
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES: SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Background

The District acknowledges that it has a responsibility to establish direction for District student services which is consistent with provincial legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines. District policies and procedures are intended to direct present programs and services, as well as to guide future developments, for all students.

The District recognizes that all students are unique and, as such, have needs which may be different. The District welcomes diversity and recognizes that some students require more support than others. All students are entitled to appropriate programs, learning materials and methods of teaching. The District believes it must seek to ensure that equity is established so that all students have the opportunity to reach their individual potential.

Special Education programs and services enable students with special needs to have access to learning and opportunities to pursue and achieve the goals of their educational programs.

The District promotes an inclusive education program as described by the Ministry of Education's policy on special education. An inclusive education program is one where students with special needs are fully participating members of a community of learning.

Inclusion describes the principle that all students are entitled to learn, achieve and pursue excellence in all aspects of their educational programs.

"The practice of inclusion is not necessarily synonymous with full integration in regular classrooms, and goes beyond placement to include meaningful participation and the promotion of interaction with others." (www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/special_ed.htm)

1. Identifying and Referring Students with Special Needs

- 1.1 Students can be identified as special needs on only a tentative basis until a review of learning needs by the District Screening Committee and/or a full assessment can be conducted by the appropriately-trained professional, usually a member of the Student Services staff.
- 1.2 Students whose educational needs are not currently being met in the regular classroom setting are to be referred to the school-based team.
- 1.3 The Principal of each school, as leader of the school-based team, is responsible for seeing that teachers identify students in need of program modification and/or adaptation.
- 1.4 Any referral of a student for special services may be made to the school-based team via the school's learning assistance teacher who will assess the situation. If, in the opinion of the team a more formal assessment is required, the case, with the approval of the Principal, shall be referred to the Director of Student Support Services.

- 1.5 Referrals to the Director of Student Support Services may be made by parents, teachers, or the counsellor through the Principal, or directly by physicians, clinical specialists, or by specialists either in the Ministry of Education or the Ministry for Children and Families via the school-based team.
- 1.6 Screenings, in cooperation with other agencies, shall be conducted to identify special needs children in kindergarten who might need special services.
- 1.7 Before a student may be referred to the Director of Student Support Services for assessment, permission of the parent must be obtained. If the parent does not understand English sufficiently, the request must be made in the language used in the home.
- 1.8 Referrals to the Director of Student Support Services shall be made in writing using the designated forms and shall include the pre-referral data and endorsement of the school-based team.
- 1.9 Any referral for non-school based resources shall be made by the school-based team and with the informed consent of the parent. It is the responsibility of the team to maintain a working liaison with the agency of referral.

2. Assessing Students for Special Needs

- 2.1 Once a referral has been made, a specialist from Student Support Services will make an appointment to consult with the student's teacher and arrange to respond to the referral by any combination of observation, consultation, and formal and informal assessment of the student.
- 2.2 Student Support Services personnel may collect these data:
 - 2.2.1 Results of an intellectual evaluation with an appropriate instrument;
 - 2.2.2 Measurements of academic achievement;
 - 2.2.3 Measurements of aspects of personality to indicate the nature and degree of any socio-emotional difficulty;
 - 2.2.4 Results of the assessment of social skills to identify functional adaptive behaviours and interactions;
 - 2.2.5 Family history;
 - 2.2.6 Medical history;
 - 2.2.7 Information on the strengths and positive aspects of the student's functioning, both academically and behaviourally.
- 2.3 The results of all District specialist assessments must be interpreted to the parents in a timely manner. If evaluations have been made by outside specialists, written permission of the parents must be obtained before a copy of the report(s) can be obtained.
- 2.4 The release of information resulting from any aptitude, personality, or other clinical measures to an outside agency will be permitted only if the written permission has been secured of a parent or, if required, of the student.
- 2.5 At the conclusion of the assessment process, the Principal of the school shall arrange a school-based team meeting to discuss the results and to make appropriate plans

and develop follow-up procedures. Parents, referring teachers, and the appropriate members of the Student Support Services team shall be invited to attend.

3. Accessing Student Records

- 3.1 Parents, subject to legal limitations, shall have the right to review records maintained on their child.
- 3.2 Arrangements to examine records shall be made with the Principal of the school the child attends.
- 3.3 Records, including the student's folder and the B.C. School Permanent Record Card, shall be examined in the presence of a member of the College of Teachers who is qualified to interpret them.

4. Designing Individual Education Programs

- 4.1 Identified special needs students are required to have developed on their behalf an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that recognizes adaptation(s) and/or modification(s) needed to guide their school program. The Principal, as the educational leader, shall provide the enrolling teacher the support of the school-based team to develop and modify the IEP. The team may typically include:
 - 4.1.1 A school-based administrative officer
 - 4.1.2 A learning assistance or resource teacher
 - 4.1.3 A referring teacher (enrolling)
 - 4.1.4 A classroom teacher
 - 4.1.5 The custodial parent
 - 4.1.6 The student
 - 4.1.7 District specialists and teacher's assistants involved with the student
 - 4.1.8 Community or Ministerial representatives
- 4.2 Individual Education Plans shall be reviewed at least annually.

5. Placing Students with Special Needs

- 5.1 Each special needs student requires a particular degree of support and assistance, which will change as the student progresses through various stages of development. The student shall be placed in the least restrictive setting that will provide the appropriate environment for optimum learning and development.
- 5.2 A review of a student's placement in a special education setting may be requested by the parent, who shall direct a written petition to the Principal of the school the student attends and/or to the Director, Student Support Services.

6. Graduation Requirements for Special Needs Students

- 6.1 A special education program might not terminate with formal graduation.
- 6.2 An anecdotal School-Leaving Certificate may be issued when a student withdraws from a program; or the Provincial School Completion Certificate may be awarded at the end of twelve years of education.

7. Adapted and/or Modified Programs

- 7.1 In accordance with A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines programs may be modified or adapted to meet the goals of the Individual Education Plan of special needs students.
- 7.2 Official records will clearly display that the student has followed an adapted and/or modified program of studies.
- 7.3 Parents and students shall be kept informed of the nature, purpose and system of grading any modified or adapted program.

8. Exclusion of Exceptional Children

- 8.1 A candidate who would otherwise qualify as an English-as-a-Second Language student may not be enrolled in any District secondary school if he/she is 19 years of age or over.

Reference: Sections 6, 11, 17, 20, 22, 26, 85, 88, 89, 91 School Act
School Regulation 265/89
Individual Education Plan Order M638/95
Special Needs Students Order M150/89
Support Services for Schools Order 149/89
Special Education Services: A Manual of Policy, Procedures and Guidelines

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