

**TITLE: SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

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**1.0 OBJECTIVE**

To provide for the education of students with special education needs.

**2.0 DEFINITIONS**

In this Policy:

- 2.1 **Accommodation** means a system of special teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and/or individualized equipment that help a student learn and demonstrate learning.
- 2.2 **Assessment** means the process of gathering, from a variety of sources, information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving curriculum expectations in a subject or course.
- 2.3 **Differentiated Instruction** means an approach to instruction designed to maximize growth by considering the needs of each student at his or her current stage of development and offering that student a learning experience which responds to his or her individual needs.
- 2.4 **District** means the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.
- 2.5 **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** means a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student based on a thorough assessment of the student's strengths and needs and shall be used as both a document and as an accountability tool.
- 2.6 **Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)** means the committee set up by the school board to consider the exceptionalities of students referred to them.

- 2.7 **Modification** means changes made to age-appropriate grade-level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs.
- 2.8 **Student with Special Needs** means a student who requires special education services, including any student who has been formally identified as exceptional by the IPRC process as well as students who may not have been formally identified but who may require services including, but not limited to, modified programs or accommodations.

### 3.0 POLICY

3.1 Policy Statement

The District believes every student is able to learn and to benefit from learning, and upholds the right of each student with special needs to an instructional program appropriate to that student's needs which enables him or her to achieve to the best of his or her ability. The term students with special needs includes all students who are receiving special education programs and services, whether or not they have been identified as exceptional.

3.2 Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles shall govern the education of students with special needs:

- a) promoting early identification and intervention;
- b) ensuring a focus on the whole child;
- c) providing a range of services for the student, subject to available resources;
- d) ensuring every reasonable attempt is made to support participation by the student in school activities;
- e) emphasizing the value and importance of communication and consultation with the parents/guardians of children with special needs;
- f) recognizing the necessity for the provision of support for staff to develop the necessary skills and teaching strategies to work with students with special needs; and
- g) ensuring the accommodation of students with special needs to the point of undue hardship for the District.

### 3.3 Key Learning Supports

The special education policy shall be achieved through the delivery of a variety of learning supports including, but not limited to:

- a) a range of appropriate assessments accompanied by timely tiered interventions and professional strategies;
- b) a continuum of placement options;
- c) equitable application of the specialized class location model using geographically defined catchment areas and designated schools to ensure fair access to specialized programs;
- d) appropriate student/teacher ratios as governed by the *Education Act*;
- e) Individual Education Plans (IEPs) subject to regular review and outcome-based evaluation;
- f) a clearly communicated IPRC process, with consistent procedures;
- g) integration opportunities within the student's school;
- h) multi-disciplinary professional supports for students with special education needs;
- i) timely access as required to appropriate equipment and materials; and
- j) timely access to information for parents about programs and services.

### 3.4 Enrolment and Placement

As required under the *Education Act*, the District will provide a Special Education Program for the enrolment and placement of each student with special needs.

### 3.5 Special Education Report

As required under the *Education Act*, the Special Education report of the OCDSB shall be reviewed annually by SEAC and the Board and shall be made readily accessible on the District website.

## **4.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES**

### 4.1 Programs and Support Services for Students with Special Needs

- a) The District shall ensure that the Ministry of Education Curriculum Guidelines are the basis for Special Education Programs. The special needs of each student can be accommodated by using a

variety of teaching methods , support personnel, resources, equipment and special materials.

#### 4.2 Service Delivery

- a) The Special Education service delivery of the District is based on a continuum of placement options ranging from non-specialized classes with special education resource support to specialized classes and schools where needs dictate. Specialized class locations shall be based on geographically defined catchment areas and designated schools. Special Education Programs and Services and school catchment areas will be reviewed regularly in consultation with various stakeholders.
- b) The special needs of each student should be met by accommodations, modifications, and/or alternative expectations, including, but not limited to, a variety of teaching methods, and/or special equipment including, but not limited to, adaptive technology, and appropriately trained specialized personnel.

#### 4.3 Identification, Assessment, Accommodation

- a) Students who may have special needs will be identified and assessed regularly and as appropriate. Assessments shall be undertaken in consultation with parents/guardians, after initial written consent has been received.
- b) Accommodations and modifications for the purposes of academic assessment/evaluation should be considered in accordance with District and Ministry policy relevant to assessment, evaluation, and reporting of student achievement (P.083.CUR and PR.584.CUR) to account for the requirements for assessments administered at beyond the District level (EQAO, PISA etc.).
- c) The principal is responsible for ensuring that an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed, implemented and updated in alignment with OCDSB reporting periods where:
  - i) a student has been formally identified as exceptional by an IPRC
  - ii) a student has not been formally identified but requires an ongoing special education program and/or services, including modified or alternative learning expectations and/or accommodations,
- d) The IEP shall be developed in partnership with parents/guardians and shall include SMART goals (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely).

- e) The IEP involves the following five phases:
  - i) Gather information about the student;
  - ii) Set the direction for the student;
  - iii) Develop the IEP as it relates to the student's special education program and services;
  - iv) Implement the IEP; and
  - v) Review and update the IEP.
  
- f) Students with special needs may be referred to an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) set up by the District. The principal may, on written notice to a parent of a student, and shall, at the written request of a parent, refer a student to the District IPRC.
  
- g) Once the decision of the IPRC is received, the principal and superintendent of shall make every effort to work with the parent/guardian to resolve any concerns about the decision. In the event of a disagreement about the IPRC decision, the process for appeal outlined in P.117.SES Special Education Appeal Board Policy shall be followed.
  
- h) Students identified as exceptional must be provided with appropriate special programs and/or services designed to build on their strengths and meet their needs.
  
- i) The District shall ensure a process for appropriate access to special education programs. The process will be transparent, consistent, and equitable, and subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA).
  
- j) The District shall ensure regular opportunities are provided for the training and development of staff to support students with special needs. This may include training in the areas of instructional practice, accommodations, academic, socio-emotional and cultural sensitivity.

#### 4.4 Communication

The District is committed to communicating clearly and regularly with parents/guardians of students with special needs and will do so on matters including:

- a) the full range of services available;
- b) the IPRC process, including the appeals process;
- c) implementation practice and progress of IEPs; and

- d) Ministry guidelines for the delivery of Special Education Programs.

#### 4.5 Performance Measures

- a) The Board is committed to developing and maintaining special education programs and services that are based on best practice models, including evidence based data, ongoing assessment and measurement of objectives. These will be reviewed on a cyclical basis, to ensure that they remain effective and are current with evidence-based research findings.
- b) The District will continue to develop and will maintain Quality Program Indicators to help guide the implementation of special education programs and services in a consistent manner.

#### 4.6 Transportation

- a) The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, through its agent for transportation services, the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority, (OSTA) accepts responsibility for appropriate home-to-school transportation for exceptional students who meet the criteria set out in OCDSB Student Transportation Policy P.068.TRA.
- b) Under the authority of *The Education Act*, the Board, through its agent for transportation services, the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority, agrees to provide transportation for Ottawa-Carleton District School Board students attending Provincial and Demonstration Schools.

## 5.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

*The Education Act, Ontario*

R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298/Reg. 306

Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils, O.R. 181/98

Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools

OCDSB *Special Education Plan*

The Individual Education Plan (IEP): A Resource Guide

Board Policy P.083.CUR: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting of Student Achievement

Board Policy P.058.HR: Health and Safety

Board Policy P.068.TRA: Student Transportation

Board Policy P.032.SCO: Safe Schools

Board Policy P.125.SCO: Board Code of Conduct

Board Policy P.117.SES: SEAB

Board Procedure PR.556.TRA: Student Transportation