



Parents' Guide

to

Special Education

**The Identification, Placement
and Review Committee Process**

(IPRC)

Revised: June 2014

1. What is an IPRC?

The Education Act requires that school boards provide, or purchase from another board, special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils. The purpose of this parents' guide is to provide you with information about the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC), and to set out for you the procedures involved in identifying a pupil as "exceptional", deciding the pupil's placement, or appealing such decisions if you do not agree with the IPRC.

If, after reading this guide, you require more information, please see the Avon Maitland District School Board contact information at the end of the document.

2. Who comprises the committee?

Regulation 181/98 requires that all school boards establish IPRCs. An IPRC is composed of at least three persons, one of whom must be a principal or supervisory officer of the Avon Maitland District School Board.

3. What is the role of the IPRC?

The IPRC will:

- decide whether or not your child should be identified as an exceptional pupil;
- identify the area(s) of your child's exceptionality(ies), according to the categories and definitions of exceptionality provided by the Ministry of Education;
- decide an appropriate placement for your child; regular classroom, regular classroom resource assistance, and regular classroom with withdrawal assistance; and
- review the identification and placement at least once in each school year unless you as the parent/guardian gives written notice dispensing with the review.

4. 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 require a special education placement. Students are identified according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education.

5. What is a special education placement?

The Avon Maitland District School Board offers a range of special education placements for exceptional pupils. The placements include: regular class, regular class with resource assistance, and regular class with withdrawal assistance. Programming within the regular class setting is individualized as per the student's Individual Education Plan. In special circumstances, pupils may be placed in provincial schools.

6. What is a special education program?

A special education program is defined in the Education Act as an educational program that:

- is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation; and
- includes a plan (the Individual Education Plan [IEP]) containing specific objectives and an outline of educational services that meets the needs of the exceptional pupil.

7. What are special education services?

Special education services are defined in the Education Act as the facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.

The Avon Maitland District School Board provides special education services either directly (e.g., psychological services, speech/language services, etc.) or through partnerships with community agencies (e.g., occupational therapy and physiotherapy, speech language therapy, mental health, etc.).

8. What is an IEP? (Individual Education Plan)

An IEP is:

- a summary of the student's strengths, interests, and needs and of the expectations for a student's learning during a school year that differ from the expectations defined in the appropriate grade level of the Ontario curriculum;
- a written plan of action prepared for a student who requires modifications of the regular school program or accommodations;
- a tool to help teachers monitor and communicate the student's growth;
- a plan developed, implemented, and monitored by school staff;
- a flexible, working document that can be adjusted as necessary;
- an accountability tool for the student, his or her parents, and everyone who has responsibilities under the plan for helping the student meet his or her goals and expectations;
- an ongoing record that ensures continuity in programming;
- a document to be used in conjunction with the provincial report card.

The IEP must be developed for your child in consultation with you. It must include:

- student's strengths and needs;
- relevant medical/health information;
- relevant formal (standardized) assessment data;
- programming modifications as applicable;
- accommodations required;
- an outline of the special education program and services that will be received;
- a statement about the methods by which your child's progress will be reviewed; and
- a plan for transitions within the school and transition out of school to appropriate post-secondary school activities, such as work, further education, and community living.

The IEP must be completed within 30 school days after your child has been placed in the special education program, and the principal must ensure that you receive a copy.

9. How is an IPRC meeting requested?

The principal of your child's school:

- must request an IPRC meeting for your child, upon receiving your written request;
- may, with written notice to you, refer your child to an IPRC when the principal and the child's teacher or teachers believe that your child may benefit from a special education program.

Within 15 days of receiving your request, or giving you notice, the principal must provide you with a copy of this guide and a written statement of when the IPRC is scheduled to meet.

See IPRC Process and Timelines at the end of this document.

10. May parents attend the IPRC meeting?

Regulation 181/98 entitles parents and pupils 16 years of age or older:

- to be present at and participate in all committee discussions about your child; and
- to be present when the committee's identification and placement decision is made.

11. Who else may attend an IPRC meeting?

- other resource people such as your child's teacher, special education staff, board support staff, or the representative of an agency, who may provide further information or clarification;
- your representative – that is, a person who may support you or speak on behalf of you or your child; and
- an interpreter, if one is required. (You can request the services of an interpreter through the principal of your child's school.)

12. Who may request that others attend?

Either you or the principal of your child's school may make a request for the attendance of others at the IPRC meeting. A student who is 16 years of age or older may make the same request.

13. What information will parents receive about the IPRC meeting?

At least 10 days in advance of the meeting, the chair of the IPRC will provide you with written notification of the meeting and an invitation to attend the meeting as an important partner in considering your child's placement. This letter will notify you of the date, time and place of the meeting, and will ask you to indicate whether you will attend.

Before the IPRC meeting occurs, you will receive information about updated educational assessment and your child's progress. This may include the results of assessments or a summary of information.

14. What if parents are unable to make the scheduled meeting?

If you are unable to make the scheduled meeting, you may:

- contact the school principal to arrange an alternative date or time; or
- let the school principal know you will not be attending, and as soon as possible after the meeting, the principal will forward to you, for your consideration and signature, the IPRC's written statement of decision noting the decision of identification and placement.

15. What happens at an IPRC meeting?

- The chair introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting.
- The IPRC will review all available information about your child.

The members will:

- * consider an educational assessment of your child;
- * consider, subject to the provisions of the Health Care Consent Act, 1996, a health or psychological assessment of your child conducted by a qualified practitioner if they feel that such an assessment is required to make a correct identification or placement decision;
- * interview your child, with your consent if your child is less than 16 years of age, if they feel it would be useful to do so; and
- * consider any information that you submit about your child or that your child submits if he or she is 16 years of age or older.

- The committee may discuss any proposal that has been made about a special education program or special education services for the child.
- Committee members will discuss any such proposal at your request, or at the request of your child if the child is 16 years of age or older. However, the IPRC determines identification and placement decisions.
- You are encouraged to ask questions and join in the discussion.
- Following the discussion, after all the information has been presented and considered, the committee will make its decision regarding identification and placement.

16. What will the IPRC consider in making its placement decision?

In determining your child's most appropriate special education program, the IPRC will consider the most appropriate placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services in order to:

- meet your child's needs; and
- be consistent with your preferences.

17. What will the IPRC's written statement of decision include?

The IPRC's written statement of decision will state:

- whether the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional and,
- if the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional:
 - * the categories and definitions of any exceptionalities identified, as they are defined by the Ministry of Education;
 - * the IPRC's description of your child's strengths and needs; and
 - * the IPRC's placement decision.
- where the IPRC has decided that your child should be placed in a special education class, the reasons for that decision;
- in addition, the IPRC may consider recommendations regarding special education services.

18. What happens after the IPRC has made its decision?

- If you **agree** with the IPRC decision, you will be asked to indicate, by signing your name that you agree with the identification and placement decisions made by the IPRC. The statement of decision may be signed at the IPRC meeting or taken home and returned.
- If the IPRC has identified your child as an exceptional pupil and you **have agreed** with the IPRC identification and placement decision, the principal submits the minutes of the IPRC to the Education Centre.
- If you agree with the IPRC decision to have your child identified as exceptional, the school will develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child within 30 days.

19. Once a placement decision has been made, can this placement be reviewed?

- A review IPRC meeting will be held within the school year, unless you, the parent/guardian, indicate that the annual review is not required.
- You may request a review IPRC meeting any time after your child has been in a special education placement for 3 months.

20. What does a review IPRC consider and decide?

- The review IPRC considers the same type of information that was originally considered.
- With your written permission, the IPRC conducting the review will consider the progress your child has made in relation to the IEP.

- The IPRC will review the placement and identification decisions and decide whether they should be continued or whether a different decision should now be made.

21. What can parents do if they disagree with the IPRC decision?

- If you **do not agree** with either the identification or placement decision made by the IPRC, you may:
 - * within 15 days of receipt of the decision, request that the IPRC hold a second meeting to discuss your concerns; or
 - * within 30 days of receipt of the decision, file a notice of appeal with the Director of Education and Secretary of the Avon Maitland District School Board, 62 Chalk Street North, Seaforth, Ontario N0K 1W0.
- If you **do not agree** with the decision after the second meeting, you may file a notice of appeal within 15 days of your receipt of the decision.

If you do not consent to the IPRC decision and you do not appeal it, the Avon Maitland District School Board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

22. How do I appeal an IPRC decision?

If you disagree with the IPRC's identification of your child as exceptional or with the placement decision of the IPRC, you may, within 30 days of receipt of the original decision or within 15 days of receipt of the decision from the second meeting described above, give written notification of your intention to appeal the decision to the Director of Education and Secretary of the Avon Maitland District School Board, 62 Chalk Street North, Seaforth, Ontario N0K 1W0.

The notice of appeal must:

- indicate the decision with which you disagree; and
- include a statement that sets out your reasons for disagreeing.

23. What happens in the appeal process?

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- The Avon Maitland District School Board will establish a special education appeal board to hear your appeal. The appeal board will be composed of three persons (one of whom is to be selected by you, the parent) who have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal.
- Within 15 days of the selections of the parent and school board representatives, the two appeal board members will select a chair.
- 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 IPRC and may interview any persons who may be able to contribute information about the matter under appeal.
- You, the parent, and your child, if he or she is 16 years old or over, 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. It may:
 - * agree with the IPRC and recommend that the decision be implemented; or
 - * disagree with the IPRC and make recommendation to the Avon Maitland District School Board about your child's identification, or placement, or both.
- The appeal board will report its recommendations in writing, to you 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 within 30 days, you may appeal to a Special Education Tribunal. You may request a hearing by 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.

THE IPRC PROCESS AND TIMELINE

IPRC MEETING REQUESTED

(Within 15 days of request)

- Principal sends parent/guardian:
 - **Acknowledgement of Parental request for IPRC (if appropriate)**
 - Parents' Guide to IPRC
 - Approximate date for IPRC meeting

(At least 10 days before meeting)

- IPRC chair sends parent/guardian (and student if over 16):
 - Notification of IPRC meeting
 - Details of the meeting (date, time, place)

(Before the meeting and as soon as possible after receipt of information)

- IPRC chair sends parent (and student if 16 or over) information about student received by IPRC

IPRC MEETING

- Student's strengths and needs documented
- Decision about identification and placement made
- Categories and definitions of exceptionalities identified
- Recommendations made about program and services
- As soon as possible after decision, statement of decision sent to relevant parties

AFTER IPRC DECISION

Parent/Guardian may:

- Agree and sign consent form
- Make no response
- Request further discussion, or
- Disagree and file appeal with special education appeal board

If parent/guardian agrees or makes no response:

(Within 30 school days of placement being implemented)

- School completes IEP; parent(s)/guardian(s) receive copy

If parent/guardian wishes further discussion:

(Within 15 days of receipt of decision)

- Request for second meeting

If parent/guardian disagrees:

(Within 30 days of receipt of initial IPRC decision)

- Parent files notice of appeal with secretary of board

SECOND IPRC MEETING

As soon as possible after the meeting, notice of results sent to relevant persons, along with reasons for changes if there is a revised decision

AFTER SECOND IPRC MEETING

Parent/guardian may:

- Sign consent form, or
- Make no response (board then implements placement; develops IEP)

If parent/guardian disagrees:

(Within 15 days of receipt of decision of the second meeting)

- Parent/Guardian files notice of appeal with secretary of board of second meeting)

24. What organizations are available to assist parents?

Many parent organizations are available to provide information and support to parents of children with exceptional needs.

- ❖ Association for Bright Children (ABC)
- ❖ Autism Society of Ontario (ASO)

- ❖ Council for Exceptional Children
- ❖ Down Syndrome Association of Ontario (DSAO)
- ❖ Integration Action Group of Ontario
- ❖ Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
- ❖ Ontario Association for Community Living (OACL)
- ❖ Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders
- ❖ Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy (OFCP)
- ❖ Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association of Ontario
- ❖ The Easter Seal Society (TESS)
- ❖ Views for the Visually Impaired (VIEWS)
- ❖ Voice for Hearing Impaired Children (VOICE)

These organizations may be represented on the Avon Maitland District School Board's *Special Education Advisory Committee* (SEAC) which advises the District School Board in matters of policy which affect children with exceptional needs.

25. What are the Ministry's provincial and demonstration schools?

The Ministry of Education operates provincial and demonstration schools throughout Ontario for deaf, blind, deaf-blind, and severely learning-disabled students, as well as those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Residential programs are offered at the schools Monday to Friday, for students who live too far from school to travel daily.

Demonstration schools for English-speaking students with ADHD and severe learning disabilities:

Sagonaska School

350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, Ontario K8P 3B2
Phone (613) 967-2830

Trillium School

347 Ontario Street South
Milton, Ontario L9T 3X9
Phone: (905) 878-8428
TTY: (905) 878-7195

Amethyst School

1515 Cheapside Street
London, Ontario N5V 3N9
Phone (519) 453-4408

Robarts School

1515 Cheapside Street
P.O. Box 7360, Station E
London, Ontario N5V 3N9
Phone: (905) 878-2851
Phone: (519) 453-4400
TTY: (519) 453-4400

Schools for the deaf:

Ernest C. Drury School

255 Ontario Street South
Milton, Ontario L9T 2M5

Sir James Whitney School

350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, Ontario K8P 1B2
Phone: (613) 967-2823
TTY: (613) 967-2857

School for the blind & deaf-blind

W. Ross MacDonald School
350 Brant Avenue
Brantford, Ontario N3T 3J9
Phone: (519) 759-0730
TTY: (519-) 759-4741

Francophone school for the deaf and for those with learning disabilities:

Centre Jules-Leger

281 rue Lanark
Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 6R8
Phone: (613) 761-9300
TTY: (613) 761-9302

26. Where can parents obtain additional information?

Additional information can be obtained from:

- the school principal; or
- Superintendent of Education
(Special Education)
Avon Maitland District School Board
62 Chalk Street North, Seaforth, Ontario NOK 1W0
Telephone: (519) 527-0111 or 1-800-592-5437
Fax: (519) 527-0222



62 Chalk Street North
Seaforth, Ontario NOK 1W0
Tel: (519) 527-0111 or 1-800-592-5437
Fax: (519) 527-0222
E-mail: info@fc.amdsb.ca
Website: www.yourschools.ca