

## SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN

### SECTION 6: The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process and Appeals

#### Context

Identification, Placement, and Review Committees (IPRCs) are formal committees responsible for the identification of exceptional students and their placement in special education programs. In accordance with Regulation 181/98 of the Education Act, every school board must establish one or more IPRCs.

In TLDSB, IPRC meetings are generally held in the student's school. In the 2017-2018 school year, a total of 905 IPRC meetings were conducted:

- 194 meetings held were new referrals to the IPRC.
- 711 meetings held were regular annual reviews by the IPRC.

[The Trillium Lakelands DSB Parent Guide to Special Education](#) is available in Section 21 of the Special Education Plan to provide more information about special education programs and services, including an in-depth overview of the IPRC process.

#### Referrals to the IPRC

When it becomes apparent that a student has significant special needs and that they may be an exceptional student who requires a special education program, the reasons for a referral to an IPRC should be carefully considered, and a referral to an IPRC discussed with parents/guardians. Indicators that a referral to the IPRC may need to be explored are:

- the student clearly has exceptional learning needs and/or an identified syndrome or condition;
- a significant level of programming support and modification is required;
- probability that significant support to the student will continue to be needed over an extended period of time;
- outside support services and agencies are involved and will likely continue to be involved;
- student was identified by previous board;
- possible qualification for specialized funding (e.g., Special Education Amount or Special Incidence Portion);
- provincial school application is being considered (e.g., learning disabilities, blind, deaf, etc.);
- specialized equipment is required to meet student needs;
- parent/principal request.

It is important to note that in TLDSB, an IPRC meeting is generally not required in order to access most special education programs and services. Students usually have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in place prior to considering the IPRC process.

The Principal is responsible for making referrals to the IPRC. In the event of a parent/guardian request, the following steps are recommended prior to the formal IPRC referral:

- parents/guardians are made aware of program and services presently provided to the student;
- a discussion regarding the purposes of formal identification takes place.

In the event of a written request by a parent/guardian to refer their child to an IPRC, the principal shall provide a written statement of approximately when the principal expects that a committee will meet for the first time to discuss the pupil. In determining this time, the principal will consider the interventions taken place to date, assessments that may be needed, and other services required. Principals may confer with the Superintendent responsible for Specialized Services or designate to determine a realistic time frame for an approximate IPRC date.



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#### **Notice of the IPRC Meeting**

At least 10 days before the IPRC meeting, the chair of the committee will send the parent(s)/guardian(s) written notification of the meeting. The invitation letter will provide the date, time and location of the meeting and will ask the parent/guardian to indicate whether they will attend the meeting. Parents/guardians are encouraged to attend IPRC meetings and every effort should be made to accommodate their schedule. A link to the Parent Guide to Special Education will be included in the invitation letter.

#### **Information Gathering and Preparation for the IPRC Meeting**

Once a referral has been made to the IPRC, the IPRC members will gather and review information in order to be ready to make well-informed decisions about identification and placement for the student during the meeting. Parents (and students over the age of 16) are entitled to be present whenever the IPRC makes its decision. As part of the preparation for the meeting, the IPRC will:

- review the student's IEP;
- review Response to Intervention (RTI) plan notes and programming/intervention actions to date, such as school intervention team notes, case conference notes, etc.;
- consider results of educational assessments relating to the specific area(s) of learning concern;
- obtain, subject to consent provisions of the Health Care Consent Act, 1996, and consider health and/or psychological assessments, if it is believed that such information is required to make an accurate identification or placement decision. The IPRC may, subject to consent provisions, consult with Department of Specialized Services staff regarding external assessments in advance of the IPRC meeting;
- consider interviewing the student if the IPRC members feel it would be useful to do so, with parent consent for students under the age of 16;
- consider any information about the student submitted by the parents, or by the student who is 16 years of age or older;
- consider any other information that may be relevant to the IPRC decisions; and
- be prepared to discuss any recommendations with the parent and student and respond to questions during the IPRC meeting.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities throughout the IPRC Process**

The IPRC is comprised of at least three members, at least one of whom must be a principal or Supervisory Officer of the board. Generally, the principal of the school will chair the meeting and the other two committee members will typically be the Special Education Resource Teacher, Department Head for Special Education, Teacher or other board support personnel, such as a Special Education Consultant or Itinerant Teacher. Parents/guardians and students over age 16 are participants, not committee members, in the IPRC process.

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Role of the principal/designated chair of the IPRC:

- makes the referral to the IPRC and establishes a date for the IPRC meeting;
- informs school and support personnel of the date;
- at least 10 days prior to the IPRC meeting, provides notification to the parent regarding the date, time and location of the IPRC meeting and provides direction on how to access the Parent Guide to Special Education online (paper copy is available upon request); and,
- chairs the IPRC meeting as lead of the decision making committee; and
- during the meeting, explains the role of the IPRC, invites each person present with knowledge of the student to share information and considers information relevant to the student's strengths and needs.

Role of school staff:

- invited to attend and form part of the decision making committee;
- assists in gathering information for the meeting;
- documents the meeting in the Record of Decision; and,
- presents relevant information that supports identification and placement decisions.

Role of board support personnel:

- may be invited to attend and/or form part of the decision making committee;
- may participate in the meeting to review any recent assessment; and,
- may act as a resource to assist in the interpretation of reports.

Role of the parent/guardian or student over age 16 before and during the IPRC meeting:

- invited to attend and participate in the meeting;
- review the Parent Guide to Special Education;
- share relevant reports and assessments;
- may arrange for a support person to attend the meeting, such as a community partner with information about the student's needs;
- provide information to the committee; and
- participate in the discussion and/or ask questions.

### IPRC Decisions

During the IPRC meeting, after considering all information presented, the committee will make decisions about:

- the student's identification;
- the student's placement.

If the committee requires more information or more time to make a decision, then the decision will be deferred and a new meeting date will be set to finalize the IPRC record.

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#### Documenting the IPRC Meeting

During the IPRC meeting, a Record of Decision document will be created in the IEP Database. The Record of Decision will include the following:

- the names of the committee members present;
- the names of other people present;
- the documents reviewed as part of the IPRC's preparation or that were presented during the meeting;
- the IPRC's description of the student's strengths and needs;
- the IPRC's identification decision according to the Ministry of Education's categories and definitions of exceptionalities and board determined criteria;
- the IPRC's placement decision;
- the IPRC's recommendations regarding special education programs and services, if any;
- the reasons for placing the student in a special education class or withdrawal program, if that is the IPRC's decision;
- signature of the IPRC Chair;
- opportunity for parent to indicate whether they agree or disagree with the IPRC's decisions; and,
- the process available to parents/guardians if they do not agree with the IPRC's decisions.

After the meeting, the Chair will:

- provide one copy of the Record of Decision to the parent/guardian and the student who is 16 years or older;
- place one copy of the Record of Decision in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR); and,
- ensure the IEP is developed or updated within 30 days of the IPRC and a copy delivered to the parent/guardian and student who is 16 years or older.

#### Parental Consent for Placement

Following an IPRC, the school board will implement the placement decision either after the parent agrees to it or, if the parent does not agree but does not wish to appeal the decision, after the time limit for an appeal has expired. In special circumstances, if written agreement by the parent/guardian of a student is not given, and a parent chooses not to appeal the decision of the committee, the Board, after 30 days, will direct the appropriate principal /guardian to place the exceptional student and to notify the parent of the action that has been taken [[Regulation 181 S 20 \(1\)](#)].

#### After the IPRC Decision

A second (follow-up) meeting may be requested by the parent(s)/guardian(s) whether or not they agree with the IPRC decisions. The parent(s)/guardian(s) have fifteen days after receiving the Record of Decision to make a written request to the student's current principal for a follow-up meeting with the IPRC. The principal will arrange for the meeting to be held as soon as possible. Then, as soon as possible after the follow-up meeting, the IPRC Chair will inform the Superintendent responsible for Specialized Services and the parents/guardians if any changes were made to the IPRC decision. If any changes were made, then the IPRC Chair will provide a revised statement of decision and written reasons for the changes. The parents/guardians will be asked to consent to the revised identification and/or placement decision.

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If parents /guardians do not agree with the IPRC decisions, they may:

- within 30 days of receipt of the initial IPRC decision, file a notice of appeal with the Director of Education; or,
- within 15 days of receipt of the decision of the second (follow-up) meeting, file a notice of appeal with the Director of Education.

If the parents do not supply written agreement with the IPRC decision and also do not appeal the decisions within the time limit set for appealing, the school board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

#### Annual Review

An IPRC review for each identified student will take place at least once within each school year. The annual review focuses on the identification and placement of a student and is requested by the principal in the same manner as for initial IPRC referrals.

Parents/guardians may request an IPRC review by putting the request in writing to the principal. A review may be requested after a placement has been in effect for three months. A request for an IPRC review cannot be made more often than once every three months.

A parent/guardian can dispense of (waive) the annual IPRC review by informing the principal in writing that a IPRC review meeting is not necessary. Otherwise, the IPRC review meeting must be held at least once within every school year as described above.

#### IPRC Appeal Process

If a parent/guardian does not agree with the decisions stemming from the original IPRC or the follow-up meeting of the IPRC, an appeal can be filed with a special education appeal board (SEAB). The parent/guardian may appeal:

- the identification decision that the student is, or is not, exceptional; and/or
- the placement decision, if the a student is identified as exceptional.

The notice of appeal must be sent to the Director of Education within 30 days of receipt of the original decision or within 15 days of receipt of the decision from the second (follow-up) meeting of the IPRC and must:

- indicate the decision with which the parent disagrees; and,
- include a statement that sets out the nature of the disagreement.

The SEAB members are selected through the following process:

- Within 15 days of receiving the notice of appeal:
  - the school board will select one person to be a member of the SEAB; and
  - the parent/guardian will select one person to be a member of the SEAB.
- Within 15 days of the selections of the parent/guardian and the school board representatives, these two appeal board members will select a Chair. If the SEAB members cannot agree on a Chair, the manager of the district office of the Ministry of Education may be asked to select the chair.
- No SEAB member should have had any prior involvement with the matter under appeal, nor should the member be an employee or member of the school board or an employee of the Ministry of Education.



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The chair of the SEAB will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but no later than 30 days after he/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.

The parent and child, if he/she is 16 years old or over, are entitled to be present and to participate in all discussions. The appeal board must make its recommendation within 3 days of the completion 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 the child's identification, placement or both.

The appeal board will report its recommendations in writing, to the parent(s)/guardian(s), the student (if he is 16 years old or over) 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 may appeal to a [Special Education Tribunal](#).

In the 2017-2018 school year, zero IPRC appeals were conducted.