EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS

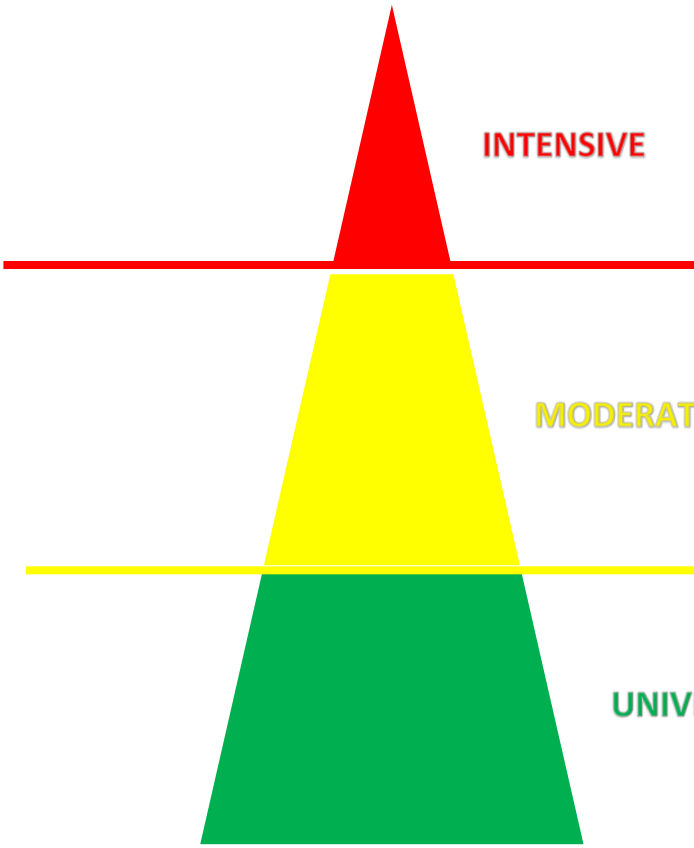
In response to student assessment results and student learning, an emphasis has been placed on the Response to Intervention framework, with a focus on early intervention strategies and programs to assist students in achieving their potential. School based literacy, numeracy and writing assessments assist teachers in recognizing the need for specific programming needs. Schools also participate in examination of student achievement information such as reading levels and writing samples to set specific preferred goals for student achievement.

As part of this process, using assessment information that related to students with special education needs is a focus. Information from these assessments is used by classroom teachers, Instructional Leads, and special education resource teachers to provide specific instruction that help students to work on areas that would improve their literacy skills.

Working with professional assessors such as Speech Language Pathologists, Psychoeducational Consultants and Psychologists on how to make the report recommendations as relevant as possible to current educational methods is a priority. Emphasis is also placed on making the best use of information from classroom based assessments as one of the best ways to help students learn.

The goal of educational assessment is to improve student learning and achievement. Assessment is a daily part of classroom programs, and regular classroom assessment strategies will provide an important range of information on a student's learning needs.

For students who are experiencing learning difficulties, additional assessment beyond the classroom and/or school is sometimes needed to assist with the decisions about program directions, exceptionality determination, and placement decisions.



At times schools may require a specialized or targeted support or service that is not possessed by school based staff or staff centrally assigned to the school. Schools may access this expertise through a Specialized Services Request.

Schools access the supports and services available to them from staff assigned to the school by the Curriculum, Student Success and Specialized Services Departments. This support is available to schools through regularly scheduled visits and by request.

Staff within each school contribute to the Learning of All Students. The varied skills and strengths that exist within each school community contribute to the learning experiences and educational opportunities of students.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

In considering assessment for special education, some guiding principles should serve in selecting assessment strategies:

Assessment for students with special needs should:

- Provide information needed for programming;
- Build on assessment information from the classroom;
- Be consistent with practice norms in Ontario for special education assessment;
- Utilize current assessment tools;
- Be conducted by appropriate professionals;
- Be efficient and cost effective;
- Respect student and parent needs.

USES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENTS

Assessment information is used for program development, Individual Education Plan development and evaluation, IPRC committee consideration, and multidisciplinary problem solving by both Board and outside agency staff. All use of assessments must comply with requirements for parent permission for the use of the information.

For IPRC purposes, assessments are obtained through provision of assessment information by the school to the appropriate IPR committee through the IPRC intake process.

LEVELS OF ASSESSMENT

Prior to initiating a formal assessment by a board Psychoeducational Consultant or Speech and Language Pathologist, program supports and interventions are reviewed at an Assessment Team Meeting that is comprised of system level professional from varied disciplines (Student Service Attendance Counsellor, Psychoeducational consultant, Special Education Consultant and Speech and Language Pathologist) along with the schools special education leadership team (Principal and Lead Special Education Resource Teacher). The team will review interventions to date that have been recommended through the School Intervention Team Process. The outcome of an assessment meeting may lead to recommendations for continued school level supports (interventions, suggested classroom practices, further school based assessments etc.), observation by assessment staff, referral to a Specialized Consultant (behavioural or autism), or, when essential, a referral for a formal assessment.

The flowchart in the section entitled *Procedures Prior to Referral to an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)* explains the phases of assessment and programs that generally take place for students with special needs. As a student moves from one phase to the next, a set of minimum assessment or consultation procedures must take place to provide a consistent set of information for determining student needs and for IPRC requirements.

Please consult the chart in the section entitled *Procedures Prior to Referral to an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)* for a description of the assessment, consultation, and programming steps.

An Assessment Overview Chart is also available below.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN

SECTION 8: Educational and Other Assessments

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW			
	ASSESSMENTS	**PURPOSE**	**PROCESS**
UNIVERSAL	Classroom and Curriculum led assessments	Informing Instruction Screen Monitor Student Progress	✓ As outlined on board assessment framework ✓ administered by classroom teacher
MODERATE	Early Intervention assessments Alternative Assessments Phonological Awareness Assessments	Inform and target instruction and interventions Monitor student progress and response to intervention	✓ Conducted by Early Intervention Teacher or SERT ✓ Intervention established in response to presenting concerns
MODERATE	Thinking Skills Inventory (CPS)	Identification of strengths and "lagging skills" to inform programming and interventions.	✓ Collaborative approach to rating of indicators with the five Thinking Skills Domains.
MODERATE *TARGET PRIMARY	Speech and Language Assessment	Determine strengths, needs and possible exceptionality Determine language profile for program planning and interventions	✓ Consultation with Speech and Language Pathologist ✓ Early Intervention and report card data are reviewed ✓ School prompted by SLP to submit referral package
MODERATE *TARGET GR. 3+	Continuous Intake - Psycho-Educational Assessment of students with possible learning or intellectual disability (no or minimal behavioural presentation)	Determine strengths, needs and possible exceptionality School programming intervention and accommodation plans	✓ Consultation with Special Education Consultant or Psycho-educational Consultant ✓ Review of student work samples, IEP, report cards and interventions to date ✓ Consultant prompts school to prepare a referral package ✓ Students assessed in order of receipt of package by psycho-educational consultants with continuous intake responsibilities

SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN

SECTION 8: Educational and Other Assessments

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW			
	ASSESSMENTS	**PURPOSE**	**PROCESS**
INTENSIVE GR. 4+	Speech and Language Assessment	Determine strengths, needs and possible exceptionality Determine language profile for program planning and interventions	✓ Consultation with System Intervention Team ✓ Review of student work samples, IEP, report cards and interventions to date ✓ SLP Consults Superintendent of Special Ed ✓ SLP prompts school to prepare a referral package
INTENSIVE ***TARGET GR. 3+**	Psycho-educational Assessment	Determine strengths, needs and possible exceptionality or diagnosis School programming intervention and accommodation plans	✓ Outcome of a System Intervention Team Meeting or consultation with Specialized Services Staff ✓ Psycho-educational Consultant prompts school to prepare a referral package
INTENSIVE RISK	Priority Consultation or Multi-disciplinary Risk/Threat Assessment	Determine potential risk of harm to self or others Determine appropriate intervention plans and programming requirements	✓ Consultation with Safe Schools and School SO ✓ Complete: Priority Consultation Request ✓ Consultation with system designated psycho-educational consultant ✓ Centrally assigned psycho-educational consultant prompts school to prepare a referral package ✓ Assessment date promptly provided to school Or ✓ Requirement of Expulsion or Exclusion

ASSESSMENTS CONDUCTED BY CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Classroom teachers conduct assessments required for routine programming and evaluation in their classroom. Examples of the assessment methods used by the classroom teacher include:

- Daily class work samples;
- Portfolios of student work;
- Projects;
- Tests and quizzes;
- Observation of students;
- Completion of First Steps continuum;
- "P.M. Benchmarks" "GB+" (French Immersion);
- "Comprehension, Attitudes, Strategies and Interests" (CASI);
- Ontario Writing Assessment (OWA);
- School and classroom developed assessments.

Classroom teachers are members in good standing of the Ontario College of Teachers, and hold valid Ontario Teaching Certificates.

ASSESSMENTS CONDUCTED BY SCHOOL RESOURCE TEACHERS

Assessment by school resource teachers and special education teachers focuses on academic achievement and skill development tools.

School resource teachers and special education program teachers use the following types of assessment tools:

- Checklists based on the Ontario curriculum;
- Skills sequences based on life skills continuums;
- Basic skills inventories (Example: Brigance Inventory of Basic Skills);
- Criterion Referenced skill assessments in specific academic areas (example: Bader Informal Reading Inventory; The Phonological Awareness Profile);
- Standardized academic assessments (example, The Phonological Awareness Test).

In addition to the qualifications required for classroom teachers, special education resource and special education program teachers hold additional qualifications in Special Education as required in Regulation 298 under the Education Act. As well, special education teachers have regular professional development and training in the area of assessment as new processes and tools are brought into the system to support student needs.

ASSESSMENTS CONDUCTED BY SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS

Assessments carried out by speech/language pathologists focus on language abilities and skills. Assessment includes observation, skills inventories, and standardized measures. Some examples of commonly used assessment types with example tools include:

- Vocabulary (e.g. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test III (PPVT-III);
- Receptive and Expressive Language;
- (e.g. Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals CELF);
- Comprehension (e.g. Test of Auditory Comprehension of Language;
- Language Processing (e.g. The Language Processing Test Revised);
- Articulation (e.g. Goldman Friscoe Test of Articulation);
- Phonological awareness (e.g. The Phonological Awareness Test).
-

Speech and Language pathologists are registered with the College of Audiologists and Speech Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO). They hold masters level degrees in speech language pathology.

The waiting time for assessment varies, depending on school and system priorities.

PSYCHOLOGICAL

Central special education staff administer two forms of assessment, a psychological assessment and a comprehensive educational assessment. Psychological assessments are used when students have significant learning, emotional, and/or behavioural needs, or when a diagnosis by a psychologist may be required. Comprehensive assessments are used for students primarily exhibiting learning difficulties. In the event that more

complex needs come to light during a comprehensive educational assessment, the assessment protocol can be changed to a psychological assessment provided parental permission to do so is obtained.

Psychological Assessments

The assessment of cognitive ability, social development, processing, and memory are areas typically included in psychological assessments. These assessments may include a specific diagnosis of learning or behavioural problems.

Psychological assessments are administered by board Psycho educational consultants under the clinical supervision of registered psychologists contracted by the board. As part of the assessment process, the parents/guardians will have the opportunity to communicate with the Psychoeducational Consultant and a feedback session will be provided for both the school and parents/guardians.

Psychoeducational Consultants hold qualifications in assessment administration and interpretation. Psychologists hold Doctoral level qualifications and are registered members of the Ontario College of Psychologists.

Assessment tools used for psychological assessments vary depending on the learning difficulties of the individual student. Examples of some commonly used tools include but are not limited to:

- Measures of cognitive ability (E.g. Weschler Intelligence Test for Children-4 (WISC-IV);
- Adaptive scales or inventories (e.g. Adaptive Behaviour Assessment Scale, Vineland Adaptive Measures);
- Academic achievement tests (e.g. Weschler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT));
- Behavioural scales (e.g. Connors Parent / Teacher Rating Scales);
- Emotional scales (e.g. Devereaux Scales of Emotional Disorders);
- Memory and processing scales (e.g. Test of Visual Perceptual Skills).

Comprehensive Psychoeducational Assessments

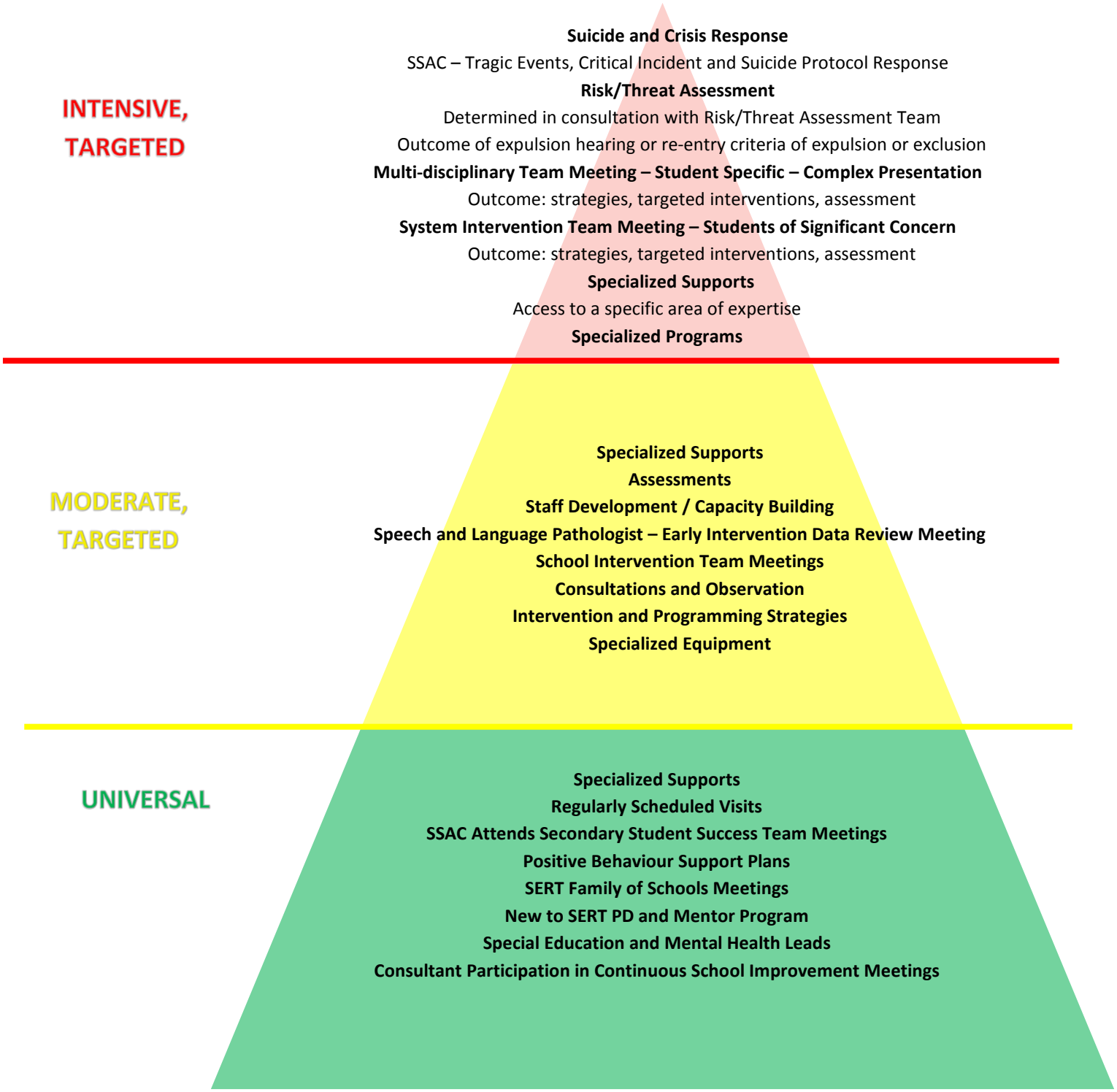
Psycho educational assessments include standardized measures of cognitive ability, memory, processing, and can also include adaptive skills assessments. They do not include behavioural and emotional measures. These assessments are administered and interpreted by board Psychoeducational Consultants.

Assessment tools used for comprehensive educational assessments with example tools noted include the following areas:

- Measures of cognitive ability (e.g. Weschler Intelligence Test for Children-IV (WISC-IV));
- Adaptive scales or inventories (e.g. Adaptive Behaviour Assessment Scale);
- Measures of memory and processing (e.g. Bender Gestalt).

SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN

SECTION 8: Educational and Other Assessments



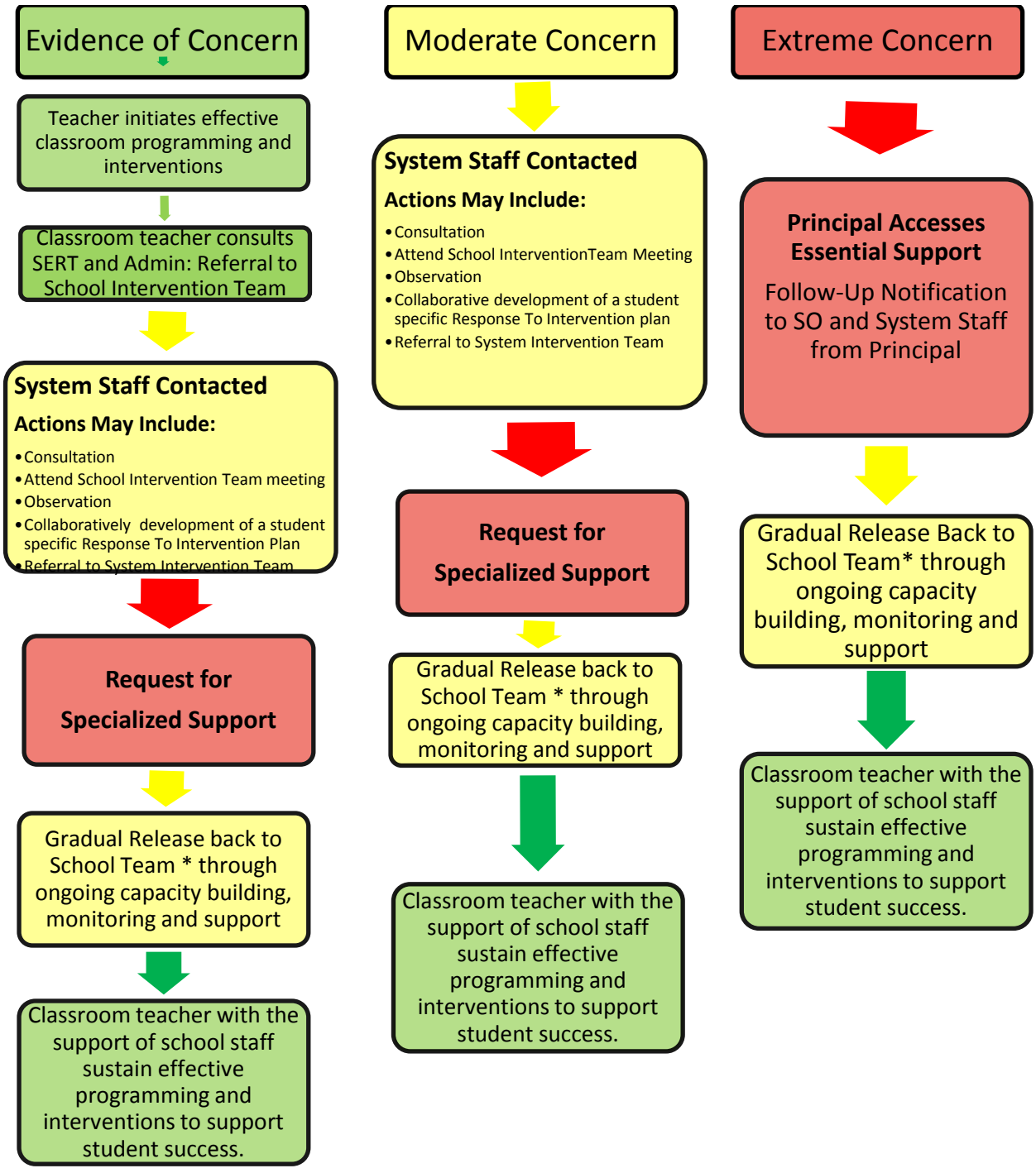
MANAGEMENT OF REFERRALS

Each year TLDSB Specialized Services Department Staff work with school staff to determine students who will receive Speech and Language and Psychoeducational Assessments throughout the school year. Students are referred for an assessment when there are gaps in their learning needs which are not successfully being addressed by interventions and supports.

Emphasis is placed on providing Language Assessments to children who are in the primary grades. Junior, Intermediate and Senior students whose psychoeducational assessment results indicate possible language impairment may also receive a Language Assessment.

Emphasis is placed on providing Psychoeducational Assessments to students who are in grades five to eight. Sometimes assessments are provided to students outside of this grade range when it is deemed essential by Specialized Services Staff.

Many strategies and interventions that are often common recommendations of assessments can be utilized to see if students respond and gaps in performance are addressed. Students who respond to the strategies may not require an assessment, as the purpose of the assessment is to identify strategies that would best address student's learning needs.


Evidence of Concern
Teacher initiates effective classroom programming and interventions
Classroom teacher consults SERT and Admin: Referral to School Intervention Team
System Staff Contacted
Actions May Include:
• Consultation
• Attend School Intervention Team meeting
• Observation
• Collaboratively development of a student specific Response To Intervention Plan
• Referral to System Intervention Team
Request for Specialized Support
Gradual Release back to School Team * through ongoing capacity building, monitoring and support
Classroom teacher with the support of school staff sustain effective programming and interventions to support student success.
Moderate Concern
System Staff Contacted
Actions May Include:
• Consultation
• Attend School InterventionTeam Meeting
• Observation
• Collaborative development of a student specific Response To Intervention plan
• Referral to System Intervention Team
Request for Specialized Support
Gradual Release back to School Team * through ongoing capacity building, monitoring and support
Classroom teacher with the support of school staff sustain effective programming and interventions to support student success.
Extreme Concern
Principal Accesses Essential Support
Follow-Up Notification to SO and System Staff from Principal
Gradual Release Back to School Team* through ongoing capacity building, monitoring and support
Classroom teacher with the support of school staff sustain effective programming and interventions to support student success.

PARENT PERMISSION FOR ASSESSMENT

Written parent permission using the appropriate form is required before conducting any assessment by personnel external to the school.

COMMUNICATION OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS

An information sharing meeting in which the assessment report and results are shared and explained to parents and school staff is held after any formal assessment involving central special education staff.

Following the information sharing, a copy of the assessment report is placed in the documentation file of the Ontario Student Record (OSR), and a copy of the report is given to the parents.

PROTOCOLS FOR SHARING INFORMATION WITH STAFF AND/OR OUTSIDE AGENCIES

As required by the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and the Ontario OSR Guideline, assessment information is shared with staff outside the school and or outside agency staff only with written parental permission.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY RELATED TO ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Assessment reports and test protocols authored by Trillium Lakelands DSB staff are kept at an area office for a minimum period of ten years after a student leaves the Board. Assessment reports are available to parents, students over 16 years of age, and other authorized personnel. Test protocols are the confidential property of Trillium Lakelands DSB and by regulation, are not shared with parents. All files are kept in a secure manner according to the Ontario College of Psychologists.

Specialized Services Department Interventions and Supports

System Supports

- Case Conference
- Case Resolution
- Conflict Resolution
- Consultations
- Critical Incident Response Team
- Instructional and Programming Support
- Observations
- OSR Review
- School Intervention Team Meeting
- System Intervention Team Meeting
- Tragic Event Response Team
- Transition Planning

Specialized Supports Referrals

- Itinerant EAs for behaviour
- Itinerant EAs for technology
- Itinerant Teacher of the Blind
- Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf
- Mental Health Lead
- Psychoeducational Consultants
- Speech and Language Pathologists
- Student Services Attendance Counsellors

Instructional Strategies

Strategies for all exceptionalities:

- Autism
- Behaviour
- Blind/Low Vision
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Gifted
- Intellectual
- Language Impairments
- Learning Disabilities
- Physical

Interventions

- Attendance Interventions
- Auditory Verbal Education
- Corrective Reading
- Early Reading
- Kindergarten Language and Literacy in the Classroom
- Language
- Non-verbal Communication
- Re-reading Program
- Social Skills Groups

Behaviour/ASD Interventions

- Anxiety Strategies
- Applied Behavioural Analysis
- Behaviour Management Plans
- C.A.P.S (Comprehensive Autism Planning System)
- Collaborative Problem Solving
- Debriefing
- Executive Functioning
- Functional Behavioural Assessments
- Safety Plans
- Self-Regulation Strategies
- Staff Response Grid
- Tracking Systems
- Zigguarat Model

Misc.

- A.T. Audits
- FM & Soundfield Supports
- Resources
- Special Education Audits

Assessment Supports

- Adaptives Assessment
  - Assessment Feedback
  - Assessment Interpretation
- AT Addendum
- CANS
- Thinking Skills Inventory (CPS)
- Psycho-educational
- Risk/Threat
- Speech and Language
- Suicide
- Targeted Assessment

Community Referrals

- CCAC
- Children's Services Council
- Chimo
- Community Living
- Five Counties
- FYCSM
- Hands
- John Howard
- Kerry's Place
- Kinark
- Learning Disabilities Assoc.
- Lynx
- Mental Health and Addictions
- One Kids' Place
- Point In Time
- Tri-County Behaviour
- Women's Resources

*note: not an exhaustive list

Other:

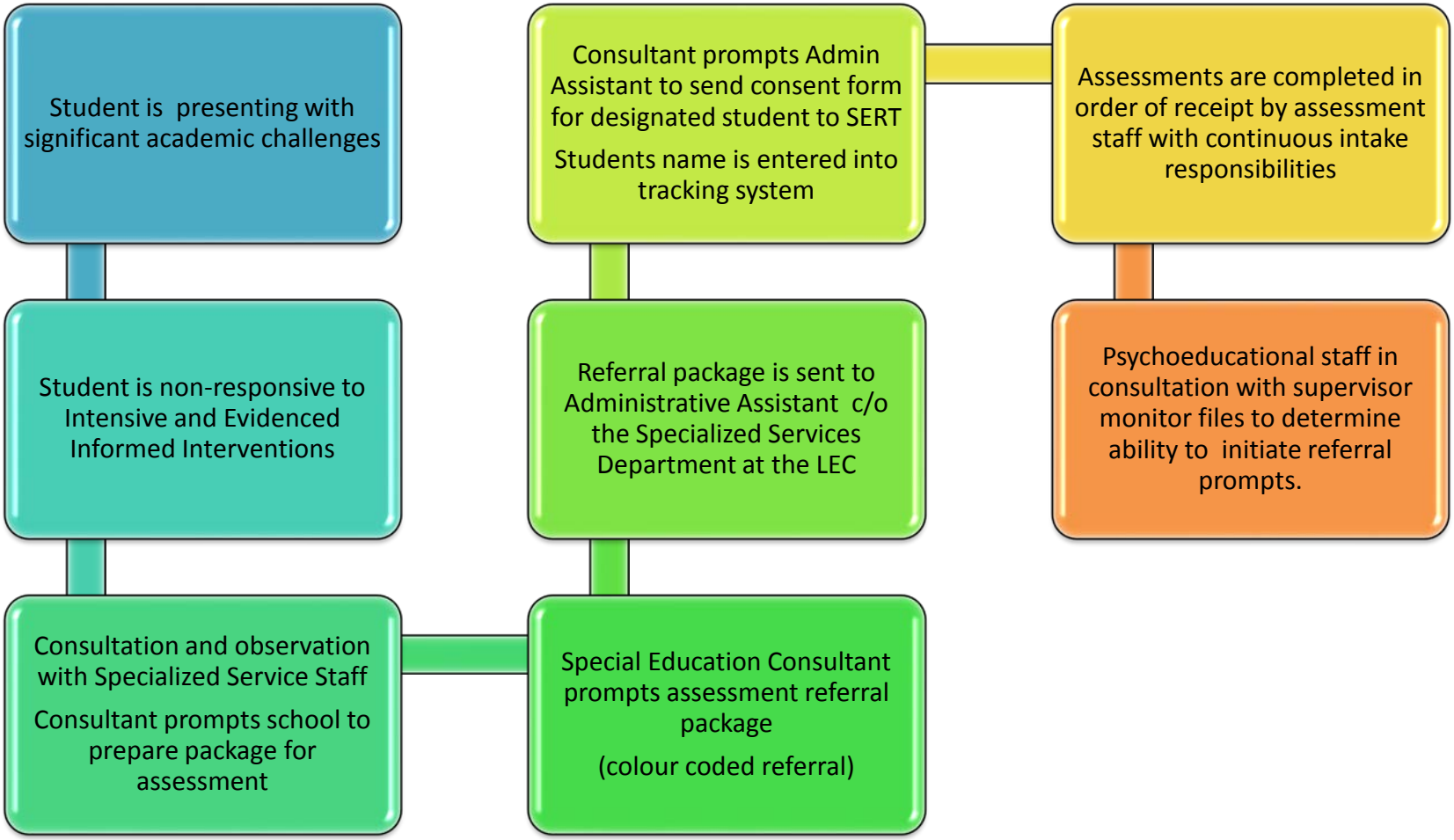
PD Sessions

Format:

- Lunch and Learn
- PD Days
- Special Release
- Staff meeting

- Assistive Technology Training
- Behaviour Management Systems Training
- Child Protection
- Classroom Management
- Collaborative Problem Solving
- Differentiated Instruction
- Embedding A.T. into Unit Planning
- FASD
- IEP Development and Database
- Language Developmental Milestones and Interventions
- Learning Strategies
- Making Sense of Assessments
- Managing Difficult Behaviours
- Mental Health Literacy
- MindUp
- Oral Language
- Phonological Awareness
- Positive Behaviour Supports
- Re-reading Program
- SafeTALK
- Shared Solutions
- Social Skills Training
- Strategies for Executive Functioning
- Strategies/Tips on each Exceptionality
- Suicide Prevention
- Transition Planning
- Trauma Informed Interventions
- Understanding Your Learning Style

CONTINUOUS INTAKE ASSESSMENT PROCESS



ASSESSMENT PROCESS