

*To struggle and not to mind the  
inconvenience...*

*To toil and not to seek for rest...*

*To labour and not to seek reward...*

*Except that of knowing that we do your will.*

Amen!

## ***MISSION STATEMENT:***

In keeping with the virtues of our Catholic Faith, we are called to know every student, to inspire them to follow the example of Jesus, and empower them with the knowledge and skills they need to live purposeful, meaningful lives.

## ***VISION:***

Following the teachings and examples of Jesus Christ, our vision is a partnership consisting of students, parents/guardians, teachers and other professionals.

- By including every student in age appropriate settings as unique and capable learners;
- Creating an atmosphere of trust and respect;
- Facilitating full participation as contributing members of the school family;
- Fostering friendships in school and community; and
- Developing confidence and self-esteem through shared responsibilities.

# Philosophy of Special Education:

The Special Education Philosophy of the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board is to provide meaningful, student-focused educational opportunities for all students. We will shape our direction using the guiding principles of our Catholic faith to create a sense of belonging and acceptance. Each student will be included in the typical classroom environment, supported by parents/guardians, peers, staff and other members of the school family. We believe that all students should be empowered to become independent, active members of their community, and a place where every person contributes and benefits from living and learning together.



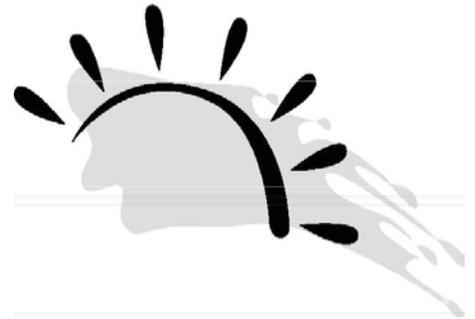
## ***What is a Special Education Program?***

A Special Education Program is an educational program based on the results of continuous assessment and evaluation. It includes an Individual Education Plan containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the student.

## ***What are Special Education Services?***

Special Education Services are the facilities and resources, including equipment and support personnel needed to create a special education program. These could include:

- intervention/consultation with a psychologist, behaviour specialist, speech and language pathologist, special education coordinator;
- academic assistance from a learning support service teacher ( L.S.S.T.);
- physical support from an educational assistant; or
- assistive devices



## **Who decides if a child will receive Special Education Services?**

This is a cooperative decision among the parents, classroom teacher, principal and the LSST. The process begins with a parent/teacher meeting to discuss the strengths and needs of the student. An individual education plan may be developed as a result of this meeting.

## **What is an Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.)?**

The Individual Education Plan is an educational road map for a student. Each student's plan outlines program modifications and necessary support services. The education team will use classroom observation, educational assessment tools and other professional evaluations to complete the I.E.P. The classroom teacher works with parents, the LSST, and the student to identify the student's strengths and needs, and to set goals.

# AN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN MUST CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING:

- specific educational expectations;*
- an outline of the special education program and program modifications that will be received by the student;*
- a statement about the methods by which the student's progress will be reviewed; and*
- for students 14 years and older (except those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness), a plan for the transition to appropriate post-secondary school activities, such as work, further education, and community living.*

Parents as important partners, are encouraged to actively participate in the development of the individual education plan and to sign it once completed.

## ***What happens once an Individual Education Plan is in place?***

The Individual Education Plan will evolve as a student grows and matures. Within each term, a student's goals and needs are reviewed and discussed with parents. Regular communication and review with the parents are essential to the success of the individual education plan.

## ***Will my child always need an Individual Education Plan?***

Some students may develop strengths and acquire skills allowing them to continue their education without an individual education plan. The purpose of an individual education plan is to provide a structure for defining and reviewing the needs of the student on a regular basis and determining if modifications are required.

## ***What if my child needs more help?***

Sometimes a formal assessment (psychological or further academic testing) is required to determine a student's specific needs. An I.P.R.C. may be considered as a result of these assessments.

## ***What is an I.P.R.C.?***

Regulation 181/98 requires that all school boards develop an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.). In the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board the I.P.R.C. will consist of the Superintendent of Special Education or a designate (Special Education Coordinator) and a team of two principals.

## ***What is the role of the I.P.R.C.?***

The Identification, Placement and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.) will:

- *decide whether or not a student should be identified as exceptional;*
- *identify areas of the student's exceptionality, according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education;*
- *decide on program modifications or in some cases, if placement is necessary; and*
- *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, 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.

The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board believes the needs of the majority of students with exceptionalities can be met in an age appropriate regular classroom with a modified program and support services.

## ***How is an IPRC meeting requested?***

The school principal must request an I.P.R.C. meeting upon receiving a written request from the parents. The principal may also request an I.P.R.C. when the classroom teacher or LSST believe that the student requires extraordinary support to succeed in school. The parents must be informed of this request in writing.

The principal must provide the parents with a copy of this guide and a written statement of approximately when the I.P.R.C. Committee will meet, within 15 days of receiving a request or giving notice.

## ***May parents attend the IPRC meeting?***

Regulation 181/98 entitles parents and students 16 years or older to be present at and participate in all committee discussions about the student and to be present when the committee's identification and placement decision is made.

## ***Who else will be at the IPRC meeting?***

The LSST, a principal / vice-principal employed by the board, and a board appointed delegate (Special Education coordinator) will be present at the I.P.R.C. meeting.

## ***Who else may attend an IPRC meeting?***

The following are also able to attend:

- *other resource people, at the discretion of the principal, such as the psychologist, speech and language pathologist, or an agency representative who may provide further information or clarification;*
- *a representative for the parents - that is, a person who may support the student or parents, or speak on their behalf; and*
- *an interpreter, if one is required. (An interpreter can be requested through the school.)*

**Either the parents or the school principal may make a request for the attendance of others at the I.P.R.C. meeting.**

## **What information will parents receive about IPRC meeting?**

At least 10 days in advance of the meeting, the school principal will provide to the parents, this information booklet and an invitation to attend the meeting as an important partner in considering their child's placement. This letter will include the date, time and place of the meeting and will ask the parents to confirm their attendance.

Before the I.P.R.C. meeting occurs, parents will receive an I.P.R.C. information package. This package will include:

- *I.P.R.C. cover sheet (application form);*
- *the most recent individual education plan;*
- *the latest report card;*
- *samples of student work, teacher observations and anecdotal notes; a summary of prior school information including student strengths, weaknesses, accommodations put in place, and LSST and support staff intervention;*
- *any relevant assessment/reports from board support staff (psychology, speech and language, social work), as necessary; and*
- *any assessments/reports from outside agencies, medical personnel, therapists, etc. received with the parent's permission.*

## **What if the parents are unable to attend the scheduled meeting?**

If the parents are unable to attend the scheduled meeting time an alternate date or time may be arranged through the school principal. If a parent does not attend the meeting, the principal will forward the I.P.R.C.'s written statement of decision to the parents.



## ***What happens at the IPRC meeting?***

During the meeting, the principal, the LSST and/or classroom teacher, and parents will present the student's profile and needs. The student (if 16 years or older) may also outline his/her own needs and concerns. If necessary, any other support staff in attendance will review the results of their own intervention. The I.P.R.C. may request a health or psychological assessment if such is required to assist with a correct identification or placement decision.

Parents are encouraged to ask questions and join in the discussion. After all information has been presented and considered, the committee will make its decision.

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

The I.P.R.C.'s written statement of decision will state:

- *whether the committee has identified the student as exceptional;*
- *where the committee has identified the student as exceptional,*
  - the categories and definitions of any exceptionalities identified as they are defined by the Ministry of Education;*
  - the I.P.R.C.'s description of the student's strengths and needs;*
  - the I.P.R.C.'s placement decision (if any); and*
  - the I.P.R.C.'s recommendations regarding a special education program and the necessary support services;*
- *the student's placement and the reason for the decision.*

## ***What happens after the IPRC has made its decision?***

Once the parents have reviewed and agree to the identification and placement decisions made by the I.P.R.C., they will be asked to sign and return the recommendation. If the student has been identified as exceptional and the parents have agreed to the identification and placement, the school principal will ensure that a new individual education plan is completed, if necessary. This must be completed and sent to the parents within 30 school days after the I.P.R.C.'s determination.

An I.P.R.C. Review meeting will be held annually to decide whether the original identification and placement decisions should be continued or whether modifications should be made. A parent may request this review any time after the student has been in a special education program for 3 months.

## **What can parents do if they disagree with the I.P.R.C.'s decision?**

If parents do not agree with either the identification or placement decision made by the I.P.R.C., they may:

- *within 15 days of receipt of the decision, request that the I.P.R.C hold a second meeting to discuss concerns; or*
- *within 30 days of receipt of the decision, file a notice of appeal with the Director of Education*

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- *any notice of appeal must indicate the decision with which they disagree and their reasons for disagreement.*

If parents do not agree with the decision after the second meeting, they may file a notice of appeal within 15 days of receipt of the decision.

If the decision is not appealed within the time provided, the principal will be instructed to implement the I.P.R.C.'s decision.

## **What happens in the appeal process?**

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- *The board will establish a special education appeal board to hear the appeal. The appeal board will be composed of three people (one of whom is to be selected by 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 I.P.R.C. and may interview anyone who may be able to contribute information about the matter under appeal.*
- *The parent and the student (if 16 years or older) 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.*

# ***The appeal board may:***

***agree*** with the I.P.R.C. and dismiss the appeal;

***disagree*** with the I.P.R.C. and refer the matter back to the I.P.R.C., stating the reasons for disagreement;

*or*

***set aside*** the determination of the I.P.R.C. that the student is an exceptional student.

These recommendations will be in writing, giving reasons behind the decision, and will be provided to both the parents and the Director of the school board.

Within 30 days of receiving the appeal board's written statement, the Director will submit it to the school board, for acceptance or rejection, and inform the parents and the I.P.R.C. of the board's decision.

Parents may accept the decision of the school board, or may appeal to the Special Education Tribunal. A hearing must be requested in 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.



## **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Special Education Branch  
Ministry of Education  
Mowat Block  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1L2  
Tel. (416) 314-2333  
1-877-699-5431

### ***Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)***

According to Regulation 464/97 “Every district school board shall establish a special education advisory committee that shall consist of ... one representative from each local association that operates locally within the area of jurisdiction of the board, as nominated by the local association and appointed by the board...”

Under this regulation: “A special education advisory committee of the board may make recommendations in respect of any matter affecting the establishment, development and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the board.”

As required by the above regulation, the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board established a Special Education Advisory Committee representing the local associations. At the time of printing of this manual the following associations were represented. Please feel free to call the local associations for more information.

# Associations Represented on SEAC

*The following associations are currently being represented on the Special Education Advisory Committee (S.E.A.C.) to the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board.*

<b>Autism Ontario – Windsor-Essex</b>	<b>519-250-1893</b>
<b>Community Living Essex County Community Living Windsor</b>	<b>519-776-6483 519-974-4221</b>
<b>Easter Seals Ontario</b>	<b>519-944-0044</b>
<b>Inclusion Action In Ontario</b>	<b>877-681-5128</b>
<b>Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex County</b>	<b>519-252-7889</b>
<b>Up About Down – Windsor-Essex Down Syndrome Association</b>	<b>519-973-6486</b>
<b>VIEWS for the Visually Impaired</b>	<b>519-984-8406</b>



**Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board**

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