DDSB
Ignite Learning

Inclusive Student Services

Special Education Plan

2026-2027

Inclusive
STUDENT SERVICES

Inclusive Student Services

Inclusive Student Services provides a range of services, supports, programs and placements for students with special education needs in the Durham District School Board (DDSB). Students' needs are met through a variety of supports and programs within the DDSB at both the elementary and secondary levels. All programs promote integration and independence that are optimally suited for each individual student.

The DDSB is committed to fostering success and independence for each student by providing a range of pathways, programs, opportunities and services that are responsive to individual identities (including intersecting identities), strengths and needs. Students with special education strengths and needs are supported in inclusive environments that enable them to develop to their potential.

Students are at the centre of all planning. Our ongoing commitment is to provide the structures and supports each student needs to nurture their growth and development in programs which respect dignity, maximize participation, and foster integration and independence as defined for each student based on their individual strengths and needs.

We work with parent(s)/guardian(s) and district staff to determine the placement that best addresses barriers and meets the student's individual needs (whether that is in a regular classroom, or for some students, in a special education class) and to provide appropriate accommodations, where required. This is in keeping with DDSB's roles and responsibilities under the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Education Act, and DDSB policies and procedures (including the Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy, the Human Rights Inclusive Design and Accommodation Procedure and related procedures).

Table of Contents

Section A - Introduction

Standard 1: The Board's Consultation Process 3

Section B - Special Education Programs and Services

Standard 2: The Board's General Model for Special Education 5
Standard 3: Roles and Responsibilities 12
Standard 4: Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies 26
Standard 5: The Identification, Placement and Review Committee Process and Appeals 31
Standard 6: Educational and Other Assessments.....35
Standard 7: Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings..... 40
Standard 8: Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities..... 44
Standard 9: Special Education Placements Provided by the Board 46
Standard 10: Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Transition Planning 61

Standard 11: Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario 65
Standard 12: Special Education Staff 71
Standard 13: Professional (Staff) Development 74
Standard 14: Specialized Equipment Allocation (SEA) 79
Standard 15: Accessibility of School Buildings 82
Standard 16: Transportation 85

Section C – Special Education Advisory Committee
The Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) 89

Section D – Coordination of Services with Other Ministries
Coordination of Services with other Ministries or Agencies 98

Section E – Submission and Availability of Plan 102

Additional Information (Appendices List)
Appendix A – DDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan 116
Appendix B – DDSB Attendance and Engagement Strategies 116
Appendix C – Caregiver Engagement Flyer 116
Appendix D – Program Flyers: AFFIRM and BEME 116
Appendix E – Parent / Guardian Guide to Special Education IPRC 116
Appendix F – Life Beyond High School 116
Appendix G – DDSB Transition Guide 116
Appendix H – SERT e-Bulletin 116
Appendix I – TRAILS Flyer 116
Appendix J – AAC Guidelines 116
Appendix K – Special Education Community Symposium Flyer/Data Overview 116
Appendix L – ACT with ART Flyer 116
Appendix M – Inclusive Skills Workshop Flyer 116
Appendix N – IPRC Timeline Flowchart 116
Appendix O – Glossary of Terms 116
Appendix P – Inclusive Student Services Workshops/Professional Development 116
Appendix Q – Individual Education Plan (IEP) Samples 116
Appendix R – Fostering Skills Supporting Student Transportation 116

Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies 116

THE BOARD'S CONSULTATION PROCESS

SECTION A – Standard 1

Standard 1: The Board's Consultation Process

The purpose of the standard is to provide details of the consultation process to the Ministry and to the public.

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) values collaboration with students, families, community and education partners. We welcome input into our Inclusive Student Services - Special Education Plan at any time through:

- The Inclusive Student Services Department by emailing InclusiveStudentServices@ddsb.ca or by calling 905-666-6371 to connect with a member of the team.
- Local school team(s).
- The DDSB's website General.Inquiry@ddsb.ca or 905-666-5500.
- The DDSB's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).
- Engage DDSB – Central Engagement Tool

SEAC formally reviews the Inclusive Student Services Special Education Plan annually, and throughout the year as the need arises. SEAC members share information and input from their respective associations/agencies and provide feedback. Input from SEAC was received and all feedback was reviewed and included in the report where the suggestions aligned with the Ministry of Education *Standards for School Board's Special Education Plans*.

Summary of Feedback Received as a Result of Consultations

- **Language and Framing:** Revise phrasing regarding IPRC processes to emphasize student strengths and needs rather than just identification; ensure the document clarifies that inclusive education relies on appropriate supports and student well-being rather than defaulting solely to regular class placement.
- **Parental Resources and Engagement:** Enhance parent/guardian sections by including clickable links to referenced documentation and creating a simplified, visual brochure to guide families through the step-by-step IPRC process.
- **Accessibility and Inclusion:** Explicitly incorporate physical accessibility, mobility, medical support, and transportation constraints into IPRC decision-making criteria to ensure safety and logistical needs are addressed.

Inclusive Student Services in the DDSB

Inclusive Student Services provides support for students, families and school teams on inclusion, accommodation and specialized special education and mental health supports.

Information about Inclusive Student Services in the DDSB can be found online: Inclusive Student Services

INCLUSIVE STUDENT SERVICES PLAN • 2026 – 2027

THE BOARD'S GENERAL MODEL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

SECTION B – Standard 2

Standard 2: The Board's General Model for Special Education

The purpose of the standard is to provide information on the Board's guiding principles, philosophy, and service delivery model for the provision of Special Education programs and services.

DDSB Commitments to Indigenous and Human Rights

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) recognizes Indigenous rights are distinct. In the exercise of those rights, Indigenous staff and students shall not be subjected to actions with the aim or effect of depriving these distinct rights.

The DDSB is committed to providing learning and working environments that centre human rights and equity and are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, inclusive, accessible, and free from all forms of discrimination, oppression, and harm.

Upholding Students' Rights and DDSB Responsibilities

The DDSB is committed to upholding students' rights to:

- Meaningfully access educational services without discrimination and to be treated with dignity and respect
- Equitable educational experiences, opportunities, and outcomes
- Inclusive and accessible services, programs, and environments

The DDSB strives to meet its responsibilities through:

- Ontario Human Rights Commission's (OHRC's) Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities ("Policy on Accessible Education"), the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Education Act
- Ministry of Education strategies, directives, and policy and program memoranda
- In alignment with the DDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan by ensuring that special education services promote Meaningful Learning through equitable access to curriculum, support Well-being by centering the student's identity and mental health and build Connected Communities through active engagement with parents and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)."
- DDSB policies and procedures
- Proactive/preventative, inclusive and responsive strategies, initiatives, structures, services, supports, and actions.

DDSB Policies and Procedures

Human Rights Policy

The DDSB's Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy and related procedures provide direction and guidance and set out roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, proactive preventative actions, and transparent processes to support these commitments.

Accessibility Policy

The Accessibility Policy and related procedure supports upholding legislated responsibilities and commitments as outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP), Accessibility Plan, Inclusive Student Services Special Education Plan, and related initiatives.

The Accessibility Policy supports the DDSB to:

1. Meet our commitments and responsibilities to promote accessibility and anti-ableism.
2. Disrupt ableist structures, policies, practices, and rules to enhance accessibility and address individual and systemic accessibility barriers based on ability/disability, neurodivergence, and intersectional discrimination in DDSB services and employment.
3. Uphold principles of dignity and respect
4. Maximize integration, independence, and participation for DDSB students, staff, and community members.

An Inclusive School System

As a district we acknowledge that systemic ableism and other forms of discrimination and oppression are deeply embedded within the education system and structures. This discriminates against, disadvantages, and causes harm to neurodivergent individuals and individuals with disabilities and other intersecting identities (for example, based on ancestry, race, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, creed/religion, socioeconomic status, etc.). It also contributes to and perpetuates disparities and disproportionate educational access, opportunities, experiences, and outcomes.

Our shared commitments and responsibilities to uphold Indigenous and human rights and to centre dignity and respect are essential principles of an inclusive public school system and are necessary to address systemic ableism.

We are working to uncover, name, challenge, disrupt and proactively prevent discriminatory biases, barriers, practices, and structures that impede achievement and well-being for all students. Our ongoing work includes actively addressing:

- Intersectional discrimination.
- Stigma and negative attitudes, stereotypes and assumptions based on neurodiversity, different abilities, and disabilities (including and not limited to assumptions about functional limitations, low expectations, learning disabilities, differences in behaviours, social interactions, cognitive processing and communication, etc.), and how this affects individual and organizational decision-making affecting students.
- Unique accessibility and other barriers (for example, attitudinal, physical, architectural, information/communications or technological barriers) for students with special education strengths and needs.

An inclusive model of special education is one that actively:

- Promotes well-being through identity-affirming approaches and practices.
- Supports all students so they are inspired to succeed.
- Increases awareness and understanding of the social model (versus medical and functional models) of disability and neurodiversity.
- Identifies, prevents, and addresses discriminatory barriers that may affect students' ability to learn and to fully participate in and contribute to society.

As a district, we recognize all students' talents, gifts, abilities, and accomplishments. We honour and affirm the unique, intersectional identities and rich lived experiences that each student and their family bring to our classrooms, schools, and communities.

The DDSB applies human rights, anti-discrimination, Universal Design for Learning, and accessibility principles, approaches, and actions in all aspects of its services and learning environments. In classrooms, the DDSB also uses culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy and differentiated instruction, assessment, and evaluation to support students in their learning.

Duty to Accommodate

Where barriers exist, the DDSB is committed to meeting its legal duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship so that students can meaningfully access educational services without discrimination.

Special Education Programs

The DDSB is committed to fostering success and independence for each student by providing a range of pathways, programs, opportunities, and services that are responsive to individual identities (including intersecting identities), strengths and needs. Students with special education strengths and needs are supported in inclusive environments to develop to their potential.

The DDSB Inclusive Student Services - Special Education Plan has been designed to comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Education Act, and Regulations made under the Act. The DDSB's approach to special education and its special education delivery model are aligned with the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

Placement Decisions

Our ongoing commitment is to provide the structures and supports each student needs to nurture their growth and development in programs which respect dignity, maximize participation, and foster integration and independence as defined for each student based on their identity, strengths and needs. We work with parent(s)/guardian(s) and district staff to determine the placement that best addresses barriers and meets the student's individual needs, whether that is in a regular classroom, or for some students, in a special education class.

The DDSB's approach is informed by and aligns with the OHRC's policy on Accessible Education and Regulation 181/98:

17. (1) When making a placement decision on a referral, the committee shall, before considering the option of placement in a special education class, consider whether placement in a regular class, with appropriate special education services,

(a) would meet the pupil's needs; and

(b) is consistent with parental preferences.

The majority of students with special education strengths and needs are supported through placement in a regular classroom. For most students, as classroom teacher, with the support of the school's Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) and district staff, is able to provide individualized programming that supports students' success. A regular classroom is always an option that parent(s)/guardian(s) may consider. A regular classroom provides opportunity for the student to be with peers, while receiving personalized programming that is outlined in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

The regular class is considered the most inclusive of placements. It is our privilege to be part of the success for all students as we support their "Placement Pathways."

Well-Being and Mental Health Supports

2025-2028 Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan

Embedded in the DDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan (Appendix A) is our collective commitment to support the everyday mental health and well-being of students and staff. We commit to strengthening identity affirming practices. We strive to connect students to, from and through pathways for support. The Action Plan centres on:

- Learn to Understand: The promotion of mental health and well-being through everyday conversations and practices.
- Strengthen Practices: Strength-based mental health promotion, prevention and intervention.
- Connect to Pathways: Strong pathways to, from and through meaningful support for the mental health and well-being of every student that is identity-affirming and culturally relevant.

Examples of actions taken to support the implementation of the Action Plan include but is not limited to:

- District Well-Being Newsletter to support all school staff's implementation of well-being and mental health promotion practices,
- Centrally assigned Educators working within the capacity as Well-Being Facilitators who support schools across the District to implement well-being strategies into their instructional practices,
- ensuring each school has a designated well-being lead who supports communication of curated resources and champions Teir one mental health
- promotion activities within their classrooms and throughout schools, and
- classroom and small group social and emotional learning skills for elementary and secondary students.

Mental Health Supports

Thinking in tiers is common in education and is useful when thinking about the continuum of supports available to support student mental health and well-being.

- Tier 1 is the mental health promotion work done by all staff to create the everyday conditions that foster mentally healthy classrooms and schools for all students.
- Tier 2 focuses on early identification and intervention for those students who may need additional support; and

- Tier 3 focuses on more intensive assessment and intervention services.

Many DDSB teams support everyday conditions for well-being (Tier 1) through to services when individual students need a greater level of support (Tier 2 and 3).

School Staff, as well as Child and Youth Support Workers focus on Tier 1 strategies and the implementation of social emotional learning, positive mental health promotion, prevention and early identification. Speech Language Pathologist in addition to individual student programming supports, help educators shape inclusive classrooms as communication is a key foundation for connection and belonging.

A focus on connection and belonging is the foundation to the DDSB Attendance and Engagement Strategy (Appendix B and Appendix C). School teams, through to consultation and service engaged with the Social Work team, centre individual students to promote well-being, positive school attendance and engagement in learning.

Social Work and Psychological Services Staff provide individual and group-based identify-affirming mental health interventions, school-level consultation, and crisis/traumatic event responses that centre student, caregiver, and community needs.

Teams continue to evolve our service models in support of identity-affirming practices and responsive to where students express support needs. As example, during the 2025-2026 school year, Psychological Services and Social Work staff will continue to provide Black Excellence Made Evident (BEME) and Project AFFIRM (Appendix D).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SECTION B – Standard 3

Standard 3: Roles and Responsibilities

The purpose of the standard is to provide the public with information on roles and responsibilities in the area of Special Education. All are required to comply with and uphold the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Human Rights Code.

The DDSB has a responsibility to provide a safe environment for all students and staff, ensure Indigenous rights and human rights (including centering dignity and respect and the duty to accommodate) are the foundations of the work, and it is the legal responsibility of the DDSB to provide education to students.

Roles and Responsibilities Outlined by the Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education defines roles and responsibilities in elementary and secondary education in several key areas: legislative and policy framework; school system management; funding; programs and curriculum. The roles and responsibilities within special education are outlined below:

The Ministry of Education:

- defines, through the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda, the legal obligations of school boards regarding the provision of special education programs and services, and prescribes the categories and definitions of exceptionality.
- ensures that school boards provide appropriate special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils.
- establishes the funding for special education through the structure of the funding model. The model consists of the Foundation Grant, the Special Education Grant, and other special purpose grants.
- requires school boards to report on their expenditures for special education.
- sets province-wide standards for curriculum and reporting of achievement.
- requires school boards to maintain special education reports, review them annually, and submit amendments to the Ministry.
- requires school boards to establish Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs)
- establishes Special Education Tribunals to hear disputes between parents and school boards regarding the identification and placement of exceptional pupils.
- establishes a provincial Advisory Council on Special Education to advise the Minister of Education on matters related to special education programs and services.
- operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind, or who have severe learning disabilities.

The district school board or school authority:

- establishes school board policy and practices that comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda.
- monitors school compliance with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda
- requires staff to comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda.
- provides appropriately qualified staff to provide programs and services for the exceptional pupils of the board.

- obtains the appropriate funding and reports on the expenditures for special education.
- develops and maintains a special education report that is amended from time to time to meet the current needs of the exceptional pupils of the board.
- reviews the report annually and submits amendments to the Minister of Education
- provides statistical reports to the Ministry as required and as requested.
- prepares a parent guide to provide parent(s)/guardian(s) with information about special education programs, services, and procedures.
- establishes one or more Individual Placement and Review Committee to identify exceptional pupils and determine appropriate placements for them.
- establishes a Special Education Advisory Committee
- provides professional development to staff on special education.

The Special Education Advisory Committee:

- makes recommendations to the board with respect to any matter affecting the establishment, development, and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the board.
- participates in the board's annual review of its special education report.
- participates in the board's annual budget process as it relates to special education.
- reviews the financial statements of the board as they relate to special education.
- provides information to parents, as requested.

The school principal:

- carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda, and through board policies.
- communicates Ministry of Education and school board expectations to staff
- ensures that appropriately qualified staff are assigned to teach special education classes.
- communicates board policies and procedures about special education to staff, students, and parents.
- ensures that the identification and placement of exceptional pupils, through an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC), is done according to the procedures outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and board policies.
- consults with parents and with school board staff to determine the most appropriate program for exceptional pupils.
- ensures the development, implementation, and review of a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), including a transition plan, according to provincial requirements.
- ensures that parents are consulted in the development of their child's IEP and that they are provided with a copy of the IEP.
- ensures the delivery of the program as set out in the IEP.
- ensures that appropriate assessments are requested if necessary and that parental consent is obtained.

The teacher:

- carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda.
- follows board policies and procedures regarding special education.

- maintains up-to-date knowledge of special education practices.
- where appropriate, works with special education staff and parents to develop the IEP for an exceptional pupil.
- communicates the student's progress to parents.
- works with other school board staff to review and update the student's IEP.

The special education teacher, in addition to the responsibilities listed above under "the teacher":

- holds qualifications, in accordance with Regulation 298, to teach special education.
- monitors the student's progress with reference to the IEP and modifies the program as necessary.
- assists in providing educational assessments for exceptional pupils.

The parent/guardian:

- becomes familiar with and informed about board policies and procedures in areas that affect the child.
- participates in IPRCs, parent-teacher conferences, and other relevant school activities.
- participates in the development of the IEP.
- becomes acquainted with the school staff working with the student.
- supports the student at home.
- works with the school principal and teachers to solve problems.
- is responsible for the student's attendance at school.

The student:

- complies with the requirements as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda.
- complies with board policies and procedures.
- participates in IPRCs, parent-teacher conferences, and other activities, as appropriate.

In addition, the DDSB's Indigenous Education Policy, Human Rights Policy, and related procedures (including the Human Rights Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities Framework) outline additional roles and responsibilities for all DDSB community members to contribute to safe, welcoming, respectful, inclusive, equitable, and accessible learning and working environments that are free from all forms of discrimination, oppression, and harm.

Our commitments, through every role in Inclusive Student Services (Special Education), have a foundation in optimizing the potential and achievement of every student. A brief summary, including leadership roles, is found here:

Table 1 – Summary of Inclusive Student Services Roles and Responsibilities

CHILD AND YOUTH SUPPORT WORKERS	Child and Youth Support Workers work directly with school staff to implement Tier One Mental Health classroom and small group strategies, educational programming and support professional learning and skills development in the areas of social-emotional learning, and consultation on the goals established on part of the Positive School Climate team. The student centred, classroom based, whole school approach and role of the team, emphasizes an asset-based approach to building student and staff strengths which can include social emotional skills, related life skills, and can also include behaviour skills training, fostering acquisition of new skills and support for building relationships.
CLASSROOM SUPPORT STAFF	Classroom support staff professionals foster inclusion and support student well-being and learning as part of school teams. Roles include: • **Educational Assistants**, working as part of classroom teams, provide learning & well-being supports for students with special education strengths and programming needs. • **ASL Interpreters** facilitate and/or provide access to communication for students who are D/deaf/hard of hearing. • **Intervenors** facilitate or provide access to communication for students who are Deaf-Blind. • **Language Acquisition Support Worker** supports students in the early learning of ASL as a primary language.
MANAGER OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES	Working with Senior Managers and Clinical Leads, the Manager of Psychological Services co-leads and provides initiatives and ongoing training for staff, while centering commitments to disrupting barriers, structures and practices that impede the achievement and well-being of students and staff. The Manager of Psychological Services also carries out all of the functions and responsibilities of a Clinical Supervisor (consultation, assessment, series, professional learning, crisis response and clinical supervision), and ensures that these are delivered in a professionally responsible manner that promotes student well-being and meets the standards and guidelines of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.
MENTAL HEALTH LEAD	The Mental Health Lead works with system and school leaders to coordinate, develop and implement the Well-Being and Mental Health Action Plan, through a tiered model, in support of students and staff. The Mental Health Lead coordinates and leads board wide initiatives to promote well-being, mental health, reduce stigma and lead focus on increasing knowledge about mental health and well-being.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES STAFF	The Senior Manager Clinical Lead-Psychologist provides leadership to the Psychological Services team in the provision of service and programming that centres commitments to disrupting barriers, structures and practices that impede the achievement and well-being of students and staff. Staff provide five essential functions to support students in the DDSB: assessment, consultation, direct service, capacity building and crisis response, in partnership with colleagues from the Social Work team. Staff who are clinical supervisors of Psychological Services also provide clinical supervision, in accordance with the Standards and codes of ethics of the College of Psychologists of Ontario as one of their role functions. Staff work directly to support the academic achievement and well-being of students within the DDSB, and work within a collaborative framework with staff, parent(s)/guardian(s) and students.
SENIOR MANAGER CLINICAL LEAD PSYCHOLOGIST	The Senior Manager Clinical Lead-Psychologist is responsible for overseeing the professional services provided by Psychological Services staff. Within this scope, the Senior Manager Clinical Lead- Psychologist ensures that staff maintain professional standards and deliver current, evidence-based practices in assessment, consultation and direct services that centre commitments to disrupting barriers, structures and practices that impede the achievement and well-being of students and staff. The Senior Manager Clinical Lead-Psychologist also works with other Clinical Leads and Senior Administration to facilitate the integration of professional support services. As well, the Clinical Lead is responsible for coordinating capacity building professional development delivered by Psychological Service staff. Consultation to system and community-based programs and initiatives is provided when needed
SENIOR MANAGER CLINICAL LEAD SOCIAL WORK AND ATTENDANCE SERVICES	The Senior Manager Clinical Lead-Social Work is responsible for leading and overseeing the quality of Social Work and Attendance services carried out for referred students, and for the provision of direct services to students and parent(s)/guardian(s), as well as consultative support to school personnel and parent(s)/guardian(s) in order to address barriers that may impede success at school.
SENIOR MANAGER CLINICAL LEAD SPEECH LANGUAGE AND HEARING SERVICES	The Senior Manager Clinical Lead-Speech, Language and Hearing is responsible for the quality of speech, language and hearing services carried out for referred students and the provision of direct services to students, consultative support, and capacity building supports to school personnel and parent(s)/guardian(s) to assist students to access and use language to communicate and participate within the school system (through prevention, early intervention, and enhancement) and make academic progress.

SENIOR SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST (SLP)	Reporting to the Senior Manager, Clinical Lead – Speech, Language and Hearing, the Senior SLP, in addition to the duties of an SLP, is responsible for the onboarding of new staff, peer consultation and peer support and providing leadership and support for department and system level initiatives. This is a three year term-based leadership opportunity for a member of the SLP team. 2025-26 is the second year of three, for the inaugural term of this role.
SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER	Reporting to the Senior Manager, Clinical Lead- Social Work, the Senior Social Worker, in addition to the duties of a Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor, is responsible for the onboarding of new staff, peer consultations and peer support, providing leadership and support for various team and practice level initiatives as well as supporting District projects. In collaboration with the Senior Manager, Clinical Lead, the Senior Social Worker participates in the maintenance and/or development of community partnerships and initiatives. This role is a three-year term-based leadership opportunity for a member of the Social Work team.
SOCIAL WORKERS/ATTENDANCE COUNSELLORS	Under the supervision of the Senior Manager Clinical Lead-Social Worker, the Social Work/Attendance team provides both consultative and direct support to students and parent(s)/guardian(s). In the role of Social Worker, the team is responsible for providing social work assessment, brief counselling for students and their parent(s)/guardian(s), advocacy, coordination of services and facilitating referrals to community agencies. They provide consultation and make recommendations to school staff, parent(s)/guardian(s) and department colleagues. The team also provides support in the role of the Attendance Counsellor.
SPECIAL EDUCATION FACILITATOR	Special Education Facilitators are centrally assigned teachers, guided through the leadership of the System Leads –and the Superintendent of Inclusive Student Services. Special Education Facilitators may have portfolio responsibilities to support a Family of Schools or Innovative (Assistive) Technology. Facilitators support school staff in meeting the needs of students with special education strengths and needs, provide guidance and professional collaboration. Facilitators also liaise with schools and parent(s)/guardian(s), assisting all stakeholders in shaping programming and considerations of most appropriate program and placement for individual students.
TEACHERS OF STUDENTS: DEAF HARD OF HEARING BLIND LOW VISION	Teachers of Students Deaf Hard of Hearing (ToDHH) and Teachers of Students Blind Low Vision (ToBLV) are centrally assigned and provide both consultative and direct service for students with hearing and vision accommodation needs and exceptionalities. These specialist teachers work collaboratively with school staff to meet the needs of students, provide programming and specialized equipment resources.

	Initiated for September 2024, each of these teams has a dedicated, leadership secondment, Lead ToDHH and Lead ToBLV, to help support the development and implementation of services and on-going training for staff within and across teams.
SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS (SLPs)	Under the supervision of the Senior Manager Clinical Lead-Speech, Language and Hearing, the SLPs provide both consultative and direct support of oral and written language, including Augmentative/Alternative Communication supports for non-verbal students. In collaboration with families and school teams, SLPs support the academic success and social emotional well-being of students through a variety of services, including assessments, collaboration, training, professional development and connecting with community agencies.
SYSTEM LEAD – INCLUSIVE STUDENT SERVICES	The role of the System Leads – Inclusive Student Services, as centrally assigned Principals, support students, directly reporting to the Superintendent of Inclusive Student Services, by providing leadership of special education programs, supports and department staff. System Leads work collaboratively with other System Leads, departments, Facilitators, Speech-Language, Centrally Assigned Teachers, Social Work, Psychological Services and school-based special education staff to ensure coordination of services for students with special education strengths and needs. This includes supporting IEP development, providing in-service opportunities and provision of resources to staff in developing universal design for learning and differentiated programming including the infusion of technology for students with special education strengths and needs.
THE SUPERINTENDENT INCLUSIVE STUDENT SERVICES (SPECIAL EDUCATION)	The Superintendent of Inclusive Student Services leads coordination of all special education, mental health and day treatment partnership programs and services, including the development and implementation of curriculum and new programs. In addition, ensuring that policies and procedures are developed and followed in accordance with The Education Act, the regulations and Durham District School Board priorities.
TRANSITION AND WORK EDUCATION COORDINATORS	Transition and Work Education Coordinators support students with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities, and their parent(s)/guardian(s), in preparing for post-secondary pathways (work, school & community). Coordinated planning includes building staff knowledge in support of integrated transition planning and building relationships with service-based community partners. Transition and Work Education Coordinators support work education experiences for students building work readiness skills within their secondary learning programs.

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Psychological Services

We are here to help!

Psychological Services team members work with students, caregivers, educators, and with colleagues from across the Durham District School Board (DDSB) to promote student well-being and achievement.

We believe in the fundamental worth of students, their families, and their broader communities. Understanding that relationships are essential to well-being, trust, and a sense of belonging, we offer services that are rooted in anti-oppression. We understand that we are always on the path of learning. We are committed to respecting student voice, the contexts in which learners and their adults live, as well as the dignity of their lived experiences. We embrace a strength-based approach to optimize student potential and we strive to promote safe, welcoming communities where well-being is centered.

Our services include:

- Consultation, with the goal of improving students' learning and social experiences at school;
- Child and adolescent mental health (assessments and interventions);
- Psychological assessment for children and adolescents to effectively link individuals' strengths and needs with supports at school;
- Safety planning and crisis-based response for students and school communities;
- Professional learning support related to student well-being and achievement (e.g., accommodation)

How We Serve

Members of the Psychological Services team may work individually with students, their caregivers, and/or school-based team members. We also work as part of multi-disciplinary Inclusive Student Services Teams. Our work often intersects with the professional expertise including, but not limited to, Instructional Facilitators, Speech Language Pathologists, and Social Workers.

Page 1 / 2

How to Access Psychological Services

Our services are referral based and provided in accordance with the professional standards and ethics of the College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario. To access Psychological Services, consider starting with a conversation with your child's Principal, Special Education Resource Teacher, or Guidance Counsellor. We can also provide mental health support to students if they or their caregivers make a request through the Connect with our Mental Health Team button on the DDSB website.

Consent and Privacy

Psychological Services team members are regulated by the College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario (CPBAO), and the Standards of Professional Conduct and ethical guidelines set out by both the CPBAO and (for staff who are members) the College of Regulated Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO). Our services are provided only with informed consent.

The practices of all Psychological Services staff are governed by regulations set out by the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA). As such, we collect only personal information that is needed to provide services for which consent has been granted.

All personnel are trained on matters relating to privacy and confidentiality. Personal information is not disclosed without knowledge or expressed consent. Under the regulations, there are exceptions to maintaining confidentiality, and Psychological Services staff members will explain these to you before you agree to our provision of any services. Services are voluntary. Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

Inclusive Student Services

Psychological Services is a part of Inclusive Student Services within the DDSB. Our services are delivered within the framework of the district's Inclusive Student Services and Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plans, as well as the Indigenous Education and Human Rights Policies of the DDSB. We are committed to providing services for students within a supportive environments that centre their identities and facilitates their achievement of goals and potential.

More Information

If you would like further information about Psychological Services, please contact one of the following professionals at your school:

- Principal or Vice-Principal
- Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT)/Guidance Team (secondary)
- The member from Psychological Services assigned to your school
- Manager of Psychological Services or
- Senior Manager and Clinical Lead of Psychological Services.

Page 2 / 2

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Speech and Language Services

THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

"Language is the basis for thinking, communicating, and learning. Students need language skills to comprehend ideas and information, to interact socially, to inquire into areas of interest and study, and to express themselves clearly and demonstrate their learning."

Ontario Ministry of Education, The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Language, 2023

Who are we?

Speech-Language Pathologists (S-LPs) are part of the Durham District School Board's (DDSB) Inclusive Student Services. Our team has specialized training in communication, speech, language, and literacy. We work with students, families, educators, and professionals to create inclusive and accessible learning environments. All S-LPs have a master's degree and are registered with the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO).

What do we do?

S-LPs respect and honour each student's unique identity, lived experiences, and ways of communicating. S-LPs support students' academic, social, and emotional success through:

- **Assessments** – Evaluating speech, language, and communication skills using various assessment methods that respect each student's development, home language, and culture.
- **Collaboration** – Partnering with educators, support staff, families, and other professionals to set goals and strategies that make learning accessible.
- **Training & Support** – Teaching and modeling ways to enhance communication skills for all, including Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) users.
- **Workshops** – Providing learning opportunities for parents, educators, and community partners.
- **Community Connections** – Coordinating with community agencies and making referrals when needed (e.g., Grandview Kids School-Based Rehabilitation Services).

Page 1 / 2

Who We Support

We work with students from kindergarten to Grade 12 to support:

- **Understanding spoken language, written text, and/or picture communication symbols.**
- **Expressing themselves through speech, writing, and other communication methods.**
- **Developing communication skills for social interactions.**

While early intervention is a priority, we support students of all ages.

Accessing Our Services

- **Services can be requested by parents/guardians, students, school staff, or community agencies (with consent) through the school's Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT).**
- **Parental/guardian informed consent is required before services begin.**

Consent & Privacy

We follow the ethical guidelines of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO) and comply with the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) to ensure your child's privacy.

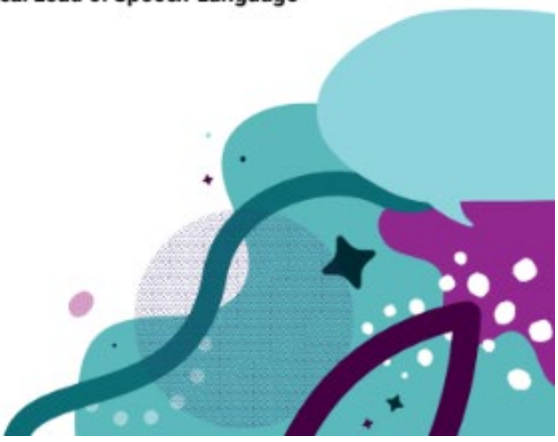
How to connect with Speech and Language Services

For more information, contact the Senior Manager and Clinical Lead of Speech-Language and Hearing Services:

1-800-265-3968 ext. 6378 or 905-666-6378

DDSB Speech and Language Services

Inclusive
STUDENT SERVICES



DDSB
Ignite Learning

Social Work Services

Who are we?

Members of the DDSB Social Work Services team all hold a Master of Social Work degree and are registered with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers. Social Workers engages with students, families/caregivers, and staff throughout DDSB schools.

What do we do?

Social Workers provide voluntary, consent based, student-centred services from equity and identity affirming perspectives which are aligned with relevant legislation, DDSB policies, and college requirements. Social Work Services supports student mental health and wellbeing, student/school engagement, and attendance needs. **We recognize that students have unique lived experiences and narratives about the things that cause them stress. These may include but are not limited to:**

- emerging or intensifying mental health needs,
- experiences of interpersonal and systemic racism and oppression,
- a lack of belonging and sense of safety,
- harassment, discrimination, and bullying,
- barriers to engagement leading to school avoidance,
- family and community concerns,
- and various psychosocial needs.

These stressors intersect in a way that may impact students' mental health, well-being, and sense of safety, influencing how they may experience school and personal success.

DDSB Social Workers offer trauma informed, student-centred services, that focus on intrinsic and self-motivated goals rooted in student direction and choice. We often include and work with families/caregivers, school staff, and other people in the student's circle depending on the unique circumstances of the young person, and in line with the student's consent to do so.

Page 1 / 2

Our services include:

- **Providing staff and system consultations to foster individual student well-being and success, as well as supporting schoolwide initiatives/strategies that promote mentally healthy and identity-affirming schools,**
- **Delivering one-to-one direct and group social work services with students to support mental health, such as skill building, assertive communication, safety, and other student directed goals,**
- **Engagement and attendance services; identifying and addressing barriers to student engagement and attendance in collaboration with student, family/caregiver, and schools,**
- **Connecting families and students with community services based on their identified needs and goals,**
- **Advocacy for students in schools and in the community,**
- **Providing crisis intervention and traumatic incident response/support for students and school communities,**
- **Offering targeted classroom/group interventions,**
- **Facilitating staff and system capacity building.**

Informed Consent is required to proceed with any services and must be obtained by Social Work Services. Informed consent may be obtained from parent/guardian, and youth may also be able to provide their own informed consent to services. Our work with students and their caregivers/parents is governed by legislation and college requirements pertaining to privacy and confidentiality *(PHIPA, MFIPA, HCCA, CYFSA)*.

How to connect with Social Work Services

Social Work Services can be accessed in a variety of ways.

Student's teacher or preferred adult:

- through school Administration (Principal, Vice Principal),
- through Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT), Guidance,
- or by using the "connect with our mental health team" button on the DDSB's website ddsb.ca/en/family-and-community-support/mental-health

Inclusive
STUDENT SERVICES



EARLY IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

SECTION B – Standard 4

Standard 4: Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies

The purpose of the standard is to provide details of the board's early identification procedures and intervention strategies to the ministry and to the public.

Guiding Principles

The Durham District School Board has procedures to identify each child's level of development, learning abilities and educational programming needs. As per Ministry PPM 11, programs are in place to ensure that educational programs are designed to accommodate these needs and to facilitate each child's growth and development.

The DDSB uses a systematic approach to providing high-quality, evidence-based assessment and instruction and appropriate supports that respond to students' individual strengths, interests, and needs. It is based on frequent monitoring of student progress and the use of assessment data, focusing on learning levels and input from students and their parent(s)/guardian(s), to recognize when students are experiencing learning challenges and to plan for increasing the learning supports that may be needed to address individual student needs while always building from their strengths and where they are. This tiered approach can be used to address academic, physical, communication and behavioural needs. The nature, intensity, and duration of supports may be decided by teachers individually or in collaboration with a school team, always on the basis of evidence derived from monitoring student achievement. (Learning for All Kindergarten - Grade 12)

The Durham District School Board recognizes the importance of the first contact parent(s)/guardian(s) have with the school system. It is the goal of each school to provide a welcoming orientation for all students and their families entering school for the first time, including those who may have differing needs.

The Right to Read Inquiry Report includes recommendations for yearly evidence-based screening of students in their early years of schooling (Kindergarten to Grade 2) in word-reading accuracy and fluency. Information from the Ministry of Education and our continued learning as a district will inform our planning for implementation of this commitment and impact our early intervention and assessment planning from what is currently reflected in this plan.

Early Identification Process

Once a child who might need additional support has been registered, the school and parent(s)/guardian(s) work with the Inclusive Student Services resource staff to understand the child's strengths, abilities, and needs, and discuss and plan for supports, programs and services that will help the child experience the most successful school entry. An Inclusive Student Services Supplemental Registration Package may be completed to share relevant information that will help with identifying program options.

Strong partnerships exist with agencies serving pre-school children. Discussions may be held before a child begins school to help understand the needs of the student to support a smooth transition into school.

For a student with additional support needs, in collaboration with parent/caregivers, the process typically involves:

- considering any other identity based or intersectional needs
- request for parental/guardian consent to share information
- a contact with pre-school providers
- resource staff visits to the pre-school or childcare
- meetings with parent(s)/guardian(s) and any involved advocates/consultative staff/stakeholders involved with the child
- formation of an entry plan including consideration for accessibility, required equipment, class match and other supports
- visits for students and parent(s)/guardian(s) to the new school
- in-service workshops as required for the staff who provide services, supports and programs for the student

The DDSB will be releasing a revised teaching and learning policy in the Fall of 2026 that will include information regarding considerations for students with special education needs. The DDSB supports early recognition and a tiered approach to those supports by providing in- service opportunities and resources currently used in classrooms such as the following for classroom teachers, special education staff and school administration:

- Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction
- Professional Resources and Instruction for Math Educations PRIME
- Acadience
- Gap closing strategies
- Structured teaching strategies

It is possible that some children may be referred to an Identification, Placement, Review Committee (IPRC) for identification, but meaningful inclusion in early years classrooms provides access to stimulating peer interaction opportunities, inquiry-based learning and a language-rich environment.

Please refer to the DDSB Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education IPRC (Appendix E), for details regarding policies/procedures for informing parent(s)/guardian(s) that their child may require an IPRC.

The Educator's Role in Early Identification

The educator makes professional observations of the student in various settings, co-ordinates the information that is available from those who are involved and works collaboratively to determine appropriate services, programs and supports. The educator will discuss additional supports that might be needed with administration, the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) and the Inclusive Student Services Team (where appropriate). An intervention plan might be put in place, as outlined in the Supporting Many Paths to Success document (see following page).

The Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Role in Early Identification

The parent(s)/guardian(s) shares observations based on interactions in the home and outside the school setting. The parent/guardian may choose to provide any assessments about their child that adds to the overall understanding of their child's strengths, abilities, interests and needs.

Supporting Many Paths

The following Supporting Many Paths to Success document provides an overview to families and school teams on the process of accommodation including consideration of Individual, Placement, Review Committee process.



SPECIAL EDUCATION

Supporting Many Paths to Success

Inclusive
STUDENT SERVICES

STEP 1 Teacher Assesses Strengths and Needs of Student

NOTE: Steps 1 - 4 **MUST** precede the *Consent for Service*

1. Recognizes a learning gap, unique pattern of strength/need or significant concern;
2. Communicates with parent(s)/guardian(s), principal, and Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT);
3. Accommodates program to meet student needs;
4. Evaluates the effectiveness of accommodations/ interventions;
5. Student Summary created in PowerSchool (PSP).

If accommodations/interventions meet the student's needs
- continue with selected strategies;
- monitor progress interventions meetings, in-school team meetings.

If accommodations/interventions do not yet meet the student's needs
- meet with parents and SERT;
- discuss observations, data collected, patterns/trends;
- continue classroom assessment and begin intervention checklist;
- develop plan involving accommodations and develop a home-support plan;
- implement new strategies/interventions and evaluate;
- continue classroom assessment and intervention;
- add to Student Summary created in PSP.

MOVE ON TO STEP 2

STEP 2 The Special Education Resource Teacher

1. Will observe the student and collect data pertaining to strengths and needs and interests;
2. Will create a plan of action based on the observation results and set a date to evaluate progress;
3. May provide and coordinate more direct support to the teacher and student through a variety of approaches;
4. Share plan of action with parent(s)/guardian(s).

If accommodations/interventions meet the student's needs
- continue with current accommodations and strategies and interventions;
- document all accommodations/interventions and evaluate;
- maintain on-going assessment and evaluation;
- update Student Summary and continue to gather documentation.

If accommodations/interventions do not yet meet the student's needs
- SERT activates Special Education Team using Student Smmary and informs parent(s)/guardians(s).

MOVE ON TO STEP 3

STEP 3 In-School Team

1. Teacher and SERT present classroom observations and/or assessment results to in-school team and outline current accommodations;
2. Team brainstorms strategies/suggestions including community partners/services;
3. Team collaboratively updates the action plan;
4. Update parent(s)/guardian(s) - SERT and teacher discuss program accommodations and interventions with parent(s)/guardian(s).

If accommodations/interventions meet the student's needs
- ensure ongoing communication with parent(s)/guardian(s);
- document success of the recommendations within the action plan.

If accommodations/interventions do not yet meet the student's needs
- assess implemented accommodations/interventions;
- develop further revisions/changes to the action plan;
- set a timeline to monitor and review accommodations/interventions and schedule next meeting.

MOVE ON TO STEP 4

STEP 4 Pre-Referral Consultation

1. Pre-Referral consultation occurs with the Family of Schools Special Education Team to determine appropriate services;
2. Academic Assessment may be considered at this time for further information of student needs;
3. No identifying information is shared at this point.

NOTE: Steps 1 - 4 **MUST** precede the *Consent for Service*

If accommodations/interventions meet the student's needs
- record accommodations for further reference;
- continue with on-going assessment, accommodations, intervention and evaluation;
- continue to involve school resource personnel as needed.

If accommodations/interventions do not yet meet the student's needs
- obtain parental consent for school-based assessment by SERT;
- discuss with parents possible special education support services;
- obtain signed consent for services on PSP;
- give parent(s)/guardians(s) a copy of the "Protecting Personal Health Information" pamphlet.

MOVE ON TO STEP 5

STEP 5 ISS Referral Submitted

1. SERT verifies that appropriate forms and documentation are completed and sent to Special Education Support staff;
2. Informed Consent by Service Professional.
   - Special Education support staff provide communication to parent(s)/guardian(s) to secure informed consent;
   - Special Education support staff ensure that the parent(s)/ guardian(s) are aware of the nature of services to be provided, appropriate timelines and confidentiality.
3. Support from Special Education Services
   - Special Education support staff may visit classroom, observe and provide further assessment, program accommodation, strategies and materials as required;
   - SERT continues to update teacher and administration;
   - Special Education support staff involvement may be consultative and/or involve direct student support.
4. Determine if IPRC is warranted at this time.

If accommodations/interventions meet the student's needs
- document changes to program;
- report card reflects progress;
- on-going assessment and evaluation;
- continue information sharing with parent(s)/guardian(s) and school/ Special Education staff.

If accommodations/interventions do not yet meet the student's needs
- set up a Care Conference with team and parent(s)/guardian(s).

MOVE ON TO STEP 6

STEP 6 Care Conference

1. Special Education Parent Guide provided to parent(s)/ guardian(s);
2. Parent(s)/guardian(s), teacher, SERT, Administrator attend a meeting to discuss concerns/next steps.

If additional programming/interventions meet student's needs
- no IPRC at this time; continue to monitor.

If following the care conference and all parties are in agreement
- hold an initial meeting - Identification, Placement, Review Committee (IPRC);
- on-going monitoring and development of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) by school staff, in conjunction with parent(s)/guardian(s), community and relevant support staff.

Acknowledge: Ministry of Education

THE IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC) PROCESS AND APPEALS

SECTION B – Standard 5

Standard 5: The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process and Appeals

The purpose of the Standard is to provide details of the board's IPRC process to the Ministry and to the public.

The DDSB Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education IPRC (Appendix E) includes emphasis on the importance of ongoing parent/guardian voice in program and pathway planning. Consultation and collaboration with families/legal guardians on pathway considerations and placements must be an essential component of the IPRC meeting process.

The DDSB Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education IPRC can be found in Appendix E. We also have a flow chart that outlines the IPRC process (Appendix N).

Support Resources

- DDSB Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education IPRC
- Video Recording - DDSB Special Education Placement Options
- IPRC Timeline Flowchart
- Ministry of Education – Identifying Students with Special Education Needs

Regulation 181/98 requires that each board establishes one or more Committee(s) for the identification, placement and review of exceptional students.

As of April 2026, 13,749 students have active Individual Education Plans (IEPs) outlining their learning goals and strategies based on formal Identification, Placement and Review Committee decisions. Aligned with Ministry regulation of Regular Class placement being most inclusive, 11,003 of these students' access through Regular Class placement. We also support 230 students across the system who have not been formally identified but are supported by an IEP.

Inclusive Student Services support approximately 15,000 students annually, encompassing those with IEPs and/or receiving services such as Psychological Services, Social Work, Speech-Language Pathology, and specialized programming (e.g., Services for students Blind Low Vision, Services for students D/deaf hard of hearing and Transition Coordinators).

The following procedures are based on Regulation 181/98 and outline the process school principals are to follow.

> ***17.*** *(1) When making a placement decision on a referral under section 14, the committee shall, before considering the option of placement in a special education class, consider whether placement in a regular class, with appropriate special education services,*
> *(a) would meet the pupil's needs; and*
> *(b) is consistent with parental preferences. O. Reg. 181/98, s. 17 (1); O. Reg. 443/24, s. 10.*

(See standard 9 for additional information regarding placement options).

In the Durham District School Board, IPRCs are led by school teams. The IPRC Committee is comprised of at least three designated staff from the DDSB. These will include at least one Superintendent and/or Principal/Vice-Principal. It may include the System Lead for Inclusive Student Services, or other System Leads from the central office. Others might include:

- Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT), or Curriculum Lead of Special Education from the School
- Classroom Teacher and/or other teachers from the school
- Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing or Teacher of the Blind and Low Vision
- Instructional Facilitators
- Professional support staff from the Inclusive Student Service Team (ISS) e.g., Psychological Services or Speech and Language Pathologists

The Committee may meet in-person or through a secure virtual platform; based on parent/guardian preference. A principal may refer the student to an IPRC either upon written notification to the parent(s)/guardian(s); or upon written request of parent(s)/guardians(s). As a parent or guardian, you can also submit a written request for an IPRC meeting to the school principal. An IPRC meeting to review a student's identification and placement is held annually. After a student has been in a special education placement for three months a parent can request a review IPRC meeting any time.

In the Durham District School Board in the 2025-2026 school year, a total of 5,967 referrals (new or reopened) were made in addition to consents for services with continuity from previous year. There were 15,318 reviews and 4 appeals were filed with the district as of April 30, 2026.

Table 2 - At the IPRC Meeting

<table>
<tr><th colspan="6">At the IPRC Meeting</th></tr>
<tr><th>Principal/Designate</th><th>Referring Teacher(s)</th><th>Special Education Resource Teacher</th><th>Inclusive Student Services</th><th>Parent(s)/ Legal Guardian(s)</th><th>Student</th></tr>
<tr>
<td>• Chairs the meeting; Explains the role of the Committee;
• Invites each person in attendance with knowledge of the student to present information.
• Considers information relevant to the student's interests, strengths and needs</td>
<td>• Presents all relevant information that supports identification(or not), including student strengths and needs</td>
<td>• Presents all Relevant information that supports identification (or not), including student strengths and needs</td>
<td>• May be invited to attend and review any recent assessments and;
• Acts as a resource to assist in the interpretation of reports from other agencies.
• Translator or Interpreter, if required</td>
<td>• Shares any available reports with Committee;
• Provides any further information
• Asks questions, and/or clarifications and any other relevant data
• Can invite an advocate/ support to join the meeting</td>
<td>• Participates in IPRCs as appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">At the IPRC Meeting, the Committee May Decide to:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">• Recommend identification or decide that an identification is not required;
• Recommend placement;
• Defer decision if the Committee requires more information.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">After the IPRC Meeting</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Principal/Designate
• Provides one copy of the Statement of Decision to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student who is 16 years or older;
• Places one copy of the Statement of Decision in the Ontario Student Record (OSR);
• Within 30 days of IPRC, provides one copy of IEP to the parents(s)/guardian(s) and the student who is 16 years or older;
• Places one copy of the IEP in the OSR

For Parent(s)/Guardian(s):
If you disagree with the IPRC decision, you are able, within 15 calendar days of receiving the decision, request in writing an additional meeting to re-evaluate the decision of the IPRC.
If after the second meeting to re-evaluate the IPRC decision you disagree with the recommendation, you may indicate an appeal of the decision. Notification is made in writing to the Superintendent of Education – Inclusive Student Services and must be made within 15 calendar days. Flexibility in scheduling may be needed to accommodate the schedules of those involved in the appeal process.
Further information is available within the DDSB Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education IPRC</td></tr>
</table>

EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS

SECTION B – Standard 6

Standard 6: Educational and Other Assessments

The purpose of the standard is to provide details of the board's assessment policies and procedures and to make parent(s)/guardian(s) aware of the types of assessment tools used by district teams, the ways in which assessments support programming for students, duty bearer responsibilities and the process by which assessment results may be used to inform Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) decisions.

The DDSB recognizes potential biases and barriers in assessment tools and the potential for bias of those facilitating and/or analyzing the assessments results. In keeping with our commitments to Indigenous rights, human rights, and equity, the DDSB considers students' identities, strengths and needs when conducting assessments and when making related programming recommendations, plans and decisions.

The purpose of assessment is to better learn how children and youth learn. The information gathered is used to inform educational programing for students and is completed in collaboration with parent(s)/guardian(s) and where appropriate includes student voice. Educators are supported in the use of assessment strategies used through a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) lens.

The process of assessment is dynamic and ongoing to:

- help to identify strengths, abilities and potential educational, learning program needs
- answer specific questions or concerns
- assist in planning effective programming, including accommodations
- determine next steps in programming adjustments responsive to individual student
- help parent(s)/guardian(s) formulate further understanding of the child's learning potential
- support staffing resource allocation considerations (e.g., Functional Vision Assessment for potential allocation of Teacher of Blind Low Vision and/or Intervenor support)
- help support programming to maximize participation, learning, and well-being.

Parent/Guardian Consent

Informed and written consent from parent(s)/guardian(s) for students under 18 years of age is obtained for all referrals for formal assessments and clinical services and access to the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR). Information to be reviewed or shared may include, but is not limited to, that which is contained in the OSR. This information is obtained and used only for the improvement of instruction and other education of the student in accordance with the Education Act, (R.S.O. 1990. S.266(2)) and is collected, transmitted, retained and disposed of confidentially in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (R.S.O. 1990 c. M. 56).

Consent for Sharing Information and Protection of Privacy

All information is collected, stored, and shared in accordance with the Education Act, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) and other legislation that governs the use of personal information. A separate consent form, the

Release of Confidential Information, must be signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) or capable student to share information with outside agencies and/or service providers.

Classroom Literacy Assessments

In accordance with Policy/Program Memorandum #168: Reading Instruction and Early Reading Screening, all DDSB schools continue early reading screenings for students.

The chosen screener is Acadience Reading K-6, a widely utilized tool across Ontario. This tool supports our commitment to ensuring students' academic success by monitoring their foundational reading skills development. The primary objectives include individualizing program planning for students who may require additional support, guiding tailored instructional strategies, and enhancing literacy outcomes.

Acadience Reading K-6 serves various purposes, including identifying students at risk of reading difficulties, aiding teachers in pinpointing areas requiring instructional reinforcement, monitoring progress, and evaluating instructional interventions.

The Ministry of Education requires all students in Year 2 of Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 to undergo early reading screening twice per school year. The second screening is only mandatory for students who did not meet the benchmark in the first screening. Early reading screening complements, rather than replaces, a repertoire of classroom-based assessments.

Communication of Assessment Information

Upon completion of an assessment, SERTs, Speech-Language Pathologists, Audiologists, Psychologists, Psychological Associates, and/or Psychometrists, discuss the results with the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s). A written confidential report is prepared for parent(s)/guardian(s) which, subject to client consent for release of information, a copy of may be placed in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR). An electronic copy of the report is uploaded to a confidential records management system within our Inclusive Student Services.

For Psychological Services, the communication of a diagnosis is a controlled act under the Registered Health Professions Act (RHPA), 1991. The Act requires that diagnoses (e.g., learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, etc.) be formulated and communicated directly by a Licensed Psychological practitioner (i.e., Psychologist, Psychological Associate).

The following are some commonly used assessment tools employed by DDSB staff to assist in understanding how students learn and engage with school:

Table 3 - Commonly Used Assessment Tools

Understanding Student Strengths and Programming Needs	Assessment Facilitated by:	Assessment Tools (these are commonly used assessment tools, but not an exhaustive list)	Average Wait Time for Assessment
Understanding student strengths and next steps in learning in language and numeracy	Classroom Teacher	Early Numeracy Observation Tool (ENOT) Leaps and Bounds Nelson Math Pre- Assessment Acadience Universal Screener Education Perfect Classroom-Based Assessment (Conversation, Observations and Products) Math Up Assessing Reading Multiple Measures DIBELS QPS/QSS Phonics for Reading RewardsSTEP Assessment for Multi-Language Learners (MLL)	Assessment is on-going within the classroom
Program not yet meeting student's learning needs; broader understanding helpful in supporting programming decisions and supports. **Behavioural concerns that may impact learning**	Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT)	Key Math Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (KTEA) Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA)	3 to 6 months Efforts to conduct FBA in a timely manner, prioritizing safety concerns
Social, behavioural, cognitive, or mental health concerns that impact upon the student's learning or school functioning and have not been responsive to school-based interventions.	Psychologists, Psychological Associates, Psychometrists	Tools chosen by staff are suited to the assessment focus and may vary accordingly. Direct observations and/or dynamic assessments supplement the use of formal assessment tools.	Efforts to conduct formal assessments in a timely manner. Balance of need for assessment with priorities for other service functions, in collaboration with school staff and parent/guardians.

Concerns regarding auditory and/or visual access that are not responsive to universal classroom intervention	Teacher of Deaf Hard of Hearing Teacher of Blind Low Vision	Informal observations and assessments Collaborative/integrated service assessments. Wide range of formal assessments relative to the presenting programming concern	Complete priority assessments within the school year.
Concerns regarding oral language, literacy, speech, augmentative and alternative communication, and social communication development that have not been responsive to Tier 1 or 2 S-LP supports and/or school-based interventions	Speech-Language Pathologist (S-LP)	Assessment tools are chosen based on the area of concern and may include family/school questionnaires, standardized assessments, dynamic assessment, and direct classroom observation.	Efforts to conduct formal assessments in a timely manner. Balance of need for assessment with priorities for other service functions, in collaboration with school staff and parent/guardians.
Student experiences that impact student learning, school engagement, and functioning at school: emotional challenges, crisis, family or relationship challenge, mental health concerns.	Social Worker	Assessment based on information from student, and/or the parent(s)/guardian(s). Classroom observation Information from school supports and education staff review of school records with consent Contact with community agencies Use of mental health and well-being tools	Student usually seen within a week from time of referral for initial consultation

SPECIALIZED HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

SECTION B – Standard 7

Standard 7: Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings

The purpose of the standard is to provide details of the board's specialized health support services to the Ministry and to the public.

The provision of health support services to students in school settings is governed by the Ministry Education Policy/Program Memorandum 81. This policy document outlines the shared responsibility for the provision of health support services amongst the Ministries of Education, Health, Long-Term Care, and Children, Community and Social Services. At the time of publishing the DDSB Special Education Plan for 2023-2024, the Ministry of Education had gathered consultation on proposed revision to PPM81 but no further communication has been received. If changes are made at the provincial level impacting Specialized Heath Support Services in School Settings, the Inclusive Student Services team, in consultation with district senior leadership team, will revise to reflect any changes to service responsibilities or access.

The expectations of the Ministry of Education are that all school boards develop and maintain policies to support students who have asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, or are at risk for anaphylaxis are set in PPM 161 – Supporting Children and Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions in Schools. These are medical conditions referred to as prevalent medical conditions and have the potential to result in a medical incident or emergency.

The Durham DSB has the following related procedures:

- Supporting Children and Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions in Schools: Anaphylaxis
- Supporting Children and Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions in Schools: Asthma
- Supporting Children and Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions in Schools: Diabetes
- Supporting Children and Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions in School: Epilepsy.

All four procedures for students with prevalent medical conditions require that schools create a Plan of Care in conjunction with parent(s)/guardian(s), the student, and the appropriate medical practitioner to support each presenting student.

Administration of prescribed medication to students during the school day is addressed under the board's Policy and Procedure regarding Administration of Prescriptive Oral Medication. Inquiries can be made through the Principal/Vice-Principal.

Eligibility Criteria for School Health Support Services

The eligibility criteria for the provision of School Health Support Services is as follows:

1. The person must be enrolled as a pupil at a school or be receiving satisfactory instruction at home in accordance with clause 21(2) (a) of the *Education Act*.
2. The person must require the services
   (i) in order to be able to attend school, participate in school routines and receive instruction,
   (ii) in order to be able to receive satisfactory instruction at home in accordance with clause 21(2) (a) of the *Education Act*.
3. The person must be an insured person under the *Health Insurance Act*.
4. The school or home in which the service is to be provided must have the physical features necessary to enable the service to be provided.

5. The risk that a service provider who provides the service to the person who requires it, will experience
   (i) must not be significant, or
   (ii) if it is significant, the service provider must be able to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk so that it is no longer significant

The DDSB will work collaboratively with community partners to determine if directives of a plan of care have been met or accommodation is no longer required. Should parents wish to review or dispute the provision of services provided by the school, they should connect with a DDSB school Principal to review services in consultation with Inclusive Student Services team. For services provided by Ministry of Health, information regarding review and appeal of service provision exists within their individual service information. PPM 81 provides additional information regarding conflict resolution for service provision.

In Durham Region, School Based Rehabilitation Services are provided through Grandview Kids, the local Children's Treatment Centre.

School Health Support Services and the board are as follows:

Table 4 - School Health Support Services

Specialized Health Support Service	Agency or position of person who performs the service in school setting	Eligibility criteria for students to receive the service	Procedures for resolving disputes about eligibility and level of support
Nursing	Ministry of Health: local	Referral from Health	Ministry of Health: local
Occupational therapy	Ministry of Health: Grandview Kids	Referral and Assessment	Grandview Kids
Physiotherapy	Ministry of Health: Grandview Kids	Referral and Assessment	Grandview Kids
Speech therapy	Ministry of Health: Grandview Kids - School- Based Rehab Services	Referral by school or other agency for speech disorders	Grandview Kids School -Based Rehab Services, board SLP and Clinical Lead SLP as needed
Catheterization (clean and intermittent)	Ministry of Education/board - EA	Direction from a doctor	Principal and/or System Lead – Inclusive Student
Catheterization (sterile and intermittent)	Ministry of Health: local	Ministry of Health: local	Ministry of Health: local
Suctioning: Shallow (oral or nasal suction surface)	Ministry of Education/ School Staff- EA	Direction from doctor	Principal and/or System Lead – Inclusive Student Services
Suctioning: Deep	Ministry of Health: local	Ministry of Health: local	Ministry of Health: local

Lifting, positioning, feeding and toileting	Ministry of Education/ School Staff - EA	Direction from doctor, therapist	Principal and/or System Lead – Inclusive Student Services
G tube feeding	Ministry of Health: local	Ministry of Health	Ministry of Health: local

Please note: Chart includes information available up to May 2024.
Updates will be made and posted online as changes to Health Services are made in Ontario.

CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS OF EXCEPTIONALTIES

SECTION B – Standard 8

Standard 8: Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities

The purpose of the standard is to make information on the Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities available to the public, including parent(s)/guardian(s) and community associations.

In an actioned commitment to anti-ableism, we affirm disability and neurodiversity as vital expressions of human diversity that enrich our learning and working communities. Drawing on Dr. Gillian Parekh's work in *Addressing Ableism in Education*, this commitment includes challenging the limitations of the medical model of exceptionalities by embracing inclusive, identity-affirming approaches that recognize neurodiverse learners and colleagues as assets—bringing unique perspectives, strengths, and contributions.

As a district, we are committed to addressing ableism, shifting practices to an asset-based approach to inclusion and challenging medical models which focus on diagnosis and/or deficit. As a district, we acknowledge and commit to the work that must be done to make these shifts.

The Education Act identifies five categories of exceptionalities for exceptional students which are used by the DDSB for the purpose of IPRC decisions:

- **Behaviour**
- **Communication** (Autism, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Language Impairment, Speech Impairment, Learning Disability)
- **Intellectual** (Giftedness, Mild Intellectual Disability, Developmental Disability)
- **Physical** (Physical Disability, Blind and Low Vision)
- **Multiple**

Further information about the five categories of exceptionalities, and their subcategories (listed above in parenthesis), can be found in the Ministry of Education resource:

Special Education in Ontario, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Resource Guide (2024)

SPECIAL EDUCATION PLACEMENTS PROVIDED BY THE BOARD

SECTION B – Standard 9

Standard 9: Special Education Placements

The purpose of the standard is to make information about Special Education Placement in the Durham District School Board available to the public, including parent(s)/guardian(s) and community associations.

The DDSB is committed to all students and to providing services and learning environments that are safe, welcoming, respectful, inclusive, equitable and accessible, and free from discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code. In partnership with parent(s)/guardian(s), the DDSB considers the student's identity and individual learning interests, strengths and needs. The DDSB provides a range of differentiated placements, programs, interventions and individualized accommodations to maximize participation, integration and independence, enable meaningful access to education, and support student success.

Students' needs can be met through a variety of programs, placements and class types within the DDSB. We strive to help every student meet their full potential, while fostering the highest level of independence possible. We work with parent(s)/guardian(s) and board staff to determine the placement that best meets the student's needs, whether that is in a regular classroom, or for some students, in a special education placement program. We place a strong emphasis on the inclusion of students with special education strengths and needs. All placements are reviewed on an annual basis at Identification Placement Review Committee (IPRC) meetings to determine placement for the following year.

The majority of students with special education strengths and needs, access learning through a regular classroom placement. For most students, a classroom teacher, with the support of the school's Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) and board staff, is able to provide individualized programming to support student success. A regular classroom is always an option that parent(s)/guardian(s) may consider. A regular classroom allows the student to be with their peers, while receiving personalized programming that is outlined in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). The regular class is considered the most inclusive placement.

Our ongoing commitment is to provide the structures and supports each student needs to foster their growth and development in programs which foster integration and independence as defined for each student based on their interests, strengths and needs. We continue to learn and grow to uphold our commitments to Indigenous rights, human rights, equity and inclusion.

Transition Planning

From the first day of school to graduation or completion, our District embeds transition planning into every stage of a student's journey, recognizing that successful navigation of both small daily shifts and major educational milestones is essential to equitable student success. This includes, for students with complex programming needs, early start to transition planning for first entry to school and, through Integrated Transition Planning (Appendix G), long-term planning for life beyond secondary.

From the DDSB Transition Guide (Appendix G), "Flexible approaches, consultation with families/caregivers to consider students' individual identities, needs and circumstances that

impact transitions, need to be considered in focusing scope and implementing transition strategies and supports for individual students. Collaboration and ongoing communication are essential to exploring options. Our shared commitment is to keep students at the centre of special education programming and service planning including transition supports. Collaboration with families and caregivers is foundational to decision making to individualize the planning for each student." (DDSB Transition Guide, p.2)

Integrated Transition Planning

In a commitment to supporting achievement, well-being and pathways within School Learning Plans, how we plan for, support and celebrate students whose achievement is other than an OSSD is important.

Integrated Transition Planning begins at age 14 for youth with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities. Early planning is key to ensuring that the students, and their families/caregivers:

- are centred in planning (goals/hopes)
- have access to information and
- that supports such as DSO (Developmental Services Ontario) application requirements

such as recent assessment are planned.

The DDSB Life Beyond High School - Transition Planning –Guide (Appendix F), launched during the 2024-2025 school year, offers a comprehensive overview of key milestones for transitional-aged youth with developmental and intellectual disabilities. This resource features a timeline, sectioned by age from 14-21 years old, with each section detailing important transition milestones. Each milestone includes a brief description, its significance, eligibility criteria, and guidance on how to access related services.

The 'Transition Planning – Getting Started' resource serves as an all-in-one guide for parents, caregivers and guardians. It provides essential information on transition planning, helping facilitate a smooth transition to community supports and services for when their child exits school at age 21. Further this resource will enhance school teams' knowledge and capacity on key transition milestones.

The IPRC Placement Decision

Placement decisions for students are made through the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process (see Standard 5). Parents/legal guardians are critical partners in the decision making process regarding their child's education.

Before the IPRC considers placement of the student in a special education class, Regulation 181/98 requires the committee consider placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services. If, after considering all of the information presented, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a regular class would meet the student's needs and is consistent with parent(s) or guardian(s) preferences, the committee will decide in favour of placement in a regular class.

Placement Options for Students Identified with an Exceptionality

All students identified with an exceptionality will be supported by an Individual Education Plan (IEP), regardless of placement.

Regular Class with Indirect Support
The student is placed in a regular class for the entire day (following the regular class schedule), and the teacher receives specialized consultative support services.

Regular Class with Resource Assistance
The student is placed in the regular class for the day (following the regular class schedule), and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified special education teacher.

Regular Class with Withdrawal Assistance
The student is placed in the regular class and receives instruction from a qualified special education teacher outside of the classroom for less than 50 percent of the school day. In the Durham District School Board Regular Class with Withdrawal Assistance and Regular Class with Resource Assistance are placements utilized for a relatively small number of students accessing direct teaching by Itinerant teachers with specialized certifications who work in multiple schools to support students who are Blind/Low Vision or Deaf/Hard of Hearing.

A Special Education Class with Partial Integration
The student is placed by IPRC in a special education class, for at least 50 percent of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.

A Special Education Class Full Time
The student is placed by IPRC in a special education class and is supported in that placement for the entire school day.

A qualified special education teacher is a teacher with additional qualifications in special education recognized by the Ontario College of Teachers.

A placement describes the class setting where instruction and learning will take place. Support staff, such as Educational Assistants, may support students in any setting and are not particular to a setting.

Teacher and educational assistant support that is the foundation for special education program delivery can be found within the individual program brochures found within this plan and through the DDSB website.

Regular Classroom Placements
There are many strategies available within the Durham District School Board to support the inclusion of exceptional students in placements in a regular class.

The majority of exceptional students access programming in a regular classroom. For most students, a classroom teacher, with consultative support from the school's Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) and/or specialized consultative support services, is able to provide individualized, differentiated special education programming to support student success in a classroom environment with their same aged peers. The board's practice is to support exceptional students, whenever possible, within their home school and with placement in a regular class. Placement in a regular class is considered the most inclusive option.

Principals are responsible for creating an inclusive school climate supportive of exceptional students, which honours and values their diverse, unique and intersecting identities. Developing a climate of dignity, respect, understanding and acceptance throughout the school, providing support and training for teachers and educational assistants and creating a culture of collaboration are essential components of successful inclusion.
Included here are examples of the ways in which a student can be integrated into the regular classroom with the support of the school community.

Special Education Class Placements
Some students require more intensive intervention and specialized services delivered in a smaller class setting to support student success. For those students, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be consulted regarding the opportunity to explore the option of placement in a Special Education Class for their child. In the DDSB we provide seven different types of special education classes, each with clearly defined outcomes designed to meet the needs of students with specific learning profiles.

Program types include:

- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program (currently under review/not active placement for 2026/2027)
- Developmental Program
- Gifted Class (elementary only, Secondary course options)
- Practical Learning Program
- School Support Program
- Structured Learning Class Program
- Transition to Work Program

The special education programming and aligned special education services that are offered within a special education class are responsive to the individual needs of the student. Classroom support staff, such as Educational Assistants, may support students placed in regular classes with indirect support and special education classes. In the Durham District School Board **Regular Class with Withdrawal Assistance** and **Regular Class with Resource Assistance** are placements utilized for a relatively small number of students accessing direct teaching by Itinerant teachers with specialized certifications who work in multiple schools to support students who are Blind/Low Vision or Deaf/Hard of Hearing.

Teacher and educational assistant support that is the foundation for special education program delivery can be found within the individual program brochures found within this plan and

through the DDSB website.

The following chart provides a breakdown of Special Education classes across the district for the 2026–2027 school year, organized by program type to support planning and service delivery.

Table 5 – DDSB 2026-27 Special Education Class Programs

DDSB 2026-2027 Special Education Class Programs			
Program Type	System Total 2026-27	Max. Roster Per Class	Total Program Seats
Developmental Class	25	6	150
Gifted (Elementary) **Gifted (Secondary - Course Options Available)**	39	25	975
Practical Learning Program Class	106	10	1060
School Support Program Class - Elementary	38	10	380
School Support Program Class- Secondary	15	12	180
Structured Learning Class	14	6	84
Transition to Work Program Class	5	12	60
Totals	242		2889

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is kept informed on a regular basis by the System Leads (District Principals), Senior Managers & Clinical Leads and Superintendent of Inclusive Student Services about the range of available placements for students with special education strengths and needs. The input from SEAC is important in reviewing program types based on student needs and improving strategies for inclusion.

Consultation occurs during monthly SEAC meetings, Board meetings and Administrative Council liaison.

The following pages provide information about the Special Education Classes for the 2026- 2027 school year inclusive of our information about Special Education in the DDSB.

More detailed information on each special education class type can be found online Special Education Placement Programs

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program

The publication date of the 2026-2027Inclusive Student Services Special Education Plan, fell within the review phase for an action research initiative about Deaf and Hard of Hearing programs and services. The research project has been undertaken, in partnership with university faculty research collaborators, to better understand the experience and programming needs of students who are Deaf and/or Hard of Hearing to inform decisions about services and student programming.

Traditionally, reviews of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Programs have focused on service delivery, administrative process, and staffing requirement. Through the action research process, we gathered information about the degree to which the programming, curriculum and pedagogy is accessible to deaf and hard of hearing children and develop finer grain data that provides indicators of progress in language development, literacy skills and overall academic progress.

The lead researchers are led by Dr. Joanna Weber, Canada Research Council Chair (Tier 2) in Deaf Education, Assistant Professor for the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta, and Director of Western Canadian Centre for Deaf Studies, and Dr. Joanna Cannon, University of British Columbia. The next phase of the project will include reviewing recommendations and potential implementation phases to support Deaf and Hard of Hearing programs. Results of this action research project will be shared publicly, including with the Special Education Advisory Committee, in fall 2026 to inform program and service planning.

<u>Special Education</u> Gifted Programming & Process Review (2026-2027)

Intellectual (Gifted) programming and related administrative processes will undergo continued review throughout the 2026-2027 school year.

Gifted Identification Process

Effective **July 1, 2026**, students must complete a two-phase assessment process to be considered for formal identification via the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC).

Phase	Assessment	Requirement for Advancement
Phase 1	CCAT Assessment	Composite Score in the **98th percentile** or above.
Phase 2	WISC Assessment*	Full Scale Score or General Abilities Index Score in the **98th percentile** or above.

**Administered by DDSB Psychological Services staff.*

Students who meet the 98th percentile threshold in both phases will proceed to the IPRC for formal "Intellectually Gifted" identification and placement.

Note Private Assessments: The DDSB Psychological Services Department reserves the right to review all private WISC assessments to determine if the student meets specific board criteria for Giftedness.

Once a student is formally identified via the **IPRC process**, two placement models are considered:

Home School Placement – Regular Class with Indirect Support

Students who meet the criteria for an identification of Gifted may remain in their home school and

be supported through the creation of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a written plan that describes special education programming, accommodations and services that the school board will provide for the student. The strategies and supports outlined in the IEPs are based on a thorough assessment of the student's strengths, interest and needs. Students supported in the mainstream gifted program will have access to the following:

- Opportunity to remain at their home school
- An Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Opportunity to participate in school based and central experiences and events for students who are gifted
- Opportunity to engage with other students with a gifted identification in their school (if applicable) and the DDSB
- Receives direct instruction from a mainstream classroom teacher, who receives specialized consultative services from a Special Education Resource Teacher, Inclusive Student Services Staff (if applicable) and Instructional Facilitator supporting gifted education.

Special Education Gifted Class Placement

Students who meet the criteria for an identification of Gifted can be considered for placement in a special education gifted class – full time. Students supported in the special education class full time with have access to the following:

- Opportunity to attend a school offering gifted programming that is as close to their home school as possible
- An Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- All students in the class will also have an identification of Intellectual Gifted
- Opportunity to participate in school based and central experiences and events for students who are gifted
- Opportunity to engage with other gifted students in their school and in the DDSB
- In school programming support from the Special Education teacher, Inclusive Student Services Staff (if applicable) and Gifted Facilitator

To be recommended for placement in a Special Education Gifted Class, a student must meet the criteria to be identified as an exceptional pupil - Intellectual - Gifted by an Identification Placement Review Committee. The IPRC will consider all relevant assessment and student data when making a recommendation for placement.

Students who require differentiated learning experiences of depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program may be recommended for a Special Education Classroom Placement.

Students who are considered for Special Education Class placements may also meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Show a clear need for enrichment opportunities and/or alternative programming (such as advanced thinking skills or self/peer awareness) that requires differentiated learning experiences with greater depth and breadth than those typically offered in the mainstream class to meet the student's educational potential.
- Show evidence of significant challenges in interpersonal relationships, social interactions, and/or emotional development within the school environment.

If, after considering all of the information obtained by the IPRC committee, they are satisfied that placement in a regular class would meet the pupil's needs and is consistent with parental preferences, the committee shall decide in favour of placement in a regular class with indirect support. O. Reg. 181/98, s. 17 (2).

Inclusive Student Services

Placement Pathways

SPECIAL EDUCATION
in the Durham District School Board



DDSB
Ignite Learning

How do we serve our students?

Students' needs can be met through a variety of programs, placements and class types within the DDSB. We strive to help every student meet their full potential, while fostering the highest level of independence possible for each student. We work with parents/guardians and board staff to determine the placement that best meets the student's needs, whether that is in a regular classroom, or for some students, in a special education class.

We place a strong emphasis on the inclusion of our students with special needs, providing meaningful, individualized integration opportunities for students accessing special education programs.

Our Mission

The Durham District School Board is committed to fostering success and independence for each student by providing a range of pathways, programs, opportunities and services. Students with special education strengths and needs are supported in inclusive environments that enable them to develop to their own full potential.

For more information, please contact the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) at your school.

Regular Class Placement

The vast majority of our students with special education strengths and needs will access regular class placements. This placement may include individualized accommodations. The placement also involves a number of key supports and strategies often referred to as 'Indirect Support' and can include but are not limited to:

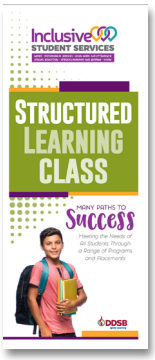
- Learning planned on a foundation of universal design for learning (UDL);
- Differentiation in environmental, teaching and assessment strategies;
- Focused small support groups for specific skill building;
- Targeted and small group instruction and intervention within classes;
- Specific tools and resources introduced to address individual learning needs, support and skill building;
- Leveraging of technology to provide instruction, rehearsal, engagement and support; and
- Programming support from Special Education Resource Teacher(s), Inclusive Student Services (ISS) team members, and, with consent, collaboration with involved community agencies and other expertise.

Many students in regular class placements receive support from classroom support staff roles (ASL Interpreter, Educational Assistant, or Intervenor). The professionals in these roles are integral to students' programming within schools and provide valuable well-being , safety, self-care and learning support. These roles are not referenced as part of a students' placement through Individual Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) decisions which are, in accordance with applicable legislation, linked to special education qualified teachers.

Special Education Class Placements

Some students require a higher level of support, more intensive intervention and specialized services in order to meet with success. For those students, parents and guardians may be offered an opportunity to explore a Special Education Class placement for their child. In the DDSB we provide seven class types that meet the needs of students with a specific learning profile and that have clearly defined outcomes of student success.

For more information on individual programs search DDSB Inclusive Student Services, or click on the photo beside each of the program descriptions.

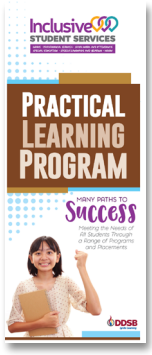


STRUCTURED LEARNING CLASS

Special Education Class with Partial Integration

The Structured Learning Class (SLC) provides more intensive support for students who are diagnosed with Autism and working on Ontario or Alternative curriculum expectations. Structured teaching strategies, positive reinforcement, sensory-based self-regulation and generalization of learning are foundational to supporting students in achieving their goals in areas of learning such as: communication, self-regulation, and building and maintaining peer relationships.

Maximum of six students.



PRACTICAL LEARNING PROGRAM

Special Education Class with Partial Integration or Full-Time Special Education Class

The Practical Learning Program provides intensive support while teaching and reinforcing essential skills that foster independence in activities of daily living. This program is suited for students who may have intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and/or autism.

Maximum of ten students.



DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

Full-time Special Education Class

The Developmental Program provides an intensive support program for students who have significant physical, intellectual or developmental disabilities. Students accessing the Developmental Program may also be medically fragile and/or require significant sensory support. The program also includes integrated community supports embedded within programming.

Maximum of six students.



SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAM

Special Education Class with Partial Integration

The School Support Program provides an opportunity for an intensive support placement for the development of core curriculum and executive functioning (learning skills) for students within/ near their community school. The goal of the program is to foster independence and integration.

Elementary: Maximum of ten students
Secondary: Maximum of twelve students



TRANSITION TO WORK PROGRAM

Full-time Special Education Class

The Transition to Work Program is designed to bridge between school and successful adult living by providing experiences in various work environments. The goal of the program is to develop employability skills and foster independence to support students with special needs to become productive workers with a goal of leading to meaningful employment. Through this program placement, students with special education needs can learn, practice, and refine productivity skills and social skills that are essential to participating in meaningful employment, learning more about themselves and the world of work.

Maximum of twelve students.



GIFTED CLASS

Full-Time Special Education Class (Elementary)

The Gifted Special Education Class provides differentiated support for learning who are intellectually gifted. As a self-contained classroom placement at the elementary level the class provides opportunity for students to learn with and from other students with similar intellectual aptitude, based on the Ontario Curriculum. Students who require differentiated learning experiences of depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular classroom may be recommended for a Special Education Classroom Placement.

Students who are considered for Special Education Class placements may also meet one or more of the following criteria:

Show a clear need for enrichment opportunities and/or alternative programming (such as advanced thinking skills or self/peer awareness) that requires differentiated learning experiences with greater depth and Breadth than those typically offered in the mainstream classroom to meet the student's educational potential.

Show evidence of significant challenges in interpersonal relationships, social interactions, and/or emotional development within the school environment.

In Secondary, students with a placement of Special Education class with partial integration or regular class with indirect support and can enroll for courses offered to students identified with a gifted exceptionality.



The Durham DDSB core priorities are all reflected in Inclusive programming which promotes student growth and achievement. Student independence is fostered through a gradual release of responsibility model. This framework provides the and support needed to set a student on a path to their own level of independence. Independence allows for a growth of a student's voice which includes knowing who they are, what they want or need and making positive choices that affect their life.

A MODEL FOR SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

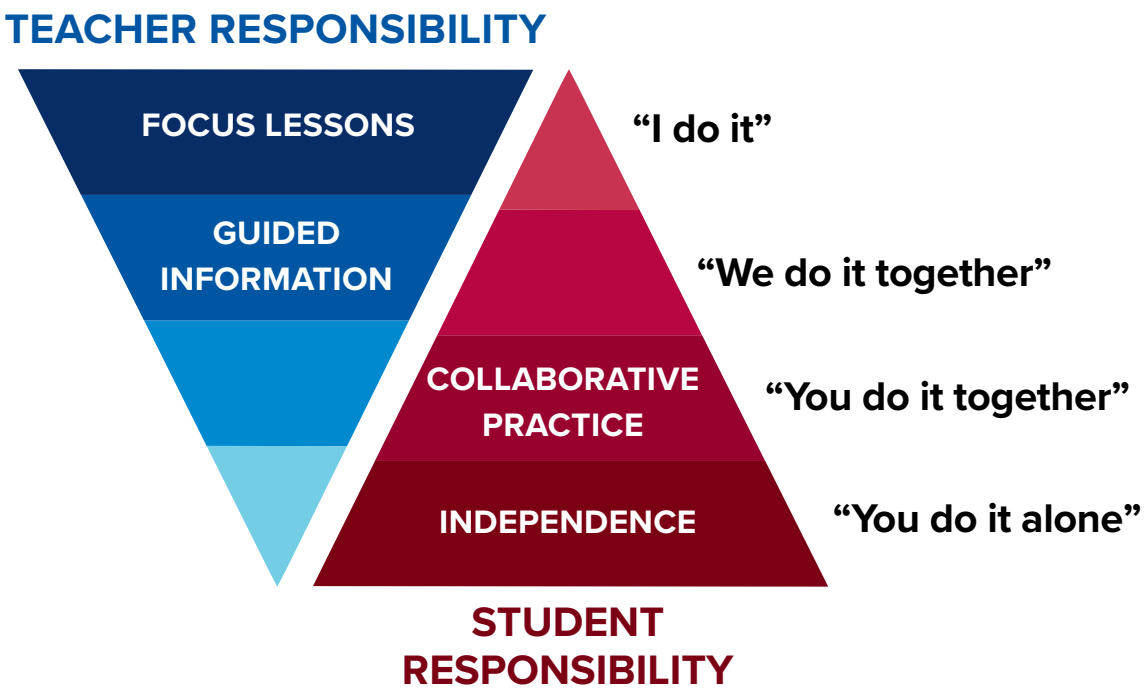


Image from the resource "Fostering Student Independence – An Educator's Guide" co-created by the Durham District School Board and partner boards.

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INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEPs) AND TRANSITION PLANNING

SECTION B – Standard 10

Standard 10: Individual Education Plans and Transition Planning

The purpose of the standard is to inform the Ministry and the public about the ways in which the board is complying with the Ministry requirement for the implementation of Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Implementing the Ministry of Education's Standards for IEPs

As per Regulation 181/98, all students in the DDSB who are identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) have an IEP. For a sample of a DDSB Individual Education Template (IEP), please see Appendix Q.

An IEP is a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by an individual student to support equitable access to programming. An IEP is based on the student's strengths and needs as identified through appropriate assessments. The IEP identifies accommodations and/or modified expectations from the Ontario Curriculum and/or alternative expectations that comprise a student's program. An IEP also includes special education services needed to assist the student in achieving their learning goals. The IEP is a working document; revisions or updates are part of a cycle of continuous assessment and monitoring. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are consulted in the development of the IEP and are informed of any changes to the plan throughout the school year.

The implementation of the IEP is led and monitored by the principal in each school and appropriate Inclusive Student Services team members (district staff) who have access to IEPs to ensure consistency and accountability.

In addition, an IEP may be developed for a student who has not been formally identified as exceptional, but who requires a special education program and/or services. In these cases, an IEP is required when the student regularly requires accommodations for instructional or assessment purposes and requires the use of Special Equipment Amount (SEA) equipment but is not identified through IPRC. It is important to note that accommodations for students are part of inclusive programming and an IEP is not required to implement.

Transition Planning

As per PPM 156, a transition plan is provided for each student who is identified. The Transition Plan template is built into the IEP software to ensure it is completed each year for each student. Teams within the DDSB work collaboratively with the student (as appropriate), parent(s)/guardian(s), professional service staff involved with the student and relevant community agencies to develop and implement transition plans. The DDSB Transition Guide (Appendix G) provides school teams with guidance on transition planning. Additional resources have also been shared with Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs) that are available from our SEAC partner organizations including, for example, Easter Seals and Autism Ontario.

Roles and Responsibilities

The school principal is ultimately responsible for the initiation, development, implementation, and review of a student's IEP for students with an exceptionality, as well as ensuring that parents/legal guardians have meaningful opportunities for consultation prior to its completion.

With the support of the In-School Team, and in consultation with the parents/legal guardians, it is the role of the principal to determines the appropriateness of introducing an IEP and they are

responsible for communicating the rationale to the parents/legal guardians. The IEP must identify the date, source, and results or recommendations of assessment reports that are directly related to the need for a special education program and/or services for the student. Possible sources of assessment data include educational assessments (e.g., reading assessments, math assessments, benchmarks, provincial large-scale assessments), medical/health assessments (e.g., vision, hearing, physical, neurological assessments), speech/language assessments, occupational/physical therapy assessments, behavioural/psychiatric assessments, and psychological assessments and data provided by the family through consultation. As noted in the Ministry of Education's *Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning and Implementation (2000)*: Components of the IEP standards and effective practices (section 10)

> "Although the IEP is developed collaboratively, the principal is ultimately responsible for each student's plan. The principal must sign the IEP to indicate their assurance that the plan is appropriate to the student's strengths and needs and that it meets all of the standards outlined in this document."

While the principal is not obligated to adopt every suggestion made by parents/legal guardians, they are expected to give these contributions due consideration. When a suggestion or request is not included, the principal must provide clear, professional reasons for the decision.

Resolution of Disputes Related to the IEP

Parent/legal guardian collaboration in the development of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) provides an invaluable perspective into a student's interests, strengths, identity, lived experiences, and areas for growth. While family/caregiver collaboration during the development and implementation of the IEP is essential, there may be instances where parents/caregivers and the school team hold differing viewpoints regarding the proposed accommodations, modifications and program goals, or the initiation of an IEP itself. In such situations, effective communication is paramount to clarify information and reach a mutual understanding. The Ministry of Education document *Shared Solutions* remains an excellent foundational resource for these circumstances.

A collaborative process is key to successful programming for students; therefore, every effort is made to resolve differences through the joint efforts of parent(s)/guardian(s) and school staff. Differences of opinion around the content of the IEP are mediated at the school level. The Special Education Resource Teachers (SERT) and Special Education Instructional Facilitators are available to assist with this process should it be necessary. In the event of unresolved concerns, parent(s)/guardian(s) and school staff can work with the System Lead and/or the Superintendent of Inclusive Student Services or the DDSB Student and Family Support Office to address concerns.

When a disagreement regarding the IEP occurs between parents/guardians and board staff, the goal is to keep the best interests of the student at the center of all discussions. In alignment with DDSB expectations for fostering strong, collaborative working relationships, resolution of issues Should follow the following steps:

1. **Initial Consultation:** Engage in open, respectful dialogue with the parents/legal guardians, the student (where age-appropriate), and the classroom teacher(s) to identify the specific areas of concern and brainstorm potential solutions. The IEP consultation form can be used to indicate that you wish for further discussion about your child's IEP.
2. **School Support Team Meeting:** If the concern remains unresolved, schedule a School Support Team meeting. This provides a formal opportunity to include the parents/legal guardians, appropriate school staff, advocates and, where applicable, Inclusive Student services Staff to discuss the issues and seek a mutual path forward.
3. **Administrative Involvement:** If the concern remains, the school principal can arrange a further meeting with the parents/legal guardians. The System Lead for Inclusive Student Services may be invited to join.
4. **Superintendent of Inclusive Student Services**: At this stage, the school superintendent may be consulted or asked to attend a meeting with the school staff and family/guardians to provide further guidance.

Should all school-based and Board based resolution steps be exhausted, parents/legal guardians may choose to seek assistance from the Ministry of Education as permitted under provincial guidelines.

Results of the Ministry of Education's IEP Review

No Ministry review was conducted in the 2025-2026 school year.

For further information regarding Individual Education Plan, please visit Ministry of Education - IEP

INCLUSIVE STUDENT SERVICES PLAN • 2026 – 2027

PROVINCIAL AND DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS IN ONTARIO

SECTION B – Standard 11

Standard 11: Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario

The purpose of this standard is to provide the public with information about the Provincial and Demonstration Schools that are operated for students who are deaf, blind, or deafblind, or who have severe learning disabilities, which may include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Provincial Schools and Provincial Demonstration Schools are operated by the Ministry of Education and are accessed through an application process that is initiated collaboratively between parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student's school. Provincial Schools provide alternative education placement and educational supports for students who are deaf, blind, deafblind. Admittance to a Provincial School is determined by the Provincial Schools Admission Committee in accordance with the requirements set out in Regulation 296. Demonstration Schools provide alternative education placement and educational supports for students who have severe learning disabilities. The Provincial Committee on Learning Disabilities (PCLD) governs the placement process for school boards applying for demonstration school services on behalf of a student. The admissions criteria and procedures for a demonstration school are outlined in Policy/Program Memorandum 89.

Provincial School:
All students require an Identification Placement and Review (IPRC) meeting conducted at the child's local school board to be considered for placement at a Provincial School. Programs at provincial schools are tailored to the needs of the individual students and:

- are delivered by specially trained teachers
- follow the Ontario curriculum and alternative expectations as outlined in the Individual Education Plans (IEP)
- offer a full range of programs at both elementary and secondary level.

Additionally, Provincial Schools provide resource and outreach services. These programs include consultation, workshops, on-line learning and early intervention programs. A referral process is in place for deaf, blind or deafblind students to be seen by resource consultants.

Provincial Schools for The Blind and Deaf
W. Ross Macdonald School (English) is located in Brantford and Centre Jules-Léger (French) in Ottawa provide an alternative placement for blind, low vision and deafblind students. Programs at Provincial Schools are designed to help blind or low vision or deafblind students to develop independent learning, living skills and self-sufficiency, as well as earning credits towards their diploma.

W. Ross Macdonald also provides:

- a provincial resource centre for blind, low vision and deafblind students
- support to local school boards through consultation and the provision of special learning materials (eg. Braille materials, audiotapes, and larger print materials)
- direct support to pre-school deafblind children and their families.

Demonstration Schools for Students with Learning Disabilities

As per Policy/Program Memorandum 89, in Ontario the Ministry of Education provides the services of three (3) demonstration schools for English speaking pupils and one (1) demonstration school for French speaking pupils with severe learning disabilities.

School Name:	Location and Contact	Catchment Area:
Amethyst School	1515 Cheapside Street, London, ON N5V 3N9 (519) 453-4400	Western Ontario Region Northwestern Ontario Region Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk counties of the Central Ontario Region
Sagonaska School	350 Dundas Street West, Belleville, ON K8P 1B2 9613) 967-2823	Eastern Ontario Region Northeastern Ontario Region Durham, Haliburton, Hastings, Northumberland and Newcastle, Peterborough, Prince Edward, and Victoria counties of the Central Ontario region
Trillium School	255 Ontario Street South, Milton, ON L9T 2M5 (905) 878-2851	Midnorthern Ontario Region Dufferin, Halton, Hamilton-Wenworth, Niagara, Peel, Simcoe, Waterloo, Wellington, and York counties of the Central Ontario Region, and Metropolitan Toronto

Demonstration School Objectives:

The program objectives of the demonstration schools are as follows:

- To provide a one-year, high intensity academic intervention program for pupils with severe learning disabilities with a focus on reading intervention
- To assist enrolled pupils to develop personal life and learning strategies which will support their future academic pathway in programs within local school boards, other educational jurisdictions, or the community
- To provide in-service teacher education
- To provide resource services for schools and school boards as required, including pupil assessment and/or programming assistance

Since Demonstration Schools are to act as a resource to school boards rather than to function as a separate education system, every effort is made to help the student return to the school in their local community as soon as possible. Transition planning with the community school board is key to this process.

Demonstration School Lodging:

All students attending a demonstration school live in student lodging as a requirement of the program.

The student lodging program provides a targeted, culturally responsive, and relevant intervention to support independent academic work completion (i.e., homework and assignments), self-regulation and advocacy skills. The program includes enhanced support to ensure effective communication between the student's classroom teachers and extended day staff.

The school board arranges transportation for students to the Demonstration school every Sunday and return home every Friday.

Provincial Schools for the Deaf

The following Provincial Schools offer services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students:

Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf in Belleville (serving eastern Ontario), Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf in Milton (serving central and northern Ontario), Robarts School for the Deaf in London (serving western Ontario), Centre Jules-Léger in Ottawa (serving francophone students and families throughout Ontario). These schools provide alternative placement for deaf students from kindergarten through secondary. Programs provide opportunities to acquire and develop language, literacy, numeracy, and inquiry skills in American Sign Language (ASL) and English or French and:

- provide rich and supportive bilingual/bicultural education environments which facilitate learning and social development through American Sign Language (ASL) and English or French
- develop appreciation of various cultures including ASL culture.

Demonstration Schools for Students with Learning Disabilities

The Provincial Demonstration Schools provide lodging programs during the week and travel home on weekends for about 150 students with learning disabilities. There are four demonstration schools in Ontario. The language of instruction at the Amethyst (London), Sagonaska (Belleville) and Trillium (Milton) is English; at Centre Jules-Léger, instruction is in French. The length of stay at the Provincial Demonstration Schools is one year in a highly specialized and resourced special program. Since Provincial Demonstration Schools are to act as a resource to school boards rather than to function as a separate education system, every effort is made to help the student return to the school in their local community as soon as possible. Transition planning with the community school board is key to this process.

Statistics on the number of Durham District School Board students who are currently attending Provincial and Demonstration Schools:

Table 5 - Statistics on DDSB Students Currently Attending Provincial and Demonstration Schools

Sagonaska	4
Trillium	0
Sir James Whitney	6
W. Ross MacDonald	4
Centre Jules-Léger	0

Provincial Demonstration Schools

Table 6 - List of Provincial Demonstration Schools and Contact Information

Amethyst School (Western and Northwestern areas of the province.)	1090 Highbury Ave., London, Ontario N5Y 4V9	Phone #: (519)453-4408 Fax #: (519)453-7943
Sagonaska School (Eastern and Northeastern areas of the province.)	350 Dundas St. W. Belleville, Ontario K8P 1B2	Phone #: (613)967-2830 Fax #: (613)967-2482
Trillium School (Central and Mid-northern areas of the province.)	347 Ontario St. S. Milton, Ontario L9T	Phone #: (905)878-8428 Fax #: (905)878-7540
Centre Jules-Léger (Central Jules-Léger provides French language programs and services for French- speaking students with severe learning disabilities across	281 Avenue Lanark Ottawa, Ontario K1V 6A6	Phone #: (613)761-9300 Fax #: (613)761-9301 ATS #: (613)761-9302

Provincial Schools

Table 7 - List of Provincial Schools and Contact Information

The Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf (Serves central and northern Ontario.)	255 Ontario St. S. Milton, Ontario L9T	Phone #: (905)878-2851 Fax #: (905)878-1354
The Robarts School for the Deaf (Serves western Ontario.)	1090 Highbury Ave., London, Ontario N5Y 4V9	Phone #: (519)453-4400 Fax #: (519)453-7943
The Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf (Serves eastern Ontario.)	350 Dundas St. W. Belleville, Ontario K8P 1B2	Phone #: (613)967-2823 Fax #: (613)967-2857
W. Ross Macdonald School for the Blind (serves all of Ontario)	350 Brant Avenue Brantford,	Phone #: (519)759-0730 Toll Free: 1-866-618-9092

INCLUSIVE STUDENT SERVICES PLAN • 2026 – 2027

SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF

SECTION B - Standard 12

Standard 12: Special Education Staff

The purpose of the standard is to provide specific details on board staff to the Ministry and to the public.

Table 8 Special Education Staff

Special Education Role	2025/26	2026/27	Staff Qualifications/Required
School Based Staff			
Special Education Resource Teachers*	205.5	210.0	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Special Education Class Teachers*	290.6	294.4	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Educational Assistants – EAI*	931.0	931.0	Secondary School Diploma
Educational Assistants – EAII*	34.0	34.0	College Certificate/CYW or Equivalent
Language Acquisition Support Worker	1.0	1.0	Lived experience within the Deaf community, Fluency in ASL/SLIC Level 4
Inclusive Student Services Department Staff			
Senior Manager and Clinical Lead Psychological Services	1.0	1.0	Doctorate of Psychology, Licensed with CPBAO
Manager of Psychological Services	1.0	1.0	Doctorate of Psychology, Licensed with CPBAO
Senior Manager and Clinical Lead Social Work and Attendance Services	1.0	1.0	Masters of Social Work
Senior Manager and Clinical Lead Speech Language and Hearing Services	1.0	1.0	Masters of Speech Language
System Leads – Inclusive Student Services	3.0	3.0	Special Education Specialist and/or Ontario Principals Council Special Education for Administrators (SEAQP), PQP2
Inclusive Technology Trainers (SEA)	2.5	0.5	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Interpreters	10.0	12.0	Completion of Accredited Interpreter Training

Intervenors	9.0	9.0	Completion of Accredited Intervenor Training
Itinerant Teachers – Hearing Resource	8.0	9.0	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Itinerant Teachers – Vision Resource	5.0	6.0	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Instructional Facilitators - Seconded Teachers	14.5	14.5	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Psychological Associates	5.8	3.8	Masters of Psychology, Licensed with CPBAO
Psychologists/Clinical Supervisors	5.0	7.0	Masters or Doctorate of Psychology, Licensed with CPBAO
Psychometrists (incl. RBAs)	23.8	23.8	Masters of Psychology
Senior Social Worker	1.0	1.0	Masters of Social Work
Social Worker/Attendance Counsellors	27.0	27.0	Masters of Social Work
Senior Speech Language Pathologist	1.0	1.0	Masters of Speech Language Pathology
Speech Language Pathologists	26.0	26.0	Masters of Speech Language Pathology
Work Education & Transition Coordinators	3.0	2.0	Completion of related post- secondary program
Superintendent of Education – Inclusive Student Services, ECPP, Mental Health & Well-Being	1.0	1.0	Masters of Education, SOQP
Education Community Partner Programs (ECPP) and Care and Treatment Education Programs (CTEP) Staffing			
CTEP/ECPP Classroom Teachers	50.0	50.0	B.Ed, Inclusive Education or Special Education AQ preferred.
CTEP/ECPP Administrators	2.0	2.0	PQP2
Resource Staff - Contract			
Audiologist	1.0	1.0	Masters Degree - Audiology
Orientation and Mobility Personnel	0.5	0.5	Degree & Certificate in Orientation and Mobility

PROFESSIONAL (STAFF) DEVELOPMENT

SECTION B – Standard 13

Standard 13: Professional (Staff) Development

The purpose of the standard is to provide details of the board's professional development plans to the Ministry and to the public.

Foundations for Professional Learning at the DDSB

Meaningful interdepartmental and interdisciplinary collaboration that centres Indigenous rights, human rights, and equity in our planning and facilitating of professional learning are critical foundations to upholding our responsibilities to our students and community.

To address ableism, we need to uncover, name, challenge and disrupt biases, barriers, structures and practices that impede the achievement and well-being of our learners, especially those who are discriminated against and disadvantaged in and by our systems and structures. It is through an examination of our practices that we will ensure that we better serve all our learners and support our staff. Principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and differentiation are encouraged to be standard components of all educator and classroom support staff professional learning opportunities.

All professional learning will reinforce and support our individual and shared organizational duty bearer roles and responsibilities under the Human Rights Policy and procedures to:

- promote and protect human rights (including centering dignity and respect, upholding the rights of the child and acting in the best interest of the child in ways that are not discriminatory and that prevent harm)
- identify, prevent and address human rights barriers and harm in schools/classrooms, curriculum, learning/training, operational and employment policies, procedures, processes, practices, workplaces, etc.
- respond to and address barriers and issues that rights holders experience, including accommodating human rights related needs
- learn about human rights principles and how they apply in our day-to-day jobs
- address human rights issues and complaints and correct discrimination.

To support this work, professional learning will integrate and apply the principles and requirements of:

- the Indigenous Education Policy and procedures
- the Human Rights Policy, procedures, and accountability framework
- the Anti-Oppression strategy and the 2SLGBTQIA+ Compendium of Action to support students, staff and families
- Inclusive Design, Universal Design for Learning, accessibility and differentiated instruction, assessment and evaluation
- Positive School Climates
- Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy
- Compendium of Action for Black Student Success 2.0.
- Consultation with SEAC regarding professional development needs of the system

Inclusive Design and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) are key foundations for learning. Professional learning takes place in a number of formats and with multiple entry points for staff. These include working alongside educators within classrooms through an applied practice coaching model, large group delivery of professional learning, and ongoing networked learning of professionals using the Critically Conscious Practitioner Inquiry (CPPI) model.

In addition, professional learning will also consider Student Census, student achievement data, SEAC feedback, School Climate and Workforce Census data to better understand and address barriers, disparities, and disproportionate experiences, opportunities and outcomes for students and staff.

For the 2026-2027 school year $395,268 has been dedicated to staff development in the area of Special Education.

Professional Learning to Support Shifts Towards Anti-Oppressive Practices

Meaningful collaboration, focusing on Indigenous rights, and human rights and equity are essential for planning and facilitating professional learning. These approaches help us uphold our responsibilities to students and the community.

To address ableism, we must identify, challenge, and disrupt biases, barriers, structures, and practices that hinder the achievement and well-being of learners, especially those who experience systemic discrimination and disadvantage.

By examining our practices, we can better serve all learners. Professional learning reinforces our roles and responsibilities, both individually and organizationally. Engaging in learning throughout the school year connects us to students' experiences in growing knowledge and skills and support continuous reflection on and improvement of services for students. Inclusive Student Services staff have access to professional learning opportunities provided, both job-embedded and session based, within the DDSB and external to the board.

With a focus on learning at all levels of the organization, the overall goal of the Inclusive Student Services professional learning plan is to support classroom educators, school leaders (Administrators and Special Education Resource Teachers), support staff, and Inclusive Student Services staff to provide them with the information, materials, and skills necessary to implement and support differentiated programming for students with special education strengths and needs. Student learning is the core of all programs within the DDSB. It is important that, as our students grow, so do the professionals supporting their programs and services.

Supporting School Teams

Regular communications such as the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) e-Bulletin (Appendix H), help support staff with information related to supports and services for students as well as professional learning. Staff are able to access professional learning opportunities through the DDSB online professional development platform.

Within Team Mentoring

Inclusive Student Services teams have a variety of in-team structures to provide team members with consultation and mentorship. For example:

- Social Work Services, in addition to the support and mentorship offered by the Senior Social

Worker, have smaller mentor groups. Comprised of newly onboarded as well as experienced Social Workers, these groups provide staff with a forum to discuss clinical and process related issues with an aim to share wise practices and strengthen service.

Focused Working Groups

Therapeutic Work Group: members of Social Work Services and Psychological Services collaborated this year to develop and pilot a group for eligible secondary school students based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). ACT is an evidence based therapeutic approach to supporting a wide range of mental health concerns including but not limited to anxiety and depression.

The Speech Language (S-LP) working groups, as example:

- Developed resources and provided peer training to support S-LPs with the roll out of Tier 1 oral language and literacy support to kindergarten classrooms in the Spring of 2026
- Peer training and support on use of new standardized and non-standardized assessment tools
- Developed and provided school and system-wide professional development for educators on fostering connection, communication, and learning for students who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC).

Formal Training

- Acceptance and Commitment Training for members of Psychological Services and Social Work Services. This training will continue to be offered to new or returning staff members on a rolling basis
- Echo PD: Considerations for assessment, diagnosis, feedback and report writing through a neurodiversity-affirming lens. This training was offered by Holland Bloorview and presenters were Melanie Penner (Developmental Pediatrician), Abbie Solish (Clinical Psychologist) and Moira Robertson (Autistic Advocate) and Special Education Instructional Facilitators. This important training was attended by teams from Inclusive Student Services as teams from adjacent departments.
- Social Work Services
- Psychological Services
- Speech-Language and Hearing Services
- Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Teachers of the Blind and Low Vision
- ISS System Leads and Superintendent
- Anti-Oppression (System Lead and Facilitators)
- Mental Health and Well-Being (MH Lead and Well-Being workers)

- NTIP – infused into formal NTIP training opportunities and prioritized NTIP for Additional Qualification courses

For a list of additional professional learning opportunities offered by the Inclusive Student Services Department, please see Appendix P.

Accessibility Policy

The Accessibility Policy and related procedure supports upholding legislated responsibilities and commitments as outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP), Accessibility Plan, Inclusive Student Services Special Education Plan, and related initiatives.

The Accessibility Policy supports the DDSB to:

1. Meet our commitments and responsibilities to promote accessibility and anti-ableism.
2. Disrupt ableist structures, policies, practices, and rules to enhance accessibility and address individual and systemic accessibility barriers based on ability/disability, neurodivergence, and intersectional discrimination in DDSB services and employment.
3. Uphold principles of dignity and respect
4. Maximize integration, independence, and participation for DDSB students, staff, and community members.

SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT ALLOCATION (SEA)

SECTION B – Standard 14

Standard 14: Equipment

The purpose of this standard is to inform the Ministry, board staff members and other professionals, and parent(s)/caregiver(s) about the provision of individualized equipment for some students with special education strengths and needs.

The Durham District School Board is committed to ensuring that students with special education interests, strengths and needs have the personalized equipment necessary to access their educational programs. Student equipment needs are identified through the Inclusive Student Services school team or our School Based Rehabilitation Services partner Grandview Kids. Recommendations are received from board professional personnel and community professional practitioners. Professional assessments can come from:

- Audiologist
- Optometrist/Ophthalmologist
- Occupational Therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Psychologist
- Psychological Associate
- Speech-Language Pathologist
- Specialist Teachers of Students who are Blind/Low Vision, Deafblind or Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Physician
- Other regulated health professionals as appropriate.

There are two types of Specialized Equipment Allocation* (SEA) claims:

- SEA Formula Amount (computer hardware, software and related equipment)
- SEA Claims-based Amounts (i.e., lifts, Braille, furniture, sensory equipment, etc.)

A SEA recommendation is completed by School-based Rehabilitation Services clinicians and/or board clinical staff who submit applications on behalf of the student. All SEA recommendations are uploaded into our central database with accompanying support documentation to be reviewed by the board's System Lead of Inclusive Student Services identified as the SEA Authorizer, for approval and processing. Trials for computer technology are conducted to illustrate a significant discrepancy between performance with and without such equipment. Sometimes, other equipment may be trialed by a clinician to determine if it meets student needs in advance of filing a SEA recommendation.

The Ministry of Education allocates to school boards, SEA revenue generated from the SEA per Formula Amount and SEA Claims-based Amounts for expenses exceeding $5000.

The board is responsible for SEA approved equipment costs equal to and less than $5000. The DDSB outlines for staff the SEA Claim processes. Included in the documentation are:

- the process for submitting claims;

- the roles and responsibilities of individuals submitting claims;
- meeting the claim requirement;
- processing the order;
- care and safety of the equipment and
- ensuring equipment maintenance.

Funding was updated and retitled to Specialized Equipment Allocation (SEA) for the start of the 2025-2026 school year. Changes to the funding structure are reflected in this Plan. The Ministry of Education directives for SEA are posted publicly by the Ministry of Education annually.

ACCESSIBILITY OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS

SECTION B – Standard 15

Standard 15: Accessibility

The purpose of the standard is to provide details on the Ignite Accessibility, Multi-Year Accessibility Plan previously submitted to the Ministry.

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) commits to protect, uphold and promote human rights and to prevent discrimination and discriminatory barriers in all DDSB learning and working environments. Protecting, upholding and promoting human rights are necessary to meet the mandate of the DDSB and to create and foster a culture of care where students and employees can thrive and have a sense of safety, well-being, engagement and belonging. The DDSB is committed to the principles and practices of accessibility and inclusion to foster full community participation and integration and address ableism.

The Durham District School Boards DDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2022-2026) that informs our next steps for growing inclusion and accessibility. The Action Plan goes beyond school buildings and includes recommendations to enhance accessibility in key areas across the organization. The plan outlines the intentions of the Board to meet its obligations under the AODA and aligns with the Ontario Human Rights Code. The DDSB undertakes to continually improve accessibility and to provide equitable access for all in accordance with the AODA.

Over the past year, the school board has made important accessibility improvements across its schools and facilities to create more inclusive, safe, and accessible learning environments for students, staff, families, and community members. This work included upgrading and replacing elevators and lifts, installing and improving accessible ramps, removing barriers within school buildings, and enhancing outdoor spaces through accessible walkways, pathways, and site improvements. Together, these projects have improved access, mobility, and independence across school properties while supporting the Board's ongoing commitment to providing barrier-free environments for all users.

The DDSB is committed to meeting its procedural and substantive duty to accommodate under the Ontario Human Rights Code to the point of undue hardship to support students' right to meaningfully access education without discrimination. This includes collaboratively exploring accommodation options and providing appropriate individualized accommodations that respect dignity and maximize integration and participation.

Existing schools are renovated to improve accessibility during all renovation projects and as required to meet student needs for access. In the event that an existing facility cannot accommodate the needs of student(s), the DDSB is committed to providing alternate accommodations to meet student needs. New construction incorporates AODA requirements, principles of universal design and meets government accessibility standards. DDSB includes a number of features to promote accessibility. Examples that we have looked at include: interior signage includes Braille, elevator access to upper levels, contrasting colour nosing strip at every stair tread, level entry at all entrances/exits, power door operators at front door and on universal washrooms, barrier free washrooms, barrier free drinking fountains and strobe fire alarm lights.

Inclusive Student Services works closely with other departments to meet the needs of individual students through implementations of accommodations and goals outlined in

Individual Education Plans. Planning is also underway on learning and professional development to enhance awareness and understanding of ableism and accessibility barriers.

TRANSPORTATION

SECTION B – Standard 16

Standard 16: Transportation

The purpose of this standard is to provide details of the board's transportation policies to the Ministry and to the public.

Independent or family-guided student travel (e.g., walking, rolling) to and from school is prioritized where it is safe and practical. Durham Student Transportation Services, in collaboration with the Durham District School Board, assesses the best mode of transportation, where applicable, for each student based on their strengths and needs, while promoting independence and inclusion.
Accessible transportation is planned on an individual basis to support each student based on the least restrictive and most inclusive plan for transitions between home and school. Transportation planning is reviewed on an ongoing basis (minimum annually or upon changes to the skills and accommodation considerations) of a student. Requests for accessible transportation require substantiation of accommodation needs within a student's programming that are supported with documentation provided by a registered health professional when health / medically related.

When transportation is provided by the School Board and Durham Student Transportation Services, it is considered an extension of the school day and supports our goal of fostering independence. Activities during bus rides may be integrated into the student's learning program and recorded in their Individual Education Plan, similar to other classroom activities.

Fostering Independence

Positive experiences during transportation times goes beyond the movement from one location to another. For students utilizing student transportation, planning is an essential aspect of a holistic, student-centered educational strategy. This strategy includes establishing a structured framework that prioritizes safety, inclusion, and the cultivation of life skills. Intentional planning of transportation skills, building independence as individually defined for the student, is an essential element for student development; we foster an environment conducive to growth, making it a key part of a student's educational journey.

The Fostering Skill Supporting Student Transportation (Appendix R) outlines DDSB commitment to fostering success and independence for each student. Assessing a student's readiness for bus independence, setting incremental goals, and designing systematic educational experiences tailored to individual skill development help facilitate transitions and prepare students for real-world challenges. Effective transitional planning for bus independence outlines the necessary daily, short-term, and long-term changes in programs and pathways, detailing the actions required now and in the future to achieve the highest level of self-reliance.

Durham Student Transportation Services (DSTS) is fully supportive of an integrated student transportation system for all students. As with all students, self-propelling (e.g. walking, rolling, etc.) to school is the first option where it is safe and practical to do so. Students with special education strengths and needs may be transported on traditional buses and specialized transportation will be utilized in situations where, due to the nature of the exceptionality, accommodation needs or safety concerns that cannot be mitigated, appropriate alternative accessible transportation is required

because the features of the vehicle are more suitable to the student's needs.

Durham Student Transportation Services **may** make specialized transportation arrangements for students who have been approved, such as:

- Having a documented approved physical, mental or emotional exceptionality that prevents them from safely getting to and from their designated school.
- Placement in a specialized program or contained classroom **may** qualify the student.

Students accessing programming through Education, Community Partnership Programs (ECPP/Grove School) may be entitled to transportation. Parent(s)/guardian(s) can connect with agency staff who will speak to Grove School administration.

Students attending Provincial Schools will be set up on transportation that is coordinated centrally in conjunction with the Ministry of Education. The Provincial school will be able to provide further details for students that are staying in residence.

The following safety procedures are in place:

- All school bus drivers must be provided First Aid Training and are trained as well on the proper use of an EpiPen.
- School buses are equipped with a two-way radio and contact with the Operator's main dispatcher is maintained at all times during scheduled runs. School Principals or a designate complete bus safety documentation to ensure school bus drivers and Durham Student Transportation Services are aware of students that require any special care or strategies for a safe school bus ride.
- Students are issued a DSTS Transportation Card that they scan when boarding and exiting the bus. Each bus is equipped with mTransport technology to adhere to the route schedule and bus manifest in mTransport.

Safety Criteria - Contracted Service Provider Responsibilities

The Contracted Service Provider (bus operator) shall be responsible for ensuring the safe and effective transportation of students, including students with disabilities and/or special transportation requirements. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the Contracted Service Provider shall:

- Ensure that all drivers and transportation staff receive appropriate training related to the transportation of students with special needs, including, but not limited to, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requirements, Human Rights Code obligations, disability awareness, and sensitivity training.
- Ensure that all drivers are trained and regularly refreshed on emergency response procedures, including bus evacuation protocols, accident reporting procedures, and student safety practices.
- Maintain and enforce policies and procedures relating to student conduct management while

students are being transported.

- Ensure that all drivers and transportation staff have successfully completed Criminal Record Checks, including Vulnerable Sector Screening, and that such clearances are renewed in accordance with applicable legislation, regulatory requirements, and/or at minimum every five (5) years.
- Provide accessible vehicles and specialized equipment as directed by Durham Student Transportation Services (DSTS) and as required to accommodate students' transportation needs.
- Provide qualified, competent, and appropriately trained personnel to transport students with disabilities and other identified special needs.
- Communicate all relevant student transportation requirements to assigned drivers, including, but not limited to, boarding, securement, seating, supervision, medical, behavioural, and deboarding requirements.
- Develop, implement, and maintain policies and procedures governing the safe boarding, securement, transportation, and deboarding of students, and ensure that all applicable staff are appropriately trained, tested, and monitored for compliance.
- Notify DSTS immediately of any incident occurring during transportation involving student health, safety, behaviour, injury, or any circumstance that may affect the student's well-being or transportation services.

SEAC
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SECTION C

The Board's Special Education Advisory Committee

The purpose of this standard is to provide details of the operation of the board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) to the Ministry and to give members of the public information to which they are entitled.

In accordance with Education Act Regulation 464/97, every district school board shall establish a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

The DDSB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is committed to working in partnership with the staff and resources of the board to assure quality educational services for all students.

The roles and responsibilities of SEAC are as follows:

- make recommendations to the board with respect to any matter affecting the establishment, development, and delivery of Special Education programs and services for exceptional students within the board;
- participate in the board's annual review of its Special Education Plan;
- participate in the development of the board's annual budget for Special Education; and
- review the financial statements of the board as they relate to Special Education

In Durham, our Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) helps the Board protect the rights of students with special learning needs. SEAC provides information, advice and assistance to parent(s)/guardian(s) whose children may require additional support. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may contact their child(ren)'s school(s) or members of SEAC if seeking further information.

"I am honoured to support parents to advocate for their child and help them navigate the system. Connections come in many ways and can include conversation, discussion role play or connection to understand their experience." sensRAneb, Autism Ontario Durham Region

Information about SEAC is made available to families and the community in a number of ways. These include, but are not limited to, publication and annual update to the SEAC brochure, inclusion of SEAC in the Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education, SEAC webpage on the DDSB website and through social media updates. Information includes members' names, affiliation and how to make contact.

The DDSB SEAC Obligations and Expectations document provides further details about SEAC and guidelines for how the Committee works together.

The DDSB SEAC Brochure is included in this section for information regarding:

- names and affiliations of members
- meeting times, place, format
- nomination process
- members' contact information
- SEAC meeting overview

Meetings are held monthly from September to June. SEAC meetings are available to the public through livestreaming currently accessed through the DDSB YouTube channel.

- Meeting dates are published on the DDSB electronic calendar and promoted using DDSB social media accounts. Meetings usually occur on the first Thursday of the month.

As a bi-annual commitment, SEAC will next survey parent(s)/caregiver(s) in Spring 2027 to help inform the work of the committee and the district. The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) will use results from a parent/caregiver survey (May/June 2027) to inform actions supporting family engagement and consultation to the district on areas of strengths and improvement including communication.

"As a SEAC representative, one of my most fulfilling roles is using my lived experience to help other families navigate the system and advocate effectively for their children."
Eva – SEAC Chair and Member for Association for Bright Children (ABC)

Each month we will provide an Impact Update to the community of how SEAC has fulfilled its roles and responsibilities.



DDSB
Ignite Learning

What is SEAC?

Under Ontario's Education Act, every student is entitled to a program which meets their needs. In Durham, our Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) helps the Board protect the rights of students with special learning needs. SEAC provides information, advice and assistance to parents/guardians whose children may require additional support. SEAC advises and makes recommendations to the Board concerning the establishment and development of special education programs and services.

Who Are Exceptional Students?

Exceptional Students are those whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that the student needs a specialized placement or support as identified by the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.)
The mission of the Durham District School Board's Special Education program is to provide a range of programs, placements and services for students with special needs in a supportive environment which enables them to develop to their full potential. Our on-going commitment is to provide the structures and support each student needs to foster their growth and development in programs which promote integration and independence as defined for each student based on their strengths and needs.



DDSB Ignite Learning

What happens at a SEAC Meeting?

SEAC meetings are a forum for SEAC members to provide advice and discussion of Board programs and support services for exceptional pupils.
Meetings follow a formal format including:

- Review of Minutes
- Presentations
- Current issues and initiatives in Special Education
- Committee Reports by members
- Board Reports: a) Trustees b) Staff
- Correspondence and questions

You are welcome to attend!

Members of the public who wish to attend SEAC meetings in person are required to pre-register as space is limited. To pre-register, visit SEAC Calendar - Agendas and Minutes and select the meeting date you wish to attend. A short registration form will be available for completion. Once pre-registration capacity has been reached, the form will be closed, and public observation will be available through the livestream only.

The Committee meets at:
DDSB Education Centre
400 Taunton Road East, Whitby
6:30 p.m. (usually the 1st Thursday of the month)





DDSB Ignite Learning

The committee is composed of member representatives from:

- Association for Bright Children (ABC)
- Autism Ontario – Durham Chapter
- Durham District School Board (Trustees)
- Durham Down Syndrome Association
- Easter Seals Ontario
- Grandview Kids' Family Advisory Council
- Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region
- Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC)
- Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support
- Members at Large Jessica Wells and Lyle Williams

Association for Bright Children (ABC)

This association helps parents advocate for their bright and gifted children. In co-operation with the Durham District School Board, ABC's Durham Chapter provides information and support to member and non-member parents.

Contact:
Eva Kyriakides (SEAC Chair)
bill.eva.k@rogers.com
abcontario.ca

Autism Ontario-Durham Chapter

Autism Ontario is dedicated to increasing public awareness about autism and the day-to-day issues faced by individuals with autism, their families, and the professionals with whom they interact. The association and its chapters share common goals of providing information and education, supporting research, and advocating for programs and services for the autism community.

Contact:
sensaRAneb Burrell
anactiveparent@hotmail.com
Autismontario.com

Durham Down Syndrome Association

This is an organization of parents, professionals and others striving to improve the quality of life for those with Down Syndrome. While seeking to broaden public awareness, this association serves as a support to new families and as a resource to parents/guardians for information regarding facilities and programs available for persons with Down Syndrome.

Contact:
Tara Culley
SEAC@ddsa.ca
ddsa.ca

Easter Seals Ontario

Easter Seals Ontario provides programs and services to children and youth with physical disabilities across Ontario to help them achieve greater independence, accessibility and integration.

Contact:
Allyson Eamer
allyson.eamer@ontariotechu.ca
easterseals.org

Grandview Kids' Family Advisory Council

The Grandview Kids' Family Advisory Council (FAC) is a group of parents and caregivers who volunteer to help improve the planning and delivery of services at Grandview Kids. They provide guidance on system-level issues that impact many families and contribute to program and service design at the Centre.

Contact:
Seana Haley
seanahaley@gmail.com

Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region

The Learning Disabilities Association Durham Region's mission is to advocate, support and educate the Durham community about learning disabilities and to enable persons with learning disabilities to reach their full potential.
To achieve this we provide:

- Monthly Speaker Series for all
- Resource Facilitation for all
- Advocacy Support for members
- Public Awareness Activities

Contact:
Rowin Jarvis
rowin@ldadr.on.ca
ldadr.on.ca

Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC)

Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC) is a provincial parent organization providing advocacy for children, youth and young adults who are blind or have low vision.

Contact:
Charmain Brown
charmainbrown@hotmail.com

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support

Established in 2020, the Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support supports Black caregivers of children and adults with disability, providing families with a safe place to network, build connections, problem-solve, share resources and to become less isolated. We believe that "it takes a village" to meet the needs of our families and our focus is to educate them on their rights and responsibilities, to enlighten them about the services available to them and to empower them to be strong advocates for their loved ones.

Contact:
Jenn McLaughlin
SawubonaACS.org

Members at Large:

Lyle Williams:
seaclw@outlook.com
My role as Member at Large is to bring my experience in accessibility, human rights, and student support in post-secondary and public-sector environments to the committee. As a Human Rights Officer, I support members and advise on harassment, discrimination, and accommodation needs. Prior to this role, I spent many years in the college sector supporting students with disabilities and advancing inclusive learning practices. As a Black professional with a disability, I draw on both lived and professional experience to advocate for more equitable systems. I am committed to community collaboration and am excited to support the work of SEAC in promoting inclusive education across the Durham District School Board.



Jessica Wells
jessica.carol.wells@gmail.com
My role as a member at large is to contribute to meaningful discussions and work collaboratively with fellow committee members to enhance support for students with special needs and their families. I am passionate about the success of all children. My experience as a mother and a professional have provided me with insight into the challenges and opportunities within the special education system.

Durham District School Board:
905-666-5500
Toll Free: 1-800-265-2968
ddsb.ca

Donna Edwards, Trustee: 365-275-2659

Stephen Linton, Trustee: 905-706-7490

Kelly Miller, Trustee: 905-706-3817

If you would like more information on the Special Education Advisory Committee or Special Education Services in Durham, please call your local school.



DDSB
Ignite Learning

COORDINATION OF SERVICES WITH OTHER MINISTRIES

SECTION D

Coordination of Services with Other Ministries: Care and Treatment Education Programs (CTEP) and Education Community Partnership Programs (ECPP)

The purpose of the standard is to provide the Ministry and the public with details of the board's strategies to ensure smooth transitions for students with special education strengths and needs who are entering or leaving a school.

The responsibility for ensuring successful admission or transfer of students from one program to another is collaboratively shared by all staff involved with the student at school and board levels with input from parent(s)/guardian(s).

Care and Treatment Education Programs (CTEP) and Education Community Partnership Programs (ECPP)

CTEP and ECPP programs provide educational and treatment-focused opportunities for students who currently face barriers to full participation in community-based schools, owing to needs for care, treatment, and/or rehabilitative purposes. The education component provided through their partnerships is based on formal agreements between school boards and agencies that provide care, treatment, and or rehabilitative services. Access to these programs is determined by agency admission criteria, or may be ordered by the Courts. The goal of CTEPs and ECPPs, is to provide children and youth who are among the most vulnerable with opportunities to experience continuity of education during periods of care, treatment and/or rehabilitative support in a manner that aligns with treatment goals and improved outcomes.

Resource: Ministry of Education - Guidelines for Approval and Provision of an Education and Community Partnership Program (ECPP)

CTEP and ECPP in the Durham District School Board (DDSB)

Under the school title of Grove School, the DDSB has been a committed lead educational partner for these programs.

Grove School provides a school name and structure for DDSB teachers to provide education programs from Kindergarten to Grade 12 for clients of government approved CTEP and ECPP within Durham Region. Grove School programs are based on a collaborative model with community agencies and facilities. Grove has many voluntary collaborative partnerships with children's mental health agencies, hospitals or youth detention centres, which incorporate all aspects of agency and community support, establish clear educational and behavioural goals, and maintain effective classroom time providing treatment or rehabilitation and academic support. Classes are located across Durham Region either on site at a DDSB school or in a separate, segregated location. All CTEP and ECPP classes enable students to

attend school with the support and treatment offered by an agency or facility.
CTEP and ECPPs are only for children and youth who cannot attend schools because of their primary need for care, treatment and/or rehabilitation services.

DDSB CTEP and ECPP (Grove School) currently supports (May 1, 2025), in collaboration with thirteen agency partners, fifty individual classroom programs within twenty-four sites across the Durham Region. Grove School is among the largest education commitments to the CTEP and ECPP model provincially.

To receive admission into a CTEP AND ECPP Program, the student is first referred to an agency by:

- a parent/guardian (CTEP)
- the courts (ECPP only)
- child welfare (CTEP)
- a medical professional (CTEP)
- the school (CTEP)
- DDSB Professional Support Services (CTEP)

The student must be accepted and become a full-time resident or client of the facility's residential and/or Day Treatment program. Once the referral has been accepted by the agency or facility, their staff complete a Grove School registration form. The client/student is placed on the Grove School register and admitted to the classroom.

A student who is registered in a school hosting CTEP may access the agency or facility classroom on a 'reverse' basis. The host school Principal must make the referral and the agency must approve the placement based upon suitability factors. Accessing the CTEP Program in this manner does not require a change in student registration and the student remains on the host school's register.

DDSB community partnership agreements include requirements for the partner organization to uphold the Human Rights Code, in alignment with the principles of the DDSB Indigenous Education Policy, Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy and responsibilities of all staff as duty bearers.

Supporting Transitions from Care and Treatment Education Programs (CTEP) and Education Community Partnership Programs (ECPP)

Effective planning is especially important for children and youth transitioning out of Education Programs. Effective transition planning support improves the continuity of education and programs and services for children and youth. Gradual integration and reintegration, where appropriate, is an element of the transition planning (e.g. phased integration back to the community day school). Transition plans should be developed by multidisciplinary teams to support a seamless transition out of the CTEP and ECPP.

The appropriate assessment should occur upon exit from the Education Program to confirm or inform the transition plan for the child or youth. The teacher or designate at the next school setting should have access to information about the child or youth's education and accommodation needs (where applicable) and, as appropriate, attend a multi-disciplinary transition planning meeting.

Complete student records, including achievement of elementary curriculum expectations, secondary credits earned and documentation regarding work completed toward secondary credits, will be inserted into the OSR for the child or youth upon exiting an Education Program. The transition plan should be stored in the OSR folder.

The child or youth is supported by the Education Program staff during the transition period into the appropriate school or post-secondary setting through informal liaison, if possible and appropriate. Until this transition period is completed, the child or youth should remain on the register of the Education Program. If circumstances change and the child or youth should be impacted negatively by the move into program during the transition period, the child or youth may return to the Education Program**.** The Ministry of Education will not concurrently fund the same student on two registers.

The agency or facility initiates the child or youth's exit from a CTEP and ECPP. Generally, there are three ways a student ceases to be in an Education Program:

- A negotiable and planned move when the student is deemed ready to move on to a community school setting
- A non-negotiable, unplanned move (e.g. court ordered)
- An unplanned move (e.g. the student or parent/guardian unilaterally decides to leave the agency or facility treatment program).

SUBMISSION and AVAILABILITY of PLAN

SECTION E

2026-27 Special Education Plan Checklist

School boards must comply with the requirements for special education plans set out in Ontario Regulation 306 under the *Education Act*, entitled "Special Education Programs and Services", and in the *Special Education in Ontario: Kindergarten to Grade 12 – Policy and Resource Guide*.

Please fill out the checklist below and submit to your regional office by July 31, 2026.

School Board Name	Durham District School Board
Name of Chief Executive Officer	Camille Williams-Taylor
Signature of Chief Executive Officer	
Date	October 20, 2026
Please indicate the URL of the Special Education Plan on your board's website	**https://www.ddsb.ca/about-ddsb/inclusive-student-services/**

In the event of any inconsistency between the summary of the standards set out in this document and those contained in the *Special Education in Ontario: Kindergarten to Grade 12 – Policy and Resource Guide*, the standards set out in the Guide shall prevail and govern.

SECTION 1: The Board's Consultation Process **Purpose:** To provide details of the board's consultation process to the ministry and to the public. **Summary of Standard Expectations:**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
The board's special education plan must describe the consultation process and include the following materials listed below:	
▪ A statement of how the board ensures that its SEAC is involved in the annual review of the board's special education plan	☒
▪ Description of majority or minority reports concerning the boards approved plan that may have been received from the board's SEAC	☒
▪ Board's response to these reports	☒
▪ Statement of how members of the community are informed of the timelines and methods for providing input to the board's special education plan	☒
▪ Summary of feedback received as a result of consultations with members of the community	☒
▪ The special education plan must also provide information on the results of any internal or external reviews of existing special education programs and services within the board that have taken place in the previous or current school year	☒
▪ A list of internal and external reviews of the board's special education programs and services that are planned for the following year must also be included.	☒

SECTION 2: Special Education Programs and Services: The Board's General Model for Special Education **Purpose:** To provide the ministry and the public with information on the board's philosophy and service-delivery model for the provision of special education programs and services. **Summary of Standard Expectations:**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
▪ The board's special education plan must be designed to comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the *Education Act* and regulations made under the Act, and any other relevant legislation. The board must include a statement in the plan confirming that the plan has been designed in accordance with this requirement	☒
SECTION 3: Roles and Responsibilities **Purpose:** To provide the public with information on roles and responsibilities in the area of special education. **Summary of Standard Expectations:**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
The board's special education plan must provide information on the roles and responsibilities of the following listed below in the area of special education in Ontario (see Appendix A of the Guide for more information):	
▪ Ministry of Education	☒
▪ School Boards	☒
▪ Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs)	☒
▪ Principals & Teachers of the board	☒
▪ Parents or guardians	☒
▪ Students	☒

SECTION 4: Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies **Purpose:** To provide details of the board's early identification procedures and intervention strategies to the ministry and to the public. **Summary of Standard Expectations**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
▪ The school board's special education plan must contain a description of the following listed below:	
▪ The guiding principles or philosophy used by the board for early identification of children's learning needs	☒
▪ The teacher's role in early identification	☒
▪ The parent's role in early identification	☒
▪ Policies and procedures on screening, assessment, referral, identification, and program planning for students who may be in need of special education programs and services	☒
▪ Procedures for providing parents with notice that their child is having difficulty	☒
▪ Procedures used within the board for referring a student for an assessment should learning problems be identified that might result in the student's being referred eventually to an IPRC	☒
▪ Procedures for providing parents with notice that their child is being considered for referral to an IPRC	☒
▪ Procedures for providing parents with notice that their child is being considered for a special education program and related services if the child is not referred to an IPRC	☒
▪ The types of assessment tools/strategies used to gather appropriate information on students in order to assist in the development of appropriate educational programs	☒
▪ The types of early intervention strategies that are used to support students prior to referral to an IRPC	☒

SECTION 5: The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) **Purpose:** To provide details of the board's IPRC process to the ministry and to the public. **Summary of Standard Expectations:**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
▪ A board's special education plan must include a description of the board's IPRC process	☒
▪ A board's special education plan must also include the following listed below:	
▪ The number of IPRC referrals;	☒
▪ The Number of IPRC Reviews; and	☒
▪ The Number of Appeals conducted within the board in the previous school year	☒
▪ The plan will also include a copy of the board's guide for parents (see in Appendix D-1 in Part D of the guide)	☒
SECTION 6: Educational and Other Assessments **Purpose:** To provide details of the board's assessment policies and procedures to the ministry and to make parents aware of the types of assessment tools used by the school board, the ways in which assessments are obtained by IPRCs, and the ways in which assessments are used. **Summary of Standard Expectations**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
For each type of assessment tool described, the school board's special education plan must include the following information listed below:	
▪ The qualifications of categories of staff who conduct the assessment and/or provide diagnoses; that is, staff who are governed by the *Education Act; the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1993; the Health Care Consent Act, 1996;* or other legislation (the board must specify which legislation applies)	☒

▪ Average waiting times for assessments to be conducted and the criteria for managing waiting lists if they exist	☒
▪ An acknowledgement that requirements for obtaining parental consent are met prior to conducting the assessment	☒
▪ An explanation of how results of an assessment are communicated to parents	☒
▪ A description of protocols for sharing information with staff and outside agencies	☒
▪ An explanation of how the privacy of information is protected	☒
SECTION 7: Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings **Purpose:** To provide details of the board's specialized health support services to the ministry and to the public. **Summary of Standard Expectations:**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
For each type of specialized health support service described, the plan must describe the following listed below:	
▪ The agency or the position of the person who performs the service (e.g., board staff, parent, student)	☒
▪ Eligibility criteria for students to receive the service	☒
▪ Position of the person who determines whether a student is eligible to receive the service and what the level of support will be	☒
▪ Criteria for determining when the service is no longer required	☒
▪ Review or appeal procedures (if any) available for parents who dispute the provision of these services, including any time limits on requesting reviews or appeals	☒

SECTION 8: Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities **Purpose:** To make information on the categories and definitions of exceptionalities available to the public, including parents and community associations. **Summary of Standard Expectations:**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
▪ A board's special education plan must list the ministry's categories and definitions of exceptionalities	☒
▪ Describe the ways in which the board's IPRC applies them in making decisions on identification and placement	☒
SECTION 9: Special Education Placements Provided by the Board **Purpose:** To provide the ministry and the public with details of the range of placements provided by the board, and to inform the public that placement of a student in a regular class is the first option considered by an IPRC. **Summary of Standard Expectations:**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
▪ Describe the ways in which the board's SEAC is involved in providing advice on determining the range of placements offered	☒
▪ Acknowledge that placement of a student in a regular class is the first option considered by an IPRC	☒
▪ Outline ways in which a student can be integrated into the regular classroom when the placement meets the student's needs and is in accordance with the parents' preferences	☒
▪ Outline specific information about each type of placement provided at the elementary and secondary levels	☒
▪ List for each category of exceptionality the range of placement options available, along with the criteria for admission, the admission process, and the criteria for determining the level of support provided in each placement, including the board's criteria for assigning intensive support for students who are in need of a great deal of assistance	☒

▪ State the maximum class size for each type of special education class	☒
▪ List the criteria used for determining the need to change a student's placement	☒
▪ Describe the alternatives that are provided when the needs of a student cannot be met within the board's range of placements and the ways in which the options are communicated to parents	☒
SECTION 10: Individual Education Plans (IEPs) **Purpose:** To inform the ministry and the public about the ways in which the board is complying with ministry requirements for implementing IEPs **Summary of Standard Expectations:**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
▪ The school board's special education plan must describe the following listed below:	
▪ The board's plan for implementing the ministry's standards for IEPs	☒
▪ Any processes for dispute resolution where parents and board staff disagree on significant aspects of the IEP	☒
▪ The board's results of the ministry's review for the previous year, along with the board's plans for a response to these results (when available)	☒
▪ The school board must include a copy of its IEP form in the plan	☒

SECTION 11: Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario **Purpose:** To provide the public with information about the Provincial and Demonstration Schools that are operated for students who are Deaf, blind, or deafblind, or who have severe learning disabilities **Summary of Standard Expectations:**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
The school board's special education plan must include the following:	
▪ Information on programs and services offered by Provincial and Demonstration Schools that is provided by the ministry in the Provincial Schools and Demonstration Schools section in Part F of the Guide	☒
▪ Current statistics, by program, on the number of students who are qualified to be resident students in the board who are currently attending Provincial and Demonstration Schools	☒
▪ Information about how transportation is provided for students to and from the Provincial or Demonstration School, including transportation of an assistant, if necessary	☒
SECTION 12: Special Education Staff **Purpose:** To provide specific details on board staff to the ministry and to the public. **Summary of Standard Expectations:**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
▪ The school board's special education plan must include information on the types of staff and number of FTEs who provide special education programs and services (see Appendix B-2 of the Guide)	☒
SECTION 13: Staff Development **Purpose:** To provide details of the board's professional development plans for special education staff to the ministry and to the public. **Summary of Standard Expectations:**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**

The board must outline its plans for the professional development of its special education personnel. The special education plan must describe the following listed below:	
▪ The overall goal of the special education staff development plan	☒
▪ Ways in which staff provide input for the plan	☒
▪ Ways in which the school board's SEAC is consulted about staff development	☒
▪ Methods of determining priorities in the area of staff development	☒
▪ Courses, in-service training, and other types of professional development activities offered by the board	☒
▪ Ways in which staff are trained with regard to the legislation and ministry policy on special education, with particular attention to training for new teachers	☒
▪ Details of the board's budget allocation dedicated to the staff development plan in the area of special education	☒
▪ Any cost-sharing arrangements with other ministries or agencies for staff development	☒
▪ Ways in which school board staff are made aware of the board's special education plan and of professional development opportunities	☒
SECTION 14: Equipment **Purpose:** To inform the ministry, board staff members and other professionals, and parents about the provision of individualized equipment for some students with special needs. **Summary of Standard Expectations:**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
▪ The school board's plan must describe how the board determines whether a student requires individualized equipment, such as assistive technology, and how the board allocates its budget for equipment, including the criteria used for purchasing individualized equipment.	☒

SECTION 15: Accessibility of School Buildings **Purpose:** To provide the ministry with further details of the board's multi-year plan, which was previously submitted to the ministry, for improving accessibility for students with physical and sensory disabilities, and to provide the public with this information **Summary of Standard Expectations:**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
The school board's special education plan must include the following listed below:	
▪ A summary of the board's multi-year capital expenditure plan for improving accessibility to its school buildings, grounds, and administration offices, including resources dedicated to providing barrier-free access in the coming school years	☒
▪ A statement outlining how members of the public can obtain a copy of the complete plan from the board	☒
▪ A summary of the board's progress in implementing the capital expenditure plan	☒
SECTION 16: Transportation **Purpose:** To provide details of the board's transportation policies to the ministry and to the public. **Summary of Standard Expectations:**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
▪ The board's special education plan must describe the types of students with special needs who are eligible to receive transportation and the ways in which these students can access the transportation.	☒
▪ The special education plan must also describe the following listed below:	
▪ The process for deciding whether a student with special needs will be transported with other children or whether it is in the best interests of the student to be transported separately	☒
▪ The safety criteria that are used by the board in the tendering and the selection of transportation providers for exceptional students	☒

SECTION 17: The Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) **Purpose:** To provide details of the operation of the board's SEAC to the ministry and to give members of the public information to which they are entitled. **Summary of Standard Expectations:**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
▪ Names and affiliation of members	☒
▪ Meeting times and locations	☒
▪ Contact information such as an email address	☒
▪ Procedures for selecting members	☒
▪ Where applicable, a note that a board has membership to represent the interests of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students	☒
▪ The plan must provide a description of ways in which the board's SEAC fulfilled its roles and responsibilities during the school year in which the plan was developed.	☒
SECTION 18: Coordination of Services with Other Ministries or Agencies **Purpose:** To provide the ministry and the public with details of the board's strategies to ensure a smooth transition for students with special needs who are entering or leaving a school. **Summary of Standard Expectations:**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
▪ The special education plan must provide specific details about advance special education planning that is done for students with special needs who are arriving from other programs	☒

▪ The special education plan must indicate whether it is the board's policy or practice to accept assessments accompanying the students from these programs or whether it is the board's policy or practice to reassess all incoming student (If reassessment is the policy or practice, include wait time)	☒
▪ The special education plan must also provide details about the way in which information is shared for students leaving the board to attend programs offered by other school boards or by care and/or treatment, custody, and correctional facilities.	☒
▪ In the special education plan, the board must identify the position of the person responsible for ensuring the successful admission or transfer of students from one program to another.	☒
SECTION 19: Submission and Availability of School Board Plans **Purpose:** Each board is required to make its special education plan available to the public at the same time that it submits the plan to the ministry. **Summary of Standard Expectations:**	**Please confirm your submitted Special Education Plan aligns with the standards as set out in the Guide. Please check off each box below.**
The complete plan must be submitted along with the following documents listed below:	
▪ Letter from the Chief Executive Officer of the school board to confirm submission of the plan	☒
▪ Copy of the board's motion of approval of the plan, including the date of approval	☒
▪ Copy of any related motions or recommendations from the board's SEAC	☒

Additional Information – Appendices List

Appendix A – DDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan.....117
Appendix B – DDSB Attendance and Engagement Strategies 118
Appendix C – Caregiver Engagement Flyer.....127
Appendix D – Program Fliers: AFFIRM and BEME.....130
Appendix E – Parent / Guardian Guide to Special Education IPRC.....132
Appendix F – Life Beyond High School.....149
Appendix G – DDSB Transition Guide.....161
Appendix H – SERT e-Bulletin 186
Appendix I – TRAILS Flyer.....202
Appendix J – AAC Guidelines..... 203
Appendix K –Special Education Community Symposium Flyer/Data Overview 212
Appendix L – ACT with ART Flyer 215
Appendix M –Inclusive Skills Workshop Flyer 216
Appendix N – IPRC Timeline Flowchart..... 217
Appendix O – Glossary of Terms 218
Appendix P - Inclusive Student Services Workshops/Professional Development.....220
Appendix Q - Individual Education Plan (IEP) Samples.....221
Appendix R - Fostering Skills Supporting Student Transportation.....235

Additional Information Available Online Through the DDSB Website

Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies, refer to link below:

Protocol for Collaboration Agreement with External Agencies (PPM 149)

DDSB
Ignite Learning

WELL-BEING EVERYONE EVERY DAY

Mental Health and Well-Being
Student Action Plan 2025-2028



Learn to Understand

- Everyday interactions that help foster schools and classrooms where every student experiences a sense of belonging.
- Mental health and well-being is woven into the every day conversations and practices.

Strengthen to Support

- Bolster skills to ensure mental health promotion is a part of everyday classroom and school environments and experiences.
- Build and strengthen practices that centre student's identity and experiences.

Connect to Pathways

- Strong pathways to, from and through meaningful support for the mental health and well-being of every student that is identity-affirming and culturally relevant.

Appendix A

Best Practices for Engagement and Attendance

Durham District School Board (DDSB)

DDSB Ignite Learning

The World Health Organization includes education as one of its twelve Social Determinants of Health; we know that a good education is a key factor for individual success.

Most educators, allied professionals, parents/guardians, community members, and students would be aware of the requirement in Ontario for young people under the age of 18 to be enrolled in and attend school. Many children and youth do attend regularly and are engaged in many aspects of school life, including co-curriculars, clubs and social events. However, about one-fourth of all youth will experience some period of school avoidance during their school career (Anxiety Canada). The impact of school avoidance is well known and some of these consequences may include:

- Loss of relationships and developmental experiences
- Increased isolation and family conflict
- Emerging or intensifying mental health issues
- A decline in academic success
- Impact on future opportunities and pathways

Reconsidering and examining our engagement and attendance processes and approaches in a trauma informed way invites us to consider: " Does this school policy support a culture of care or a culture of compliance? "

Alex Shevrin Venet

School avoidance (some literature also uses the term school refusal), is a term used for circumstances where the child/youth is not attending school and the parent/guardian is aware of the student's whereabouts. This is different from the term 'truancy', whereby parents/guardians are typically unaware that their child is not in class. The reasons for school avoidance are varied and are unique to each individual and/or family. Some factors and barriers that may contribute to a young person's school avoidance/refusal include:

- Lack of safety at school (all forms of discrimination and harassment including racism, ableism, oppression, homophobia, transphobia, bi-phobia, sexism, and religious discrimination)*
- Bullying and social conflict
- Food insecurity
- Housing insecurity (frequent moves or staying in shelters)
- Poverty (limited access to seasonal clothing or school supplies; it's often hard to ask for help)
- Difficulties getting to school (unsafe to walk, parent/caregiver is often late getting them to school, missing a bus and lack of alternatives, the parent/caregiver had an unpleasant experience with school and struggles to support attendance)
- Fear of judgment
- Home related stressors
- Caring for loved ones or needing to get a job to help with income support
- Feeling like they don't fit in
- Unassessed or unaddressed communication or accommodation concerns
- Separation anxiety/change in routine
- Emerging or intensifying mental health concerns
- Grade decline
- Loss of hope/inability to see a future or worried about future
- Lacking a safe and caring adult at school
- Unmet learning needs

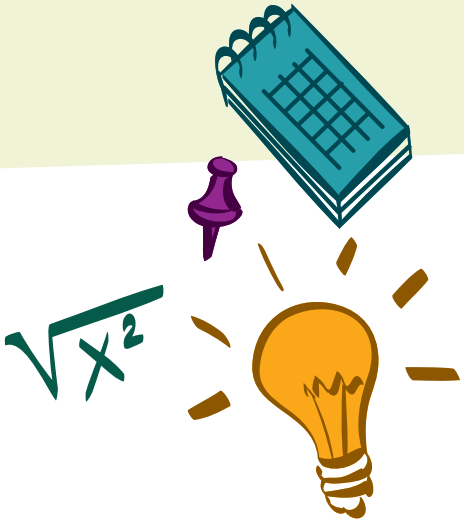
" ...about one-fourth of all youth will experience some period of school avoidance during their school career."

Anxiety Canada

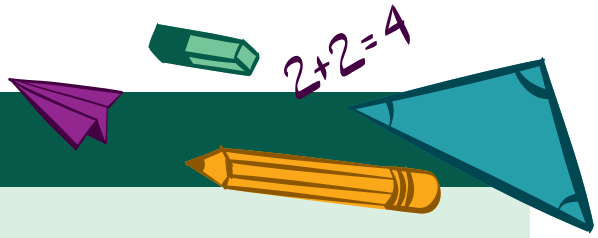
**If issues of discrimination or harassment may be involved, then it triggers responsibilities under DDSB policies, procedures and processes (for example, the Indigenous Rights, Human Rights, Positive School Climate, Code of Conduct policies and procedures etc.) to address it. If such an issue arises, then the employee needs to report it (or take steps to address it depending on the role and circumstances).*

Engagement and attendance go hand in hand and are firmly grounded in the District's commitments to student and identity centred practice, Human Rights, Indigenous Rights, and mental health and well being.

When we engage with a young person and their family from a place of authentic interest, in a way that is non-judgmental and moves away from 'compliance' and focuses solely on genuine caring, we are more likely to get at what the barriers to school attendance are and tips into how to meaningfully address them. Parents/guardians and students already know that children and youth are required to attend school (compliance) and if they could attend regularly, they likely would already be engaged in and attending school on a regular basis. When focusing on engagement, we are better able to meet the young person's needs, fulfill our duty bearer responsibilities, create a culture of care, help a young person develop problem solving skills, repair fractured relationships, and impact the trajectory of a young person.



Key Actions



This work requires us to:

- **Actively reflect on and check our biases, assumptions and stereotypes: our own and systemic**
- **Be aware of our own emotions and how they may have an impact on our interactions with others**
- **Ask our team/colleagues if the approach we are considering will enhance a culture of care or is it focused on compliance only**
- **Believe that engagement can be achieved from genuine caring; 'when I feel seen, safe, and heard I will want to show up' (compliance)**
- **Challenge our beliefs, personally and systemically, about 'attendance' and 'engagement'**
- **Value that any move forward is a win; change can be slow, it is deeply personal, and it is rarely linear**
- **Critically examine practices that may impact engagement, for example, discipline processes for lates**
- **Believe that intrinsic motivation creatives meaningful and personal change in a way that external pressure rarely does**
- **Understand that attendance (whatever that looks like) is not the only marker of how a student is faring**

A whole school engagement and attendance approach is a collaborative team effort amongst Administrators, educators, school staff, Social Work/Attendance, Psychological Services, Speech Language Pathologists, Information Technology (I.T.) Services, and System Leads/Superintendents. This approach asks us to:

- Know our roles and uphold our responsibilities
- Listen to students and families/guardians and respect their truth
- Leverage and respect professional skill and experience across disciplines
- Be aware of pathways for support

Best practice tells us that our collective responsibility requires us to acknowledge the strengths of our students and families and actively seek ways to identify and address barriers. Rather than asking "why isn't this young person coming to school", let's start by becoming curious about what we might be missing, or at least, how might the school be inadvertently contributing to the situation resulting in our students having unmet social/academic needs.

With respect to engagement and attendance tracking, there are everyday practices that help focus our ongoing engagement efforts (caring) and our daily management of attendance (compliance). Supporting students and their families requires a joint effort from the various school-based professionals and while some responsibilities may fall to the Administrator or Attendance Counsellor/ Social Worker, a student's sense of safety and belonging depends on all of us.

Daily School Based Practices

Engagement (Caring)

- Get to know our students with genuine interest (easier to notice pattern changes)
- Our ongoing efforts to engage with our families and our school communities affords us the opportunity to share information about engagement, attendance and ways we can support families around upcoming interruptions in regular engagement and attendance (such as extended vacations, hospital stays).
- Personal reach outs to kindergarten families, or where a student is transferring to the school to inquire if there are any ways to support
- Checking in and paying attention—small details matter to students
- Welcoming in a way that demonstrates that we see and value the individual and they belong
- Notice when a young person is 'off'—perhaps they are coming in late, or they've been absent, or their demeanor has changed
- Reach out to the young person (or parent/guardian) and be authentic in our caring approach "I'm glad you're back", "I notice that you don't seem yourself? How are things?"
- Build trust and respectful relationships with the parents/guardians
    - Make sure we know how parents want to be contacted and when so that they can best receive information
    - Invite a conversation about their child/family and what they want us to know about their student (strengths, challenges, habits, interests) and any accessibility issues or other barriers
    - Create an environment that understands and supports the complex challenges that parents face; making space and time for parents to connect with their child's school
    - Maintain a respectful and non-judgmental approach to the various ways that families are structured and how they live their lives and maintain their values which may not always fit with the school expectations, agendas or timelines
- When we notice changes in demeanor, attendance patterns, and/or behaviour, it is imperative that we reach out to the student to ask about how they are doing, and we maintain our caring and compassionate approach
- Collaborate with parents/caregivers when issues arise and when changes in attendance patterns begin to emerge to get their perspective and input: this is foundational information for supporting the student's engagement and addressing barriers
- Actively check our personal biases, judgments, assumptions and stereotypes and be aware of how those may show up in interactions with parents and students
- Leverage school supports (Social Work, Psychological Services, Speech Language Pathologist, Child Youth Well-Being Workers) for early consultation and/or capacity building around engagement approaches and problem solving

Attendance Management (Compliance)

- Review Enrollment Register Instructions
- Every school is required to maintain an attendance register
- Become familiar with the various codes that track attendance
- Become familiar with the various reports that are available related to monitoring student attendance
- Attendance is taken daily
- Establish a plan within the school to ensure that communication about attendance issues is brought to the attention of the office
- Co-develop a plan with school Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor for regular review and monitoring of attendance concerns, engagement approaches, and referral pathways
- Ensure families are aware of the temporary excusal form through the school website, newsletters, School Community Council (SCC) meetings, etc.

Consultation/Referral for Attendance Services

Engagement (Caring)

- Best practices in engagement efforts provide opportunities to build relationships and create caring environments
- Irrespective of the student's response, a non-judgmental message that you **noticed**, and you **offered** a kind acknowledgment and support, and that you **see** the student, has considerable positive impact on both the student and the relationship between student/school
    - Seek support and consultation if you are unsure about how to proceed (Administrator, Guidance, SERT, Social Work Services, Psychological Services, etc.)
- It is in our engagement efforts that we learn about our students and their families, their strengths and challenges, and it is this knowledge and information that is central to the **in-person consultation** with the Attendance Counsellor when more specific concerns are brought forward about a student
- Gathering this data, including staff perspectives, family input and efforts made to address the concerns are all foundational to formulating next steps
- This information provides school professionals (Speech Language Pathologist, Psychological Services, Social Work/Attendance, etc.) necessary consultation criteria to inform how best to meet the identified needs of the student and how we can build on the school's engagement efforts to date

- This information also helps to develop an integrated plan where we consider ways to leverage the expertise of others, to build on the relationships that the student and family identify as being caring and trusting in a manner that minimizes duplication and stress for a parent/caregiver (for example, multiple children in the family with attendance concerns who attend different schools; a coordinated effort can streamline engagement efforts)
- Increased disengagement in the form of poor attendance is typically symptomatic of other underlying issues for the student that may originate both at home and school so remaining curious and compassionate helps students and families share their story
- Based on identified needs (learning needs, assessment needs, lack of resources), a Social Work referral may be the appropriate next step with the consent of the family so that barriers can be addressed
- Transparency and clarity with the family and student fosters positive relationships and ensures that everyone is aware of concerns and pathways for support, including potential attendance referral
- An attendance referral has a narrow scope and specific criteria and should be considered when all other engagement efforts have been implemented and met with limited success
    - A referral for attendance does not require family consent, thus the impact on families and students is a factor to consider and could have significant consequences on future engagement efforts; having ongoing conversations and relationship with the family may minimize the impact
- Because persistent absenteeism is typically chronic, sporadic, and challenging for home and school, it is important for a thorough consultation with the Attendance Counsellor to occur to determine whether the family and student needs could best be met through a Social Work referral or if an attendance referral should be completed.



Attendance Management (Compliance)

- Using school-based plan for tracking and monitoring reports/practices, identify individual students where attendance patterns are beginning to emerge, and concerns are arising
- These reports, in combination with student/family engagement efforts will lead to a consultation with Social Work/Attendance.
- Consultation with Attendance Counsellor/Social Worker is required before a referral is completed
- Reasons for attendance referral:
    - persistent absenteeism
    - prolonged absence (approaching 15 days)
    - no contact with family despite efforts,
    - referral to Community Based Learning Program (CBLP)
- Fill out referral document on PowerSchool SP: Principal or designate fills out the form
- Family and student are informed of the referral to the Attendance Counsellor; this referral should not be a surprise to the family as this could feel quite punitive.
- Attendance Counsellor accepts the referral if there has been pre-referral consultation

Open File/Closing File

Engagement (Caring)

- After accepting the referral, efforts to contact student and family are made by the Attendance Counsellor and will also continue by school staff
- The Attendance Counsellor will work from the information provided in the consultations and build on the efforts the school has made; intention is to build on the work and not duplicate where possible
- Contact with student/family to continue to understand the barriers to engagement and attendance and support next steps
- Regular contact and partnership with Administrator/SERT/teacher is often required to support ongoing efforts to jointly address barriers as identified by student and caregiver
- There is no student or family consent involved with respect to an attendance referral and it may limit the scope of work that could occur in the scope of an attendance referral:
    - At the DDSB our Attendance Counsellors are Registered Social Workers and are bound by the requirements of the College of Social Workers and Social Services Workers (OCSWSSW), PHIPA, and other relevant legislation.
    - The provision of any services for which informed consent is normally required applies when working with a student and/or family through an attendance referral. This means that the provision of any ongoing service on the part of the Attendance Counsellor/ Social Worker to address the issues identified as barriers will require informed consent from the client and will result in a concurrent Social Work file.
    - For example, if emerging mental health concerns are identified as the reason for student absence, informed consent is required from the student (client) to support the student with those specific concerns; in the absence of informed consent, resources will be provided.
    - If consent is not provided, the Attendance Counsellor can provide community resource information
- Even when efforts have improved the relationship and engagement between the student/family with the school and barriers are reduced, efforts to maintain this progress need to be ongoing
- There is a recognition that change may be slow and it is unlikely to be linear; any move forward is celebrated and acknowledged
- We will actively resist ‘all or nothing’ approaches (compliance) and rather, will adopt creative approaches to maximize engagement and success (caring)

Attendance Management (Compliance)

- The school continues to monitor attendance and maintain the register.
- For prolonged absence (consecutive absences), the Attendance Counsellor will monitor student attendance for the purpose of providing 15 day letters as required; regular two-way communication is required to continue to produce the letters and allow the file to remain open
- Prolonged absence letters (15 day letters) can be provided up to 60 days for students aged 14-17; this does not apply to students under 14 as letters can continue to be issued up to two years if two-way contact continues
- Prolonged absence letters are provided to the school for the purpose of communicating that the attendance file remains open; these letters are filed in the student's OSR
- For prolonged absence the attendance file must be closed at 60 days if the student has not attended school
- For persistent absenteeism, the attendance file will be closed when:
  - Attendance is improving.
  - Barriers to attendance are identified and beginning to be addressed and reduced
  - Or where there is no communication with student and family after all efforts have been made
  - Or where efforts have been made and exhausted and significant improvement to attendance has not been realized, the Attendance Counsellor may close the file
  - Attendance Counsellor and school team collaborate about possible next steps
- Generally speaking, persistent absenteeism attendance files may remain open as long as there is some or sporadic attendance, there is two-way communication, and ongoing planning efforts
- An attendance file may remain open into a new school year when there are concerns that the attendance pattern will likely continue into the beginning of the new school year or where there are concerns that the student may not attend on the first day of school. The concerns that would give rise to such a referral should not be new and should be rooted in work the school team and the family has been engaged in throughout the year. In other words, late June referrals in the absence of consultation with the Attendance Counsellor/Social Worker should not occur.
- An attendance file will remain open if a student attends CBLP in order to maintain connection with the home school. The file is closed when it is confirmed that the student will not be returning to the home school. Best practice would be to document the next steps for the student (example, new school or program),
- Once an attendance file is closed, the Attendance Counsellor/Social Worker will inform Administration, support staff, and Guidance (Secondary) that the file has closed
- The principal determines if the student will be removed from the register

Helping Your Child with School Attendance

Your child has started school, and everything starts out well; they are attending and excited to see their friends and their teacher.

You continue to support and encourage regular attendance and engagement.

Oops! Something has changed.

You might start noticing or hearing some different things:



DDSB
Durham District School Board

We know you want the best for your child. It can be hard to manage everything at home and make sure your child is going to school every day. If things feel tough, you're not alone.

Talk to the school – we're here to help.

Why going to school matters

When kids miss school a lot, it can hurt how well they do in class and how they feel about themselves. It can also make it hard for them to make or keep friends. Every time they miss school, it can feel like starting over. That's why we want to work with you to help your child attend school as often as possible.

Start with a good plan

Help your child by keeping a healthy routine, including enough sleep and structure at home. Sometimes, kids miss school because of mental health problems, stress, or other worries. The school team and community can help with this. We can work with you to make a plan that fits your child's needs.

Is your child often feeling sick?

If your child often says they don't feel well, it might be because they are feeling anxious or stressed. Talk to your doctor to make sure there isn't a health problem. Then, talk with your child to understand what's going on. Some kids say they have a headache or stomach ache when they are really feeling worried about school.



Is your child avoiding school?

Sometimes kids stop wanting to go to school, and it's hard to know why. Watch for changes in how they talk about school. Do they talk more or less about it? Has their attitude changed? Try to keep the conversation going.

Remind your child that it's okay to have hard days, but not going to school won't help in the long run. We want to help them feel strong, hopeful, and ready to handle challenges.

Listen without judgment

Children may worry about things at home, in the community, or at school. Even if they don't have the words to explain, they often feel stress. Talk to your child, listen carefully, and try not to judge what they share. Your support helps them feel safe and heard.

Is your child having problems at school?

If your child feels unsafe, is having trouble with friends, or is being bullied, please let the school know. It's important we understand what's happening so we can help. Start by talking to your child's teacher or another staff member you trust.

If bullying or discrimination is involved, the school has guidelines, and teams who can help with that too.

Should I use rewards to help my child go to school?

Small rewards, like extra time with you or a fun activity, can help at first. But we don't want rewards to be the only reason your child goes to school. Over time, the goal is for your child to feel good about going because they know it's important for their future.

Who Can Help?

It can be hard to ask for help, but we're here for you. Each school has a team to support your child. This includes teachers, principals, special education staff, guidance counselors, social workers, and more.

If you don't feel ready to talk to the school team, you can also find help through DDSB Mental Health Support.



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Ignite Learning

Appendix D

AFFIRM

DO YOU IDENTIFY AS 2SLGBTQIA+?
ARE YOU BETWEEN 13 AND 18 YEARS OLD AND IN GRADE 9-12?



Facilitated by members of DDSB Social Work and Psychological Services Teams, Project AFFIRM offers evidence-based coping skills training for 2SLGBTQIA+ and questioning youth across Ontario.

WHAT DO YOU GET?

- Evidence based coping skills and strategies
- An opportunity to be in community with other 2SLGBTQIA+ youth

WHO CAN JOIN?

Anyone **13-18** and in grade 9-12 who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, two-spirit, trans, non-binary, queer and/or questioning their sexual orientation or gender.

For more information email affirm@ddsb.ca with any questions.

AFFIRM GOALS

Why participate?

- **DECREASE UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS**
- **IMPROVE WELL-BEING**
- **GAIN SKILLS**
- **UNDERSTAND STRESS**
- **FEEL BETTER ABOUT SELVES AND LIVES**
- **FOSTER HOPE**

DDSB Ignite Learning



BLACK EXCELLENCE MADE EVIDENT

DDSB Inclusive Student Services Presents:

BEME: BLACK EXCELLENCE MADE EVIDENT

Sinclair S.S. • February 17th and 18th, 2026

The Black Excellence Made Evident group is designed to amplify the voices and experiences of Black students. This 2-day in-person symposium brings Black identifying youth together in a safe space to:

- Affirm and validate Black student's identity
- Discuss strategies to confront marginalization and Anti-Black Racism
- Promote positive leadership amongst our Black students
- Provide mentorship opportunities and build connection to community

Interested? Scan the QR code to sign up!
Spots are limited—register now!

Please contact beme@ddsb.ca for more information

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Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Guide to Special Education Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)

Durham District School Board

JUNE 2026

The Purpose of this Guide

Thank you for the opportunity to partner with you in program and pathway planning for your child. Your knowledge of your child's strengths, programming needs and interests are key in planning for their learning and well-being at school. You are an essential partner to your child's school team.

This guide has been created to provide you with information about the process we follow in the Durham District School Board (DDSB) for consideration and decision-making regarding identification as an exceptional student and program placement.

It is important that parent(s)/guardian(s) understand each of the steps in this process as we strongly believe that your input, and that of your child, is key when decisions are being made about their school program.

If you have questions after reading this guide, we encourage you to contact your child's school for additional assistance.

Key contacts at your school:

- Classroom Teacher
- Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT)
- Principal/Vice Principal
- Inclusive Student Services team members

Thank you for partnering with school teams in supporting your child's program.

Kind regards,

Lauren Bliss
Superintendent of Education, Inclusive Student Services
Durham District School Board

Serving Students and Families

The DDSB recognizes Indigenous rights are distinct. In the exercise of those rights, Indigenous staff and students shall not be subjected to actions with the aim or effect of depriving these distinct rights.

The DDSB is committed to learning, and working environments that centre human rights and equity and are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible, inclusive and free from discrimination, oppression, harassment, and harm.

As a district, we are committed to addressing ableism, shifting practices to an asset-based approach to inclusion and challenging medical models which focus on diagnosis and/or deficit. As a district, we acknowledge and commit to the work that must be done to make these shifts.

The DDSB provides a range of differentiated placements, programs, supports and individualized accommodation to maximize engagement, participation, integration and independence, enable meaningful access to education, and support student success.

In partnership with parent(s)/guardian(s), the DDSB considers the student's individual learning strengths and needs.

School teams and parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to engage in regular communication throughout the school year. Sharing of successes and working through where programming may be adjusted is part of an important partnership between home and school.

Exceptional Pupil and the Program According to the Education Act

An exceptional pupil is "a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that they are considered to need placement in a special education program…". Students are identified according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education and Training.

A special education program is an educational program that is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation; and includes a plan called an Individual Education Plan (IEP) containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil.

For more information on special education policies, laws, Policy and Program Memoranda and resource documents, visit the Ministry of Education website.

For most students, regular class placement with Indirect Support and appropriate accommodations is the most inclusive setting and must be considered as the first potential option for placement.

Categories of Exceptionality

The Education Act identifies five categories of exceptionalities:

- **Behaviour**
- **Communication (Autism, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Learning Disability, Language Impairment, Speech Impairment)**
- **Intellectual (Developmental Disability, Giftedness, Mild Intellectual Disability)**
- **Physical (Blind and Low Vision, Physical Disability)**
- **Multiple**

Supporting Many Paths to Success

On-going assessment of your child's strengths and needs is an important part of supporting your child. The Special Education in the Durham District School Board Classroom Placement Pathways resource outlines the steps that school teams will take to assess, accommodate, provide specialized supports, and monitor the progress of your child as we learn more about these strengths and needs to best support them. Classroom teachers provide important information to both family and school team staff to determine next steps together. Individualization of a student's learning program is an ongoing cycle of planning, reflection and strategy refinement. A variety of information types, including feedback from you and your child, helps inform next steps.

Should initial accommodations or supports not sufficiently meet your child's needs, the SERT will be activated for more comprehensive supports. In partnership with families, additional assessment and information will be gathered through observation, daily tasks, formal assessment tools, and conversations to further the understanding of the strengths and needs of your child. This information will guide additional accommodations and further individualized planning.

A referral to additional Inclusive Student Services team members may be activated, with parent(s)/guardian(s) informed consent, to provide support, strategies, additional assessment, and recommendations for your child. A care conference may be arranged to bring together school, family and community supports to share any assessment data or new information and to discuss next steps.

In some situations where a student's needs are complex and/or medical information outlines the need, the steps towards IPRC may be moved along more quickly to meet your child's needs, including supporting programming modification or support through alternative curriculum.

What is an IPRC?

- An IPRC is a committee of the DDSB which undertakes a formal process that is mandated under Regulation 181 of the Education Act for students who require additional supports to be successful in meeting curriculum expectations.
- An IPRC is composed of at least three DDSB staff members, one of whom must be a Principal/Vice Principal or a System Lead of the Board.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are key players in any decisions that are made regarding your child; you are highly encouraged to attend and participate in the meeting as your input is valued.
- Accommodation is an ongoing process involving adjusting services, programs and practices to remove barriers and better respond to or address individual Human Rights Code related needs. Program planning may include assessment by school board or community based, clinicians and the results are shared at school team meetings (or care conferences) with the parent(s)/guardian(s). If appropriate, then an IPRC may be requested.

The IPRC Committee

The team will strive to ensure that you are an integral part of the planning process. Your input is valuable within the decision making process.

During the IPRC meeting, the committee will:

- decide whether or not your child should be identified as an exceptional student as per Ministry of Education criteria;
- identify the areas of your child's exceptionality according to the categories and definitions of exceptionality provided by the Ministry of Education;
- after considering the options available, the committee will also decide an appropriate placement for your child based on individual needs and strengths;
- review the identification and placement at least once in each school year.

Annual IPRC Review

Your child's special education needs must be reviewed at least once a year at an annual review of placement. You will be notified of this in writing.

Before the IPRC

If a program is not yet meeting a student's needs, school staff will communicate concerns, in-class assessments, planning and strategies to parent(s)/guardian(s) on a regular basis. The teacher may request support from the school team comprised of the SERT and school administrator(s) for programming ideas.

If a program continues to not yet meet the student's need, the school team will host a Care Conference. A Care Conference is an informal, strategy seeking team meeting where all those who have been working to support your child meet with parent(s)/guardian(s) (and your child as appropriate), to determine further in school supports and strategies, the need for outside supports, and whether the student would benefit from a formal identification.

A summary of all information will be presented which may include:

- information you choose to share as parent(s)/guardian(s)
- educational assessments conducted by school staff
- community based assessments subject to the consent provisions completed by other professionals that you have provided informed consent to be involved with your child and are relevant to the identification or placement decision
- strengths, needs and interests of the student; decided in collaboration with you and based on assessment data
- potential programming options

If identification is being considered, the team can describe what placement options are available to meet your child's needs. Most of our students with special education strengths and needs access learning through regular class placements with indirect support. For some, a more intensive, smaller staff to student ratio program is recommended. More information and a list of these programs can be found on the DDSB Inclusive Student Services web page.

Options may also include provincial or demonstration schools run by the Ministry of Education.

Most of our students with special education strengths and needs are in regular class placements.

Requesting an IPRC

As a parent(s)/guardian(s), you have the right to request an IPRC. The request must be written and sent to your child's school principal. The principal shall organize the IPRC and inform you in writing of the process and timelines to IPRC.

The school team may request an IPRC based on their assessment(s) of your child's progress. The principal will inform you in writing.

Within 15 calendar days of receiving your request, the principal must provide you with a copy of the DDSB Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Guide to Special Education Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC).

Schedule of an IPRC

At least 10 days before the IPRC will be held, the principal or chair will provide you with a written notice of when the IPRC will meet (location/format, date and time). If the date is not convenient you may request an alternate date or time and the principal or chair will try and accommodate your request.

If you are unable to attend, the principal will forward to you a copy of the IPRC form. Your input is important even if you are unable to attend. Please offer any information for consideration to your school team in advance of the IPRC. The IPRC Statement of Decision will include a written statement of the identification and the recommendation of placement.

The Importance of Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are an essential part of the IPRC and an equal participant in the discussion that will lead to making a decision for your child. We encourage you to become as involved and informed as possible. We highly encourage you to attend the IPRC if able. If language interpretation services or accessibility supports are required to participate in the meeting, please ask your child's principal to arrange for what you need.

If your child is 16 years or older they are encouraged to attend the IPRC meeting. Children under age 16 may attend with parent(s)/guardian(s) permission. Given the sensitive nature of some of the information presented, you may want to talk in advance with your child and your school principal about how they might be involved in the meeting.

Prior to the IPRC, your input regarding strengths, interests and placement (if change is recommended) needs will be sought.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) should be offered an opportunity to review the student's strengths, needs and interests as well as other relevant updates, including any current assessment data prior to the meeting.

Planning for IPRC Participation

Students and parent(s)/guardian(s) in the IPRC

Parent(s)/guardian(s) and students 16 years of age or older are encouraged to attend the IPRC and are important contributors to the discussion. Staff who have come to know and work with your child will attend an IPRC.

An advocate or support individual, if invited by the student/parent(s)/guardian(s) may also be in attendance to provide support or speak on behalf of students and families. We request that the school team be notified in advance so that meeting room arrangements and any accessibility accommodations can be made for participants.

IPRC Committee

The IPRC Committee is comprised of at least three designated staff from the DDSB. These will include at least one Superintendent and/or Principal/Vice principal. It may include the System Lead for Inclusive Student Services, or other System Leads from the central office. Others might include:

- SERT, or Head of Special Education from the school
- Classroom Teacher and/or other teachers from the school
- Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing or Teacher of the Blind and Low Vision
- Facilitators
- Professional support staff e.g., Psychological Services or Speech and Language Pathologists

Further information about the five categories of exceptionalities, and their subcategories, can be found in the Ministry of Education resource, Part D: The Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process.

What Happens During the IPRC Meeting?

The IPRC Chairperson begins the meeting by welcoming all attendees and initiating introductions. The purpose and goals of the IPRC meeting are reviewed and participants, including the parent(s)/guardian(s), are invited to provide information to assist the committee in understanding the student's progress, strengths, needs and interests.

A regular classroom placement (mainstream placement) should be considered as the first and most inclusive option. Before recommending a placement in a special education class (small class placement) the IPRC must decide whether this placement will meet your child's needs.

At the IPRC, the chairperson will ask that a summary of strengths, needs and interests be presented to the committee. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will have been offered an opportunity to review this information prior to the meeting. IPRC meetings are usually scheduled for 10-20 minutes.

IPRC Discussion

The IPRC will review all available information relevant to IPRC 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;
- connect with 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 share about your child or that your child shares (if they are 16 years of age of older).

The Committee may discuss any proposal that has been made about a special education program or special education services for your 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).

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be invited to ask questions and to join in the discussion.

IPRC Decision

A decision will usually be made regarding identification and placement. The Chairperson will explain it carefully.

Placement Information

What will the IPRC consider in making its placement decision?

Before the IPRC can consider placing a student in a special education placement, it must first consider whether placement in a regular class, with appropriate special education services, will:

- meet the student's needs; and
- be consistent with parent(s)/guardian(s) preferences.

If, after considering all of the information presented to it, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a regular class will meet the student's needs and that such a decision is consistent with the parent preferences, the committee will decide in favour of placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services.

Regular Class with Indirect Support

The vast majority of our students with special education strengths and needs will access regular class placements. This placement includes individualized accommodations. The placement also involves a number of key supports and strategies often referred to as 'Indirect Support' and can include but are not limited to:

- Learning planned on a foundation of universal design for learning (UDL);
- Differentiation in environmental, teaching and assessment strategies;
- Focused small support groups for specific skill building;
- Targeted and small group instruction and intervention within classes
- Specific tools and resources introduced to address individual learning needs, support, and skill building;
- Leveraging of technology to provide instruction, rehearsal, engagement and support; and
- Programming support from SERT(s), Inclusive Student Services team members, and, with consent, collaboration with involved community agencies and other experts.

In the DDSB, Regular Class with Withdrawal Assistance and Regular Class with Resource Assistance are placements for the relatively small number of students accessing direct teaching by Itinerant (teachers with specialized certifications working in multiple schools) for students who are Blind/Low Vision or Deaf/Hard of Hearing. It is important to note that placement does not indicate any specific educational assistant support.

Special Education Placements

A listing of Special Education Placement class types and description of the program outcomes for each class type can be found in the Special Education in the Durham District School Board Classroom Placement Pathways resource and individual program brochures.

What Decisions Can Be Made by the IPRC?

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given a record of Decision of the recommendations of the Committee.

The Committee:

- Is clear on what information is being used to inform the decisions of the IPRC
- Describes and provides a statement of the student's strengths, needs and interests
- Determines whether your child is "exceptional", and if so, designates the area of exceptionality as defined by the Ministry of Education and DDSB criteria. A student may be identified with more than one exceptionality
- Determines placement options based on your child's needs and strengths (where the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional)
- Determines the appropriate level of support for the student, based on the placement: and one of five placement options defined by the Ministry of Education
- States the reason for the recommendation if the committee has decided that the student placement is a Special Education Class
- Discusses and makes additional written recommendations of specific programs or services deemed by the committee to be important for understanding and meeting the needs of the student
- The IPRC may also consider referring the student to a provincial committee for consideration of eligibility for admission to one of the Provincial Schools for blind, deaf or deaf-blind students, or to one of the Provincial Demonstration Schools for students with severe learning disabilities

Five Placement Options as Defined by the Ministry of Education

1. **A regular class with indirect support** where the student is placed in a regular class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialized consultative services.
2. **A regular class with resource assistance** where the student is placed in a regular class for most or all of the day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified special education teacher.
3. **A regular class with withdrawal assistance** where the student is placed in a regular class and receives instruction outside the classroom, for less than 50 per cent of the school day, from a qualified special education teacher.
4. **A special education class with partial integration** where the student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class in which the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for at least 50 per cent of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.
5. **A full-time special education class** where the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for the entire school day.

An IPRC placement decision cannot be implemented unless a parent(s)/guardian(s) has agreed to the decision or has not filed a notice of appeal within the request time limit (within 30 calendar days of receiving the IPRC Statement of Decision).

If You Agree with the IPRC Decision

If you agree, then you will be asked to indicate by signing the IPRC Statement of Decision that you agree with the designation of the exceptionality and the placement. You may take the document home to consider or you may sign the document at the conclusion of the IPRC. You have a maximum of 30 working days to finalize with parent(s)/guardian(s) signature.

The appropriate staff will then notify the school that you agree with the decision and that an IEP will be developed within 30 school days of formal placement within the recommended program.

If You Disagree with the IPRC Decision

If you disagree with either the identification or the placement, you have 2 options available to you:

1. Within 15 calendar days of receiving the decision, request in writing an additional meeting to re-evaluate the decision of the IPRC. The principal must hold the meeting as soon as possible. Any new or additional information related to the previous decisions can be shared at this time. Following the meeting, the Chair of the IPRC must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of any changes to the decision of the IPRC.

If after the second meeting to re-evaluate the IPRC decision you still disagree, then you have 15 calendar days to appeal the decision in writing.

2. Within 30 calendar days of receiving the IPRC decision, the parent(s)/guardian(s) may appeal the decision in writing.

If you do not agree with the IPRC decision but you do not appeal it, the board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

If as parent(s)/guardian(s), you disagree with the decision reached at the Annual Review of Placement, you may appeal in the same way as described for the original IPRC.

You may appeal the IPRC decision in writing. Address your appeal to:
Superintendent of Inclusive Student Services,
Durham District School Board,
400 Taunton Road East, Whitby, ON, L1R 2K6

What Happens in the IPRC Appeal Process?

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- School board staff will establish a Special Education Appeal Board to hear your appeal.
- The chair of the appeal board will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but no later than 30 calendar days after the chair has been selected (unless parent(s)/guardian(s) and the 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 as the parent(s)/guardian(s), and your child, if they are 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's conclusion. 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 your child's identification, 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 calendar days of receiving the appeal board's written statement, the school board will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations. School boards are not required to follow the appeal board recommendation.
- You may accept the decision of the school board, or 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 Special Education Appeal Board is made up of three members:

1. one member selected by the school board;

2. one member selected by the parent of the pupil; and

3. a chair member (selected by the school Board and parent members)

The appointed members cannot be an employee of the school board, an employee of the Ministry of Education, or a person who has had any prior involvement in this matter (including anyone who may have been involved in the IPRC process). Once the school board and parent members have been chosen, those individuals appoint a third person to act as chair. This will happen within fifteen (15) days of the parent(s)/guardian(s) member's appointment.

The Ministry of Education requires that every student who has been identified by an IPRC as exceptional must have an IEP. The IEP is developed by the school with opportunity for consultation with parent(s)/ guardian(s), the school team and may include input from the central board staff.



Following the IPRC

What is an IEP?

An IEP will be developed for the student, inclusive of an opportunity for your input and your child's, and will include:

- A statement of the student's strengths, needs and interests;
- Specific education expectations;
- An outline of the special education program and services that will be provided;
- A statement about the methods by which your child's progress will be reviewed; and
- A transition plan to assist with changes to a student's experience at school as part of their school life (such as the transition between grades or schools).

The IEP may also include:

- A Student Safety Plan for students whose behaviour poses a risk of injury to themselves and/or others;
- Medical plan for students who may experience an emergency as the result of a medical condition as outlined by a physician to describe the necessary interventions required (e.g., seizures, choking, etc.);
- Emergency Evacuation plan for students who require specialized assistance in the event of a school emergency (e.g., fire drill, lock-down, etc.).

The IEP must be completed within 30 school days after your child has been formally placed in the program by an IPRC, and the principal must ensure that you receive a copy of it. Every student will receive an updated IEP within 30 working days of the start of each school year. Your input into this initial draft is important. The IEP is a working document that will be updated for every reporting period, or as student needs and program strategies change. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to continue to provide feedback as part of the ongoing development and implementation of the IEP.

Where Can Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Obtain Additional Information?

Additional information can be obtained from:

School Based Team Members such as Classroom Teachers/Support Staff, SERT, and School Administrators.

Inclusive Student Services Team Members such as Instructional Facilitator/Inclusive Student Services and System Lead–Inclusive Student Services.

Inclusive Student Services, Durham District School Board:
905-666-6371 or 1-800-265-3968 or Text Telephone (TTY): 905-666-6943

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

School boards are required to establish a Special Education Advisory Committee which includes representatives from local parent associations and trustees.

These representatives serve as advocates for children and parents, and the associations have useful parent(s)/guardian(s) resources. For more information, view the SEAC brochure.

Members of The Special Education Advisory Committee
c/o Superintendent of Education/Inclusive Student Services, Durham District School Board
905-666-6371 or 1-800-265-3968, extension 6371 and Text Telephone (TTY): 905-666-6943

Local Associations that Further the Interests of Exceptional Persons

Association for Bright Children (ABC) abcontario.ca

Autism Ontario—Durham Region Chapter autismontario.com/region/central-east

Durham Down Syndrome Association ddsa.ca

Easter Seals Ontario easterseals.org

Grandview Kids Family Advisory Council
grandviewkids.ca/about-us/family-leader-program/family-advisory-council

Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region ldadr.on.ca

Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC) opbvic.ca

Sawubona—Africentric Circle of Support sawubonaacs.org

Members At Large:
Lyle Williams seaclw@outlook.com, Stephen Linton stephen.linton@ddsb.ca

DDSB Trustees:
Donna Edwards donna.edwards@ddsb.ca, Kelly Miller kelly.miller@ddsb.ca

Provincial and Demonstration Schools

The Ministry of Education and Training operates provincial and demonstration schools throughout Ontario for students who are deaf, blind, deaf-blind and severely learning-disabled, 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, ON K8P 1B2
Telephone: 613-967-2830

Amethyst School
1515 Cheapside Street, London, ON N5V 3N9
Telephone: 519-453-4400

Trillium School
347 Ontario Street South, Milton, ON L9T 3X9
Telephone: 905-878-8428

Schools for the Deaf:

Ernest C. Drury School
255 Ontario Street South, Milton, ON LT9 2M5
Telephone: 905-878-7195
Text Telephone (TTY): 905-878-7195

Robarts School
1515 Cheapside Street, London, ON N5V 3N9
Telephone and Text Telephone (TTY): 519-453-4400

Sir James Whitney School
350 Dundas Street West, Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
Telephone and Text Telephone (TTY): 613-967-2823

Schools for the Deaf/Blind:

W. Ross MacDonald School
350 Brant Avenue, Brantford, ON N3T 3J9
Telephone: 519-759-0730

Helpful Information for Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

School Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Principal Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Inclusive Student Services Team Members:

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Name: _____

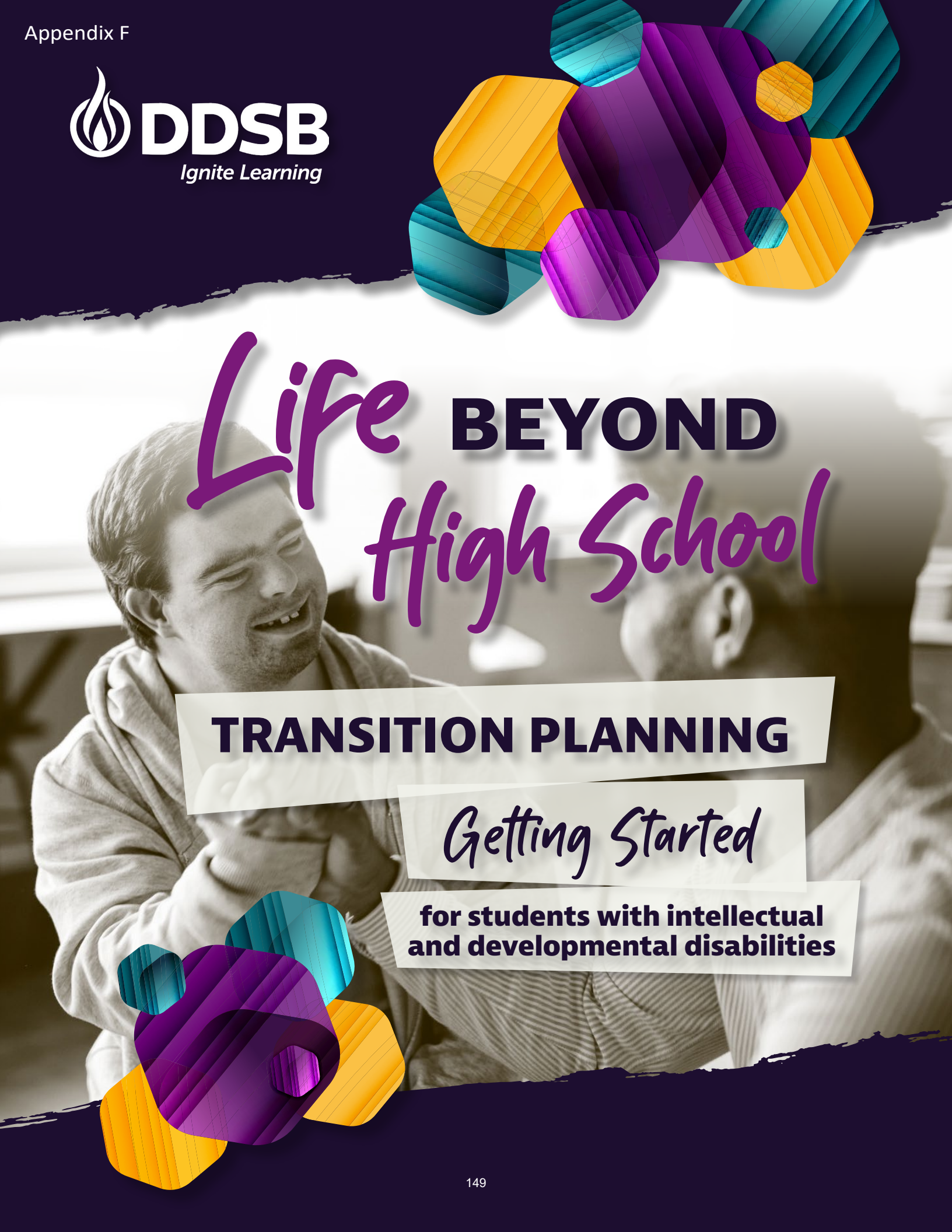
Telephone: _____

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Dates to Remember/Key Information:

DDSB
Ignite Learning



Life BEYOND High School

TRANSITION PLANNING

Getting Started

for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities

TRANSITION PATHWAY

Explore the transition pathway and begin planning supports and services for life after high school.

- **Academic Upgrading**
- **Modified Post-Secondary Program**
- **Workplace Level College Programs**
- **Post Secondary School** (College & University)



- **Day Programs**
- **Social & Community Programs**
- **Sport & Team Programs**
- **Creative and Arts Programs**
- **Self-Developmental & Skill Building Programs**
- **Respite**

- **Employment Service Providers**
- **ODSP Employment Supports**
- **Programs with a work readiness component**
- **Programs with a volunteering component**

Talk to your Classroom Teacher, Special Education Resource Teacher, or Transition Coordinator for more information and resources.

General Considerations

- **Attend all Individual Education Plan** (IEP), **Identification, Placement and Review Committee** (IPRC) **and Transition Planning meetings and discuss long term transition planning.**
- **Apply for the Disability Tax Credit** (DTC)
- **Open and contribute to Registered Disability Savings Plan** (RDSP)
- **Explore community supports and services for life after high school.**

HELPFUL TIP
This is a suggested timeline for transition events. If you're older than a certain age but haven't completed the tasks for that age, please make sure to finish them.

14–15 years old

- **Begin collecting/preparing documentation for future applications.**
  - **Birth Certificate**
  - **Health Card**, also called an OHIP card
  - **Social Insurance Number**, also called SIN
  - **Passport**
- **Open a bank account.**
- **Obtain a copy or request a Psychological Assessment*.**
- **Apply for an Access2 Card.**
- **Explore Transit Supports and Services in Durham Region.**

HELPFUL TIP
Begin exploring Community Supports & Services!

16 years old

- **Apply for Developmental Services Ontario** (DSO).
  To apply you will need:
  - **Proof of Age** (i.e., Birth Certificate)
  - **Proof of Ontario residence** (i.e., Health Card)
  - **Psychological Assessment — with scores on both *Cognitive and Adaptive Functioning***
- **Apply for an Ontario Photo Card.**

HELPFUL TIP
When you apply for DSO, you are also applying for Passport Program funding.

17 years old

- **If student is beneficiary of a RDSP, begin filing personal income tax returns to ensure the continuity of grants and bonds at 19 years old.**
- **Apply for Ontario Disability Support Program** (ODSP).
  To apply you will need:
  - **SIN Card**
  - **Health Card**
  - **Banking information**
  - **Immigration Documents** (if applicable)
  - **Tax returns** (if applicable)

HELPFUL TIP
Having a letter of eligibility from DSO can help speed up the process of applying for ODSP.

18–21 years old

- **Adult Funding and Services begin.**
  (i.e., DSO funded services, Passport funding, ODSP income support and benefits)
- **Begin planning supports and services needed for life after high school.**
  (i.e., learning about transit services, explore options for support workers, tour and meet with local day programs).

HELPFUL TIP
Call DSO 6 months before leaving high school to let them know you are looking for supports and services!

*DDSB supports provision of Psychological Assessments without precedence and subject to annual review of resources.

General Considerations

- **Attend all Individual Education Plan** (IEP meetings, and Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) **meetings and discuss long term transition planning.**

- Apply for the **Disability Tax Credit** (DTC).

  WHAT: The DTC is a non-refundable tax credit, that helps people with a disability, or their supporting family member reduce the amount of income tax they have to pay.

  WHY: It is also required to open a **Registered Disability Savings Plan** (see more information in the next section).

  WHO: To be eligible for DTC a person must (1) have a severe impairment in physical or mental functions, (2) the impairment must be prolonged, and (3) must be restricted at least 90% of the time.

  WHEN: There is no age requirement, meaning if you qualify you can apply at any age.

  HOW: Apply for DTC by completing Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) form T2201.

- Open and contribute to **Registered Disability Savings Plan** (RDSP).

  WHAT: The RDSP is a savings plan for people with disabilities intended to support long-term financial security. RSDP are made up of personal contributions, and bonds and grants contributed by the federal government.

  WHY: Having RDSP does not affect **Ontario Disability Support Program** eligibility (see more information about ODSP, under 17.5 years old)

  WHO: To be a beneficiary of RDSP a person must (1) qualify for Disability Tax Credit, (2) have a valid Social Insurance Number, (3) be resident of Canada, and (4) be under the age of 60.

  WHEN: After qualifying for Disability Tax Credit, an RSDP can be opened until 59 years old.

  HOW: If the RDSP beneficiary is under 19, a legal parent, guardian, or public department, agency or institution can open an RDSP as a Plan Holder. Plan holders can contact participating financial institutions that offer RDSPs.



14–15 years old

Begin collecting/preparing documentation for future applications.

- **Social Insurance Number**, also called SIN
- **Health Card**, also called an OHIP card
- **Passport**
- **Birth Certificate**

Open a bank account

WHAT: A bank account can be used for everyday payments and savings.

WHY: Having a separate bank account provides important benefits when it comes to employment, cashing cheques, safety and accessibility. When you apply for ODSP, financial assistance will be deposited directly into your bank account.

HOW: You can open a bank account online, in person or by calling a financial institution. You will either need to provide two pieces of identification, or provide one piece of identification and have someone who is in good standing with the bank or community confirm your identity.

Start learning about Transit Supports and Services offered in Durham Region.

For more information see page 12.



Obtain a copy or request a **Psychological Assessment***

WHAT: A psychological assessment is a written evaluation of an individual's behaviour, abilities and other characteristics and capabilities completed by a psychologist or psychological associate.

WHY: It is required for Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) application. Specifically, DSO requires assessments containing information on **Cognitive Functioning,** and **Adaptive Skills.**

WHO: You can request a copy or make a request to have a psychological assessment completed by either:

- **Contacting your Physician**
- **Contacting your Teacher, Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT), or Curriculum Lead**

Apply for an **Access2 Card.**

WHAT: The Access 2 Card is a program that allows cardholders to eliminate or reduce admission fees for accompanying support persons.

WHY: Presenting an Access 2 card at participating venues decreases admission fees for a support person.

WHO: To be eligible for an Access 2 Card, individuals must (1) live with a permanent disability, and (2) the nature of the disability requires the assistance of a support person when visiting venues.

WHEN: The Access 2 card is for all ages and types of permanent disabilities that require the assistance of a support person.

HOW: To apply for an Access 2 Card individuals must complete an application and pay the administration fee.

*DDSB supports provision of Psychological Assessments without precedence and subject to annual review of resources.



Apply for [Developmental Services Ontario (DSO).]

WHAT: DSO is the access point for all adult developmental services that are funded in Ontario. Government funded services include, the **Passport Program***, Housing Supports, Community Participation Supports, Caregiver Respite Supports and Specialized Supports such as Person Directed Planning, and Adult Protective Services.

WHY: At 18 years old all children's developmental services end, such as Special Services at Home (SSAH), Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD), and Ontario Autism Program (OAP). DSO is the adult funded supports. Having a letter of eligibility for DSO will also help speed the process of applying for the **Ontario Disability Support Program** (ODSP).

WHO: To be eligible for DSO, individuals must (1) have a developmental disability, (2) live in Ontario, and (3) be 18 years or older.

DSO services begin at 18 years old, however, individuals can apply for DSO at 16 years old.

HOW: Individuals can apply when they have:

- **Proof of age** (i.e., birth certificate)
- **Proof of Ontario residence** (i.e., health card)
- **Psychological Assessment with scores on Cognitive and Adaptive Functioning and age of onset.**

*What is the **Passport Program?**

WHAT: Passport is a reimbursement program where people and families submit invoices and receipts for admissible expenses. Then we reimburse admissible expenses up to the amount of the annual funding allocation of $5,500.

WHY: Passport funding can be used to help individuals get involved in their community, by providing funding that can be used to purchase services and supports for community participation, activities of daily living and person-directed planning.

WHO: To be receive Passport funding individuals must be eligible for DSO.

WHEN: Passport funding begins at 18 years old.

HOW: Once DSO has determined eligibility for funded services, individuals must consent to a referral to the Passport Program. This happens during the DSO application process. Individuals will then be referred to a local Passport agency to receive funds.

Apply for an [Ontario Photo Card.]

WHAT: The Ontario Photo Card is a government issued identification available to Ontarians who do not have a driver's licence.

WHY: Having an Ontario Photo card makes it easier for individuals to do things that require official identification (i.e., open a bank account, domestic travel).

WHO: Available for individuals who (1) do not/will not have a driver's licence, (2) are an Ontario resident, and (3) are 16 years of age or older.

WHEN: 16 years of age or older.

HOW: To obtain an Ontario Photo card individuals must go to a ServiceOntario centre and bring documents to prove their legal name and date of birth (i.e., passport, birth certificate, health card).

17 years old

- If student is beneficiary of a RDSP, begin filing personal income tax returns to ensure the continuity of grants and bonds at 19 years old.



17.5 years old

- Apply for **Ontario Disability Support Program** (ODSP).

WHAT: The Ontario Disability Support Program provides financial and job support for people with disabilities. It helps cover costs like food, housing, and medical needs, including drug and vision care. ODSP also offer assistance to help you find and keep jobs.

WHY: ODSP offers valuable supports for individuals with disabilities and is the only government financial assistance for people with disabilities.

WHO: To be eligible for ODSP, individuals must (1) be 18 years or older, (2) be an Ontario resident, (3) have assets that are no greater than the limits set out by ODSP, (4) be in financial need, and (4) meet ODSP's definition of a person with a disability.

WHEN: ODSP income and health benefits begin at 18 years old, however individuals can apply for ODSP at 17.5 (6 months before their 18th birthday).

HOW: To apply for ODSP individuals will need the following documents:

- **SIN**
- **Health Card**
- **Birth Certificate**
- **Immigration documents** (if applicable)
  - This may include Unique Client Identifier and/or Sponsor Information.
- **Income Tax Return** (if applicable)
  - This is only for individuals who have filed a personal income tax return.
- **Up to date banking information**

Applications can be completed online, **sada.mcss.gov.on.ca/intake/home-page**, by calling, **1-888-999-1142**, or visiting the ODSP office, **850 King St W, Oshawa, ON, L1J 2L5.**



- At 18 years old children services and funding end, this includes **Special Services at Home** (SSAH), **Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities** (ACSD), and **Ontario Autism Program** (OAP).

- **Passport funding** and **ODSP income support and health benefits** start.

- Explore transit services through **Durham Region Transit.**

TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP)

- **The Transit Assistance Program** is for customers receiving social assistance (including ODSP) in Durham Region.
- To apply for TAP, individuals can bring their **monthly social assistance statement** to a DRT PRESTO point of sale.

SUPPORT PERSON CARD

- **The Support Person Card** is available for customers who require the support of another person as it relates to communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs.
- The correct fare is to be paid by the customer, and the support person travels for free when the support person card is presenting upon boarding.
- Cards are valid for 3 years.

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SPECIALIZED SERVICES

- **Durham Region Transit** (DRT) **Specialized Services** provides public transit service for eligible persons with disabilities who are unable to use conventional transit services for all or part of their ride.
- Individuals must complete an application package.
- **DRT** will confirm eligibility by mail.
- For more information visit https://www.durhamregiontransit.com/en/routes-and-schedules/on-demand-specialized.aspx or call 1-866-247-0055

- Begin planning supports and services needed for life after high school (i.e., learning about transit services, explore options for support workers, tour and meet with local day programs).

WHAT: Supports and services for life after high school will look different for everyone. They may include:

- **Continuing Education**
- **Employment/Volunteer**
- **Community**

WHY: Planning for supports and services before leaving school is important as there may be wait times, registration periods, fees, or other considerations to be aware of. These may impact how quickly individuals will be able to access supports and services.

WHO: Planning supports and services for after high school is important for all students.

- You can explore supports and services by:
- Attending DDSB's annual **Life Beyond High School Event** or checking out the **Life Beyond High School Transition Supports webpage**, ddsb.ca/en/family-and-community-support/life-beyond-high-school-transition-supports
- Talk to your Classroom Teacher, Special Education Resource Teacher, or Transition Coordinator for more information and resources!

OTHER TRANSITION PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

HOME & LIVING SITUATIONS

There isn't a single 'right' or 'best way to live. Choices about home and living situations are influenced by personal preferences, needs, finances, resources and what's available.

***Please be aware that wait times for government funded housing can be long, depending on priority and need.**

Examples of housing options that focus on the needs of adults with intellectual disabilities might include:



LIVING WITH FAMILY

Living with your family in your family home. You may qualify for support with activities of daily living from a Personal Support Worker.

Contact Ontario Health atHome if you are interested in learning more about home care services.

SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING

Living more independently, with someone to help with daily activities. You receive between 2-10 hours of support during the day every week. You are alone overnight.

Contact Developmental Service Ontario (DSO) if you are interested in learning more about this option.



GROUP HOME LIVING

Living with a few unrelated people, with support 24 hours per day and accommodate you based on your needs and abilities.

Contact Developmental Service Ontario (DSO) if you are interested in learning more about this option.

HOST FAMILY HOME/ASSOCIATE LIVING SUPPORT

You live with a family who can provide you with care and support. You are encouraged to become an active member of the household. You are matched with a family that has similar interests, needs, and lifestyle.

Contact Developmental Service Ontario (DSO) if you are interested in learning more about this option.



CREATIVE HOUSING OPTIONS

Explore innovative, forward-thinking housing options, by exploring some of the resources listed below.

Housing Toolkit

from Developmental Services Ontario

Housing Resources

from ConnectABILITY.ca

Housing Navigator for DSO Central East Region

Kathrine Pickard
1 855 277 2121 ext. 2218 or
kpickard@yssn.ca

A Place to Call Home, Housing Resources

from Partners For Planning (P4P)

Imagining Home Meetings

offered by Durham Association for Family Resources and Support

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Legal considerations may apply to young adults with intellectual disabilities, depending on their needs and situation.

Examples of legal considerations may include supported decision making and/or substitute decision making for property & personal care, legal guardianship, estate planning, trusts, Microboards and more!

Check out the resources for more information on Legal Considerations:

- Future Planning Tool from Plan Institute
- Planning Guide from Individual Funding (IF) Library
- Legal and Estate Planning Resources from Partners for Planning
- Financial and Legal Resources from ConnectABILITY.ca



Disclaimer: This Transition Planning: Getting Started document is intended for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal, technical, business, or other advice and should not be relied on as such. Please consult a professional if you have any questions related to the topics discussed in this document. Durham District School Board (DDSB) does not endorse any commercial product, process or service referenced in this document, or its producer or provider. The DDSB also does not make any express or implied warranties, or assumes any legal liability for the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, or usefulness of any information contained in this document, including web-links to other servers. All URLs mentioned in this document will link to an external website.

NOTES:



DDSB
Ignite Learning

DDSB
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Life Beyond High School Event

Have you wondered about resources available for students with special education needs?

Let us assist in connecting you with programs, supports and services across the Durham Region.

Wednesday, November 5th, 2025 • 6:00-8:30pm

Durham District School Board Education Centre, 400 Taunton Rd. E. Whitby, ON

Meet and greet with community agencies such as
Developmental Services Ontario, Ontario Disability Support Program, Canopy Support Services and more!

For more information, please contact:
Ashley Romano, ashley.romano@ddsb.ca **or Sade Gbalajobi,** folashade.gbalajobi@ddsb.ca

PRESENTED BY:
Transition Coordinators, Superintendent & System Leads—Inclusive Student Services

Appendix G

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Transition Planning

for Students with Special Education Strengths and Needs

Flexible approaches, consultation with families/caregivers to consider students' individual identities, needs and circumstances that impact transitions, need to be considered in focusing scope and implementing transition strategies and supports for individual students. Collaboration and ongoing communication are essential to exploring options and determining workable strategies.

Our shared commitment is to keep students at the centre of special education programming and service planning including transition supports. Collaboration with families and caregivers is foundational to decision making to individualize the planning for each student.

This resource tool has been designed to support schools with transition planning. Focus is on the macro transitions that students may be moving through whether that be, for example, entry to school, program changes or secondary to adult pathways.

Examples of Key Transitions for Students:

- Entry to School
- School to School
- Class to Class
- Grade to Grade
- Changes in School Support
- School to/from Community Program
- Elementary to Secondary
- Secondary to Post-Secondary
- School to Community Service
- School to Work
- Program Placement Change

Why Transition Planning is Important

A transition is defined as a process of change that requires attention and flexibility and may create vulnerability and worry. From our youngest students to our most senior staff, we are challenged as we navigate this particular transition together, and collaboration is essential.

Transitions include layers of planning including well-being and mental health considerations, leveraging strengths, bolstering strategies and supports in areas of anticipated challenge.

Supporting Transitions for Students

Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs (Ministry PPM 156)
This memorandum sets out the requirements for district school boards with respect to transition planning for students with special education needs, from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Key points in PPM 156:

- Transitions occur both within the micro (within the day) and at significant key times such as entry to school, grades, programs, schools as well as elementary to secondary, secondary to post-secondary and through annual reviews which change student program placement.
- Principals are responsible for ensuring that transition plans are developed, implemented and maintained.
- Transition plans must be developed for all students who have an IEP, whether they are formally identified or not; Transition Plans are a part of the IEP itself.
- Transition plans must be developed in consultation with the parent(s)/caregiver(s), student (as appropriate), post-secondary institutions (where appropriate), and relevant community agencies or partners (as necessary).
- Transition plans will identify specific goals, support needs, actions to achieve the goals, roles, responsibilities and timelines.
- Ontario Regulation 181/98 states that for exceptional students who are age 14 years or over and who are not identified solely as gifted, the student's IEP must include a transition plan for transition from school to work, further education, and/or community living.
- For children and youth accessing support through Care and Treatment Education Programs (CTEP) and Education and Community Partnership Programs (ECPP) provide programming which centres on treatment needs with educational wrap around. District staff and partner agency staff will work together in creating transition plans when entering in and moving from programs. In the Durham District School Board (DDSB), CTEP and ECPPs are supported through Grove School. Transition Planning to/from Grove School Programs is specifically noted later in this document.

Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) – PPM140

Memorandum PPM 140 provides a framework for school boards to incorporate the use of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into board practices, and instructional programming, for our students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

Key points in PPM 140:

- Ensures the implementation of effective, evidence-based educational practices, to meet the individual needs of students with ASD.
- Intended to strengthen the collaborative relationships between students, families, schools and community partners.
- Requirements include:
  1. School boards must offer students with ASD special education programs and services, including, where appropriate, special education programs using ABA methods.
  2. School boards must plan for the transition between various activities and settings involving students with ASD.
- Incorporating the principles of ABA into transition planning for our students with ASD will help to ensure a thorough assessment of student needs (via data collection and analysis), proactive planning measures, skill building for the student, reinforcement contingencies, fidelity of programming across staff supporting our students, monitoring of programming, and generalization of program to new settings/people, in order to facilitate a thoughtful transition process.

Although this particular memorandum highlights the effectiveness of implementing the principles of ABA within our practices for students with ASD, it should be noted the generalization of these strategies to students throughout the board (identified or non-identified students), has also been embedded throughout our educational practices.

A Note About Integrated Transition Planning for Students with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities

The Ministries of Children and Youth Services, Community and Social Services, and the Ministry of Education have created the memorandum entitled, “Integrated Transition Planning for Young People with Developmental Disabilities” (D.O.D January 28, 2013). The goal of this memorandum is to provide school boards with protocols that would lead to the development of a single integrated transition plan for every young student with a developmental disability.

As highlighted within this document, integrated transition planning for youth with developmental disabilities includes collaboration between the student and their families, service providers, and school boards. The common goal of this collaborative team is to ensure for a smooth transition to work, further education, participation in life activities, and/or community living, based on the individual student, their strengths/needs, and their own personal transition goals. Our Transition Coordinator team can be activated to provide support to students and families.

Mental Health and Well-Being

The pandemic continues to have a major impact on all students and their respective families, especially students who were vulnerable and/or at risk prior to the pandemic, i.e., students with special needs associated with specific medical and/or psychological conditions, including educational limitations, as well as those with individual/family mental health needs. The impact of this pandemic may have resulted in an elevated stress response in one or more individuals in the family. The mental health of students will be influenced by both pre-pandemic stressors as well as the stressful period of dealing with the variety of issues/hardships associated with the pandemic.

Working in collaboration with parents/caregivers, school teams and community partners, it is necessary to identify students with a heightened level of anxiety and/or possible signs of traumatic response. These students and their families may need support from the school and other systems (medical, mental health, etc.) to cope adequately during any transition period. Many of these students already may have been flagged for attention based on their prior academic histories and developmental trajectories. However, additional students may require supports on numerous levels. Support may be required on a short-term basis or for a prolonged period, depending on factors associated with the individual student, their family, community, and supports available to them.

Working in collaboration with school teams and Inclusive Student Services, it may be helpful to operationally define the level of support for student needs to be responsive to the tiered level of support required. Examples of tiered responses to student needs are noted on the next page. This framework can help school teams differentiate between individual student setting events and risk factors. It also allows school teams to continue to be attuned to the key features of our students who are struggling.

The capacity of students to cope adequately with the transition back to school is influenced by individual and family-based factors as affected by the pandemic and other experiences and their associated changes in routines, economic status, access to supports and personal vulnerabilities. It will also be influenced by factors associated with the staff and the organization of the school that intends to welcome the student back to school. The student's ability to adjust during the transition period needs to be viewed within a larger context, including the system of the school and the community, and the extent to which all these systems have been negatively impacted by the pandemic and other stressors over a prolonged period of time.

Examples of Mental Health and Well-Being Tiered Systems of Support:

Tier 1 Supports: Irrespective of age or grade level, students may require support for return to school because of the increased level of change and stress experienced over the COVID period, with possible associated hardships facing their families. For example: a Grade One student who is leaving home after five months of not being at school in person and is experiencing some separation anxiety and/or worries about the parent's health; a Grade Nine student who experiences a heightened level of anxiety of facing a new school and new friends, in the context of parents losing their jobs due to COVID-19. These students will need a supportive team of staff at the school who are working collaboratively with them (and parents/caregivers) to help them adjust to being back at school. Psychological Services and/or Social Work may not be required at this stage of the student's transition back to school.

Tier 2 Supports: Students may require support for the return to school because of the increased stress level experienced over the COVID period with associated hardships facing the whole family, combined with pre-existent concerns about their functioning. **For example:** a student who is formally identified and supported with an IEP before the pandemic because of a history of academic and behavioural difficulties; upon return, worries are exacerbated regarding failing grades and other stress points, e.g., family transitions. This student may need Psychological Services and/or Social Work at the DDSB and possibly services in the community.

Tier 3/Tier 4 Supports: Students may require support for the return to school because of the increased stress level experienced over the COVID period with associated hardships facing the whole family, but who have historically displayed a range of mental health symptoms and corresponding behaviours. They may have had ongoing family-based stressors which have led to the involvement of professional assistance (legal, medical, mental health) and/or community-based support. This student needs coordinated services from Psychological Services and Social Work support at the DDSB, and community and/or medical support, possibly even crisis intervention.

Transition Planning Key Considerations

- Determining all parties to be involved in the transition planning (e.g., student, family/caregivers, community partners, school staff, Inclusive Student Services team member(s)).
- Identifying team leads at sending school and receiving school (use checklist in SERT OneNote binder for guidance).
- Ensuring student involvement in the transition process, when appropriate.
- SEA equipment transfers.
- A limited video tour may be used to introduce students to a program space or school setting. School teams are advised to follow Positive School Climate guidelines when creating and sharing school-based videos. For example, recording only specific areas of the school and ensuring consideration for privacy/confidentiality of students.
    - Descriptive video needed for students who are Blind/Low Vision.
    - Closed Captioning for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- Introduction videos of staff:
    - Audio strategies for students who are Blind/Low Vision.
    - Closed Captioning for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
    - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements.
    - Determining the most appropriate transition plan for individual students (e.g., starting with half days and increasing to full days, based on ongoing assessment of transition plan).
    - Priming our students ahead of time for the transition that will occur, explore possible mental health concerns.
    - For students with very specific, structured programming, ensuring that staff at the receiving school are trained to implement to the same programming, and behavioural responses, for purposes of consistency, and safety.

- Ensuring the physical space accommodates student needs (e.g., wheelchair accessible for students with mobility difficulties; creating a space in the classroom for students with self-regulation needs, etc.).

Specific to Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions Requiring Accommodation

- Plans of care utilizing the advisement of public health and the family/student's medical team must be developed.
- Consider routines around disinfecting classroom, equipment, etc.
- Consideration of additional PPE that may be required for staff and students, based on public health recommendations.
- Consider policy around partnerships with community partners such as Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and/or Nursing support who may be supporting at school (e.g., with Developmental Programs).

Transition Team Planning Options

GOAL 1 To identify strategies required to support the transition for students with an IEP.

Transitions Entry to School

Possible Actions - Consider development of IEP and Safety Plan

- Arrange visit to current setting (day-care, home, etc)
- Arrange visit to classroom/school
- Prepare visuals to assist with the transition: school photo book or video, map of the school
- Classroom/school scan of learning materials, resources and space

Transitions School to School

Possible Actions - Arrange receiving school/class visits

- Arrange transfer of OSR with updated IEP, and transition plan
- All About Me/IPP plans transferred to new school
- Contact representatives from outside agencies who are to be involved with student (e.g. CCAC)
- Communicate with receiving school staff and parents/guardians regarding transition issues and/or supports (i.e. School information, transportation, timetable, equipment)

Transitions Class to Class

Possible Actions - Create a daily schedule to prepare moving from class to class

- Prompt (visual, verbal) 5 minutes prior to the end of class
- Create a checklist to gather materials required for each class
- Provide a transitional object (e.g. fidget toy, familiar object) as a source of comfort
- Provide opportunity to practice route from class to class
- Provide opportunity to practice routine for entering each class and parents/guardians regarding transition issues and/or supports (i.e. School information, transportation, timetable, equipment)

GOAL 2 To develop a transition plan in collaboration with a student's transition team.

Transitions Class to Class

Possible Actions - Identify strategies that are successful and share them with new staff

- Have receiving staff observe student and meet the student to review programming needs
- Arrange a visit for the student prior to school starting

Transitions Changes in School Support

Possible Actions - Introduce student to new staff in the classroom

- Provide social script
- Work through routines as indicated in individual schedule (visual, electronic)
  • Conduct specific training for new staff (e.g. lifting, toileting, augmentative communication devices, assistive technology)
- Facilitate any job mentoring/shadowing experiences for school staff
- Inform parents of change in personnel

Transitions Elementary to Secondary

Possible Actions - Identify and document strategies that are successful and share with new staff

- Gather information about the receiving school's environment while considering the student's programming needs
- Have receiving team observe student and programming in elementary school
- Organize student visit to receiving environment

GOAL 3 To implement strategies and determine next steps.

Transitions Secondary to Post Secondary

Possible Actions - Ensure that student is an active participant with knowledge of their learning needs

- Update assessment information as appropriate
- Assess student's ability to self-advocate and provide opportunities to practice skills if needed
- Ongoing guidance and special education support re: goal setting and career planning, scholarship availability for students with IEP, and the college/university/trade application process
- Investigate available financial supports (e.g. Bursaries, scholarships, OSAP etc.)
- Guidance and Special Education staff to provide information about all university and college transition programs

Transitions School to Community

Possible Actions - Explore student interests, skills, abilities, needs and appropriate self-advocacy skills

- Review OSR and determine if appropriate documentation of disability is in place to ensure student/family meets criteria for appropriate community supports
- Connect parent/guardian with local associations (e.g. Community Living, DSO. etc)
- Invite the agency Case Manager to transition meeting
- Identify transition community partners from outside the school that would help the family and student

Transitions School to Work

Possible Actions - Complete Individual Pathway Plan (IPP)

- Complete job readiness skills (application form, apply for Social Insurance Card, resume)
- Practice responses to job interview questions
- Provide opportunities for simulated employment skills (e.g. apply to jobs online)
- Pursue summer/part-time employment in area of strength and interest
- Participate in workplace experiences
- Explore possible career choices

Common Actions

Possible Actions - Complete Individual Pathway Plan (IPP)

- Establish transition team to support the planning. It will include parents/guardians, school staff, the student (where appropriate) and can also include school board staff, health care workers, community workers and others who support the student
- Arrange special transportation as required
- Arrange transfer of equipment
- Provide new staff with a contact list and/or appropriate resources
- Arrange for peer supports and student awareness activities
- Gather information regarding student's strengths and interests using OSR
- Incorporate self advocacy into the student's IEP
- Ensure that the student's voice in the All About Me Portfolio/Individual Pathway Plan (IPP) is incorporated into the transition planning process
- Educate student and staff about the student's strengths and needs and the use of accommodations, assistive technology and learning strategies that are applicable for his/her learning
- Determine resources/professional training opportunities that may be required for staff
- Organize materials to support student in transition (social scripts, visuals, photos, equipment transfer)
- The transition plan must be stored in the OSR
- Inform parents/guardians of any significant changes that will impact the transition plan
- A transition plan is required for all students with an IEP, however, there may be times where the transition plan may indicate that no action is required at this time

School Teams may Consider Strategies such as:

Transition (e)Binders

Transition (e)binders are a comprehensive tool outlining all the relevant, and specific information about the student, and their programming at school. The sending school/teacher often creates an (e)binder for the receiving school/teacher, as a resource to prepare for the student transitioning between the two environments, ensuring continuity and consistency of programming and routines. Different platforms in which these can be created include a OneNote binder, google docs and shared via google drive, etc.

Suggested considerations to include in a transition (e)binder are (if applicable for the student):

- Introduction to the student (e.g., current information).
- Parent/Caregiver Survey (Strategies for Teaching based on Autism (STAR) has a great resource).
- Daily living skills (e.g., eating, road safety/awareness, personal hygiene).
- Reinforcement Preferences (e.g., reinforcing items) and thorough description of reinforcement systems (e.g., “Student utilizes a token economy system. They work for 5 marbles and can cash in for…”).
- Challenging behaviour (e.g., operational definition, antecedents/triggers, consequences, etc.).
- Behaviour Escalation Continuum (and reference to Behaviour Safety Plan, if applicable).
- Identified replacement behaviours/skill building opportunities.
- Required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for staff supporting students.
- Required Specialized Equipment Allocation (SEA) for both technology and other equipment.
- Visual Schedule – including photos when possible and examples.
- Work System – including photos when possible and examples.
- Routine for transitions (e.g., “Provide a verbal countdown when transitioning between activities in the classroom…”).
- Additional spaces the student may access (e.g., teacher table, calming corner, etc.).
- Programming (e.g., academic levels, reference to IEP, if applicable).
- Self-Regulation and/or Social Skill Curriculum tools.

- Daily School Entry & Exit Routine.
- Copies of any data collection which the school may use.
- Occupational Therapy (OT)/Physiotherapy (PT) recommendations.

Tip: When possible, it is also suggested that school teams include photographs or samples of what these structures look like (e.g., a picture of the students work station, token board, etc.) specific to the individual student.

Transition Books/Videos for Students

Transition books are a key transition tool for students who have a variety of transition needs (e.g. ASD, anxiety, mobility considerations, etc.). Transition books for students should be a key communication piece. Their use cannot be stressed enough as a key transition tool at any time, to reduce anxiety and allow students to know what to expect in their new setting, whether that be within the same school building or if they are changing schools.

What to include in a transition book for students:

- Images of the outside of the school building, including yard/playground.
- Tactile maps for students who are visually impaired.
- Their entry door.
- Office.
- Library.
- Gym.
- Calming spaces.
- Location of washrooms the student is likely to use most frequently.
- Non-structured spaces (e.g. alternate spaces at recess).
- Relevant staff members (admin, SERTs, teachers, EAs, custodian, office staff).
- Classroom (may include door of classroom, student's hook/locker area, layout of the room, individual work spaces, etc.).

Considerations for format of transition books for students:

- Digital Book (Google Slides).
- Video: Closed Captioning for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing and/or Descriptive Video for students who are blind/visually impaired.
- Hard Copy book(s) can be sent to students (following public health guidelines).

- Braille and audio versions needed for students who are blind/visually impaired.
- Transportation Planning (for example “Taking the Bus” social story).
- Images of the outside of the school building, including yard/playground.
- Tactile maps for students who are visually impaired.

Planning for Specific Transitions - Entry to School

First time school registration from home - students with accommodation needs

School Transition to Kindergarten (Great Beginnings) websites, videos, personal contacts from classroom educators to students (emails, phone calls, postcards); Linking to teams such as Speech Language or Social Work when appropriate (as they usually attend Great Beginnings events). Ensure all activities are inclusive and accessible to all students and families.

- Educator awareness of students with special and specific needs (e.g. vision, hearing, communication, physical, emotional, medical diagnoses).
- How much information can be gathered ahead of time, Inclusive Student Services (ISS) team members can help reach out to families before and get as much of an understanding as possible, kids likes, strengths, skills (help make environment more welcoming).
- Virtual greetings from Administrators, Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs), Inclusive Student Services (ISS) team. Social media can be leveraged in many ways.
- Parent/caregiver survey re: questions/concerns.
- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a school yard and entry door visit with no other students prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.
- Discussion with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) Daily Living Specialist, DDSB Orientation & Mobility Specialist and family (practicing skills) prior to entry regarding summer/home and community skills training.
- Set up loaner sound field system in class for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and leave unplugged, train teaching staff on use.
- Connect with Inclusive Student Services (ISS) teams to support the steps for anxious, overwhelmed students/families.

Considerations for Students with Special Education Strengths and Needs Transitioning from Community Supports

Transition from Campbell Children's School – Grandview Kids

- Educator awareness of student's specific needs, including specialized equipment.
- Conversations with staff from Campbell Children's School and families regarding student-specific needs and learning style (e.g. medical, Speech Language Pathologists (SLP)/Occupational Therapists (OTs)/ Physiotherapists (PTs), Vision and Hearing assessment and reports).
- Conversation with families regarding their concerns and goals for their child at school.
- Consideration of student specific needs (e.g. communication, physical, hearing etc.) during the Welcome Message. Including the supports needed by these students in the message.
- Ensure Campbell's Children's School families are aware of Great Beginnings virtual events/resources at their receiving school.
- Discuss transportation needs for individual students who may have mobility needs.
- Ensure communication between SLPs/OTs/PTs/Vision Resource Team (VRT)/ Hearing Resource Team (HRT) for students with those supports through Campbell's Children's School.
- Ensure a list of SEA equipment is included/discussed. OT/PT can submit SEA recommendations as part of pre-registration to support urgent health and safety needs.
- Kindergarten communication of learning and IEPs have been shared with receiving schools.

Transition from Infant and Child Development Program – Durham Health Department

- Conversations with Infant and Child Development staff who are currently supporting these children and families regarding student-specific needs and learning style, include ISS teams for mental health support.
- Conversation with families regarding their concerns and goals for their child at school.
- Educator awareness of student's specific needs, including possible equipment.
- Conversations with staff and families regarding student-specific needs and learning style (e.g. medical, SLP/ OT/PT, Vision and Hearing assessment and reports). SEA recommendations can be submitted as part of pre-registration for urgent health and safety needs.

- Consideration of student specific needs (e.g. communication, physical, hearing etc.) during the Welcome Message. Including the supports needed by these students in the message.
- Ensure families are aware of Transition to Kindergarten virtual events/resources at their receiving school.
- Discuss transportation needs for individual students who may have mobility needs.
- Ensure communication between SLPs/OTs/PTs/VRT/HRT for students with those supports.

Transition from Infant Hearing Program (IHP)

- Conversations with IHP staff who are currently supporting these children and families regarding student-specific needs and learning style.
- Conversation with families regarding their concerns and goals for their child at school.
- Educator awareness of student's specific needs and hearing equipment.
- School training on interpreter use (where applicable) and FM equipment.

Entry to School

First Time School Registration from home - Students with Accommodation Needs

Without community access to school buildings:

- Conversations with previous educators regarding student's needs and learning style, Inclusive Student Services (ISS) supports involved with student.
- Personal connection with family and student (e.g. phone call, email, letter/postcard to student).
- Transition and introduction video about new school, teacher, classroom, administrative staff, etc:
  - Descriptive video needed for students who are Blind/Low Vision.
  - Closed captioning needed for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- For students who have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or other social communication challenges - ensure language is clear, specific, concise, simple sentences and not too fast; video presentations use clear visuals to show the relevant parts of the new class, routine, work spaces, etc.
- Community route to and from school trained by the Orientation and Mobility Specialist.
- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a school yard and entry door visit with no other students prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.

- Students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) equipment moved to new classroom and left unplugged, teacher trained on use.
- Inclusive Student Services (ISS) teams to support students/families mental health and well-being.

To/From Provincial Demonstration Schools

- Many of the initial transition steps for students who are a candidate for provincial demonstration schools are completed before March Break.
- As this point, the second transition meeting for students returning to the DDSB has been postponed or cancelled.
- School teams can reach out directly to the provincial school teacher to obtain transitional information (i.e. current instructional levels).
- Interviews for admission and transition from Provincial Demonstration Schools (e.g. Sagonaska, Trillium and Amethyst) will be or have been held virtually.
- Students and families should know in the first couple of weeks in June whether they are offered a placement at the provincial school for the next school year.
- Once placement is offered, transition planning next steps are determined between the family and the demonstration school.
- If a student is returning from a provincial school, follow transition procedures for students who are transitioning within the DDSB. Subsequent virtual transition meetings may occur between the sending provincial school and the receiving DDSB school.
- A school visit should be considered for students returning to a new DDSB school from a provincial demonstration school.

Between School Boards

- A school visit should be planned for any student moving schools as an opportunity to build connections and address worries.
- Transition and introduction video/resources developed and shared about new school, teacher, classroom, administrative staff, etc.
- Students who have ASD and other social communication challenges – ensure language is clear, specific, concise, simple sentences and not too fast; video presentations use clear visuals to show the relevant parts of the new class, routine, work spaces.
- ISS team available to make early connections, explore mental health concerns, provide information if new to the area.

Class to Class/Grade to Grade

- Students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) –FM equipment moved to new classroom and left unplugged, teacher trained on use.
- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a school yard and entry door visit with no other students prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.
- SEA equipment moved to new classroom, if still appropriate for use.
- Transition and introduction video/resources about new school, teacher, classroom, administrative staff, etc., developed and shared.
- Students who have ASD and other social communication challenges – ensure language is clear, specific, concise, simple sentences and not too fast; video presentations use clear visuals to show the relevant parts of the new class, routine, work spaces, etc.
- Use of transition e-binder for in-school transitions as well – ensure communication of strengths and needs and programming recommendations between sending and receiving teacher takes place.
- Inclusive Student Services (ISS) teams able to reach out ahead of time to make connections, explore any mental health concerns.
- Consider hosting a visit to the new classroom with the new teacher if schools are open before September.

Elementary to Secondary – Grade Eight to Grade Nine Transitions

Without community access to school buildings:

- Priming our students ahead of time with video/other information about how secondary experience is different than elementary (e.g., routines, schedules, work completion, exams).
- Encourage student/family/caregiver to drive/walk around the school, explore school website.
- Multiple opportunities for grade 8 visits/tours transition activities to secondary schools.
- Students who have ASD and other social communication challenges - ensure language is clear, specific, concise, simple sentences and not too fast; video presentations use clear visuals to show the relevant parts of the new class, routine, work spaces, etc.

- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a school yard and entry door visit with no other students prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.
- Buddy student with an older student to share their high school experience and respond to questions appropriate for peer response.
- Community route to and from school trained by the Orientation and Mobility Specialist.
- Meet/greet with key staff including Guidance and Administration.
- SEA equipment moved to new school and set up, if still appropriate for use.
- Students who are DHH - FM equipment moved to Academic Resource (AR)/Learning Hub or semester classrooms and left unplugged, teachers trained on use.
- Consult with Social Work and Psychological Services to support/manage stress and anxiety in students and families, provide information regarding getting back to routines, expectations.
- Considerations about what Grade 9 day will look like, ensure student/family/caregivers have a key contact with as questions arise.

Program Placement Changes

From Regular Class Placement to Special Education Placement

- Conversations (transition meetings) with previous educators student and family regarding student's strengths, needs, learning style, and any ISS supports involved with student.
- Personal connection with family/caregivers and student (e.g. phone call, email, letter/postcard to student).
- Transition and introduction video/resources created about new school, teacher, classroom, administrative staff, etc.
  - Descriptive video needed for students who are Blind/Low Vision.
  - Closed captioning needed for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- Students who have ASD and other social communication challenges - ensure language is clear, specific, concise, simple sentences and not too fast; video presentations use clear visuals to show the relevant parts of the new class, routine, work spaces, etc.
- Community route to and from school trained by the Orientation and Mobility Specialist.
- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a school/entry door/classroom visit with no other students in the room prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.

From Special Education Placement to Regular Classroom Placement

- Conversations with previous educators student and family regarding student's strengths, needs, learning style, and any ISS supports involved with student.
- Personal connection with family/caregivers and student (e.g. phone call, email, letter/postcard to student) is strongly recommended.
- Transition and introduction video/resources created and shared about new school, teacher, classroom, administrative staff, etc.
    - Descriptive video needed for students who are Blind/Low Vision.
    - Closed captioning needed for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- Students who have ASD and other social communication challenges - ensure language is clear, specific, simple sentences and not too fast; video presentations use visuals to show the relevant parts of the new class, routine, work spaces, etc.
- Community route to and from school trained by the Orientation and Mobility
- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a school/entry door/classroom visit with no other students in the room prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.

To/From Community Program - Including Grove School (Education Community Partnership Programs - ECPP)

- Ensure consents have been attained for the communication of information between community agencies and DDSB staff.
- Consent for intake should be completed for students coming from a community program to allow ISS staff to support the transition.
- Ensure all relevant team members are informed and involved in the transition planning (e.g. Grove teacher, community agency staff, psychological services staff, etc.)
- Conversations with previous educators student and family regarding student's strengths, needs, learning style, and any ISS supports involved with student.
- Personal connection with family and student (e.g. phone call, email, letter/postcard to student).
- Transition and introduction video/resources created and shared about new school, teacher, classroom, administrative staff, etc.,
    - Descriptive video needed for students who are Blind/Low Vision
    - Closed captioning needed for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.

- Students who have ASD and other social communication challenges - ensure language is clear, specific, concise, simple sentences and not too fast; video presentations use clear visuals to showthe relevant parts of the new class, routine, work spaces, etc.
- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a school yard/entry door/classroom visit with no other students prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.
- Community route to and from school trained by the Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

Secondary to Post-Secondary

- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a campus/entry door/classroom visit with no other students prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.
- Community route to and from school trained by the Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

School to Community

For students transitioning to community based programs, school teams are encouraged to communicate with student, family and community program team on a regular basis regarding transition supports and strategies well before the transition period occurs. The Transition Coordinator team can provide support.

School to Work-In Preparation for Potential On-Site Work Education Next Year

- Students who are blind/visually impaired require a worksite yard and entry door visit with limited people around prior to beginning, for orientation and safety purposes.
- Community route to and from worksite trained by the Orientation and Mobility Specialist.
- Students who are accessing work education experiences typically take public transit to/from the work site; public transportation will need to be reviewed and rehearsed with support prior to independently taking public transportation. (transit training)

Additional Resources for Educators

The following links are provided to support educators. This list in not exhaustive in considerations but is meant to highlight the tremendous resources available to support considerations and planning.

1. Supporting Transition Planning
   - Supporting Transition Planning for Students with Autism
2. Supporting Transitions to Adulthood for Individuals with Autism – Autism Ontario
   autismontario.com/transition
3. Canadian Hearing Society – Transitions
   chs.ca/page/transition-planning
4. VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children –Educator Resources
   voicefordeafkids.com
   - Supporting Transition Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities
5. Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Needs (Ministry PPM 156)
   ontario.ca/document/special-education-ontario-policy-and-resource-guide-kindergarten-grade-12/transition

Video Resources

1. LD@school webinar, Transition Planning and Pathways for Students Transitioning to Post-Secondary
   ldatschool.ca/transition-planning
2. LDAO Transition Planning Resource Guide for Students with Learning Disabilities
   access.resources.ldao.ca/main/documents/TransitionPlanningResourceGuide4.pdf
3. Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities:
   Transition to Post-Secondary Education
   transitionresourceguide.ca
4. Post-Secondary Transition Planning for Students with LDs written by Cindy Perras
   ldatschool.ca/post-secondary-transition-planning
5. Transition Planning and Pathways for Students Transitioning to Post-Secondary: The Importance of Planning with the End in Mind presented by Ryan Machete
   ldatschool.ca/transition-planning

6. How Grade 8 students at Sagonaska Demonstration School created self-advocacy pamphlets to support their transition to Grade 9
   ldatschool.ca/our-self-advocacy-pamphlet-journey
7. Creating Pathways to Success which supports career/transition planning from K - Grade 12
   edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/cps/creatingpathwayssuccess.pdf
8. Student with LDs Success Story
   ldatschool.ca/success-story-danya
   - Supporting Transition Planning for Students with Physical Disabilities
9. Easter Seals Ontario - Transitions
   services.easterseals.org/transitions


DDSB
Ignite Learning

DDSB Ignite Learning

Leading Inclusive Programming

Inclusive Student Services (ISS)

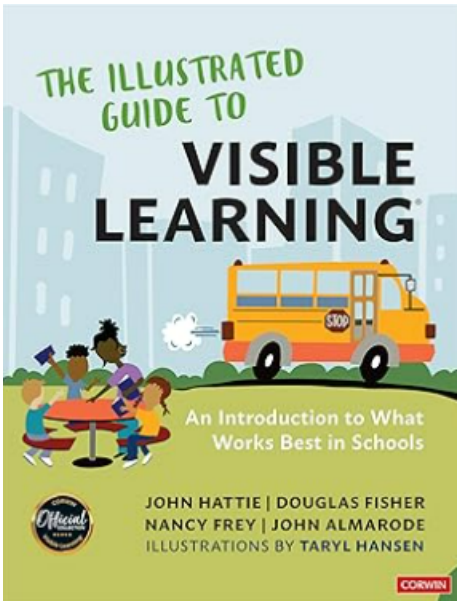
Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) eBulletin

2025-2026: Issue 1

If you have any questions or topic suggestions for the Leading Inclusive Programming e-Bulletin, please contact your Instructional Facilitator or ISS System Lead (Conor Jinkinson, Joseph Wrigley or Nancy Adams).

Information Share

From Lauren Bliss - Superintendent of Education - Inclusive Student Services



Welcome back and thank you for all the hard work you've done to transition students back to school this September. The work that you do to make learning spaces welcoming, inclusive and safe for our students is foundational to the success of our students and we cannot thank you enough. This year, all schools have been asked to make school-based commitments to “Everyday Conditions for Learning”. These conditions are foundational for student success and are essential in creating an ideal learning environment for students. When students feel they belong, supported, valued, have a voice and a connection to those around them and their learning, they are able to thrive in their learning environments. Conditions for learning are the physical, emotional, relational, and instructional factors that support student safety, well-being, engagement, and equity—creating an environment in which all learners can access, participate in, and benefit from. Throughout the year, we will continue to ensure the everyday conditions for learning drive the work we do to ensure well-being, connection and meaningful learning for all of our staff and students. For more information about everyday conditions for learning, please ask your school Principal to share “The Illustrated Guide to Visible Learning” with you.

Wishing you a wonderful start-up and looking forward to working together this year.

Lauren Bliss

Important Dates

EA Allocation Requests

The next submission deadline is Sept 19th, at noon.

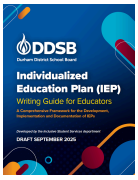
October 10th (for Secondary SERTs only)

If you have students aged 15+ who require a psychological assessment for the purposes of transition planning (i.e., access to Developmental Services), please send the Consent for Specialized Assessment, signed by caregivers (it is in the SERT OneNote) no later than October 10th for consideration in this year's assessments. Only students who have NOT been previously assessed are eligible for assessment through Psychological Services. If you are uncertain whether the student requires an assessment, please consult with the Psychological Services staff member on your school's ISS Team.

Individual Education Plan – 30th Day

Please note the following '30th Day' IEP dates for the 2025-2026 school year:

- Elementary Regular Calendar: Tuesday, October 14, 2025
- Secondary Regular Calendar: Tuesday, October 14, 2025
- Elementary Modified Calendar: Wednesday, September 17, 2025
- Secondary Modified Calendar: Friday, October 3, 2025



Individual Education Plan Writing Guide

Grounded in consultation and informed by best practices in education, this guide aims to provide a unified and consistent approach to developing IEPs. Built upon Ministry of Education policies and guidelines, this resource supports educators in creating meaningful and actionable plans that are clear, accessible and focused on student success with consistency across schools.

IEP Writing Guide for Educators.pdf

Provincial Demonstration Schools: Candidates for 26/27 school year

The Provincial School is a 1 year placement, for students with a diagnosed Learning Disability. **Applications for consultation can be made any time in the year.** The purpose of the consultation can be to determine if an application to the school is appropriate or for PD at the school level based on an individual student.
For an application for the 26/27 school year, consultation needs to happen ASAP or early in the fall; well before the Phase One application submission.
Phase One applications are due **November 1st 2025** and it is a hard deadline. Applications are available in the SERT OneNote.
Please notify Darcy, DDSB Board contact, if you are sending a consultation request.
darcy.villeneuve@ddsb.ca

Sagonaska is hosting a Fall Family Tour day. Please pass the information along to any families who might be interested in attending. The fall tour day provides an opportunity for families to see all components of the school and program as well as speak with some of the staff and students.



Gifted Testing

Gifted testing dates will be announced shortly.

Information, parent letters and nomination forms will be sent to SERTs and school admin the week of **Sept. 22nd** via email.

Please reach out to Helen Cavano helen.cavano@ddsb.ca if you have any questions.



Professional Learning

New to SERT Getting Started

Here are a few items to get started on this September:

- share last year's Student Learning Summaries, Safety Plans and IEPs with educators in direct support of the students
- review important dates in PSP under communication and calendar *also listed above
- connect with your Inclusive Student Services Instructional Facilitator (IF)
- review the SERT Binder regarding month to month to do lists If you do not have access to the SERT Binder, please email carolyn.wilson@ddsb.ca
- input the 2025/26 IEP date into student's IEP document
- review PSP IEP Overview session Slide Deck and IEP Resources to support Teachers as well as the newly released Individual Education Writing Guide
- sign up for KTEA training

SERT Learning Community Practice - Friday September 12, 2025

We are pleased to announce we will be hosting the SERT Learning Community Practice to bring out SERT teams and department heads to the Education Centre to bring important updates and learnings to the school system. It is an important opportunity for those in the role to connect from across the system as we continue to strengthen our special education knowledge, processes and programs together.

You are asked to sign-up through myPD. We know that it is likely not feasible for teams to send full teams, but we ask that you think of how you send teams carefully (potentially splitting over AM/PM).

Supply coverage will not be provided for these sessions

To register, please visit: My PD

K-TEA Training – now live for registration in MyPD!

Please note that if you are new to using the K-TEA, we offer a series of four training sessions that provide information on the assessment tool, administration and scoring, interpretation, and report writing. All four sessions are required to complete the training. This year, the training will be offered as follows:

Please register here KTEA training for new SERTS:

Participants must attend all 4 sessions

Tuesday, September 16, 2025	8:30 am - 11:30 am (Boardroom)
Tuesday, October 7, 2025	8:30 am - 11:30 am (Room 2F/2G)
Monday, October 27, 2025	8:30 am - 11:30 am (Room 2F/2G)
Wednesday, November 5, 2025	8:30 am - 11:30 am (Room 2C)

Refresher dates (for those who have been using the K-TEA and are looking for a refresh):

February 24 a.m. – Room 1D
April 13 a.m. – Room 2C

SEL: Foundations of a Mentally Healthy Classroom for Elementary & Secondary Educators

The Well-Being Facilitators along with the Child and Youth Support Workers are offering a half day session focused on refining your understanding of SEL skills and the implementation of this learning throughout the instructional day. In this interactive session, you will be given an overview of social-emotional learning, it's connection to curriculum expectations and be provided resources to build your panel-specific toolkit for creating a positive, emotionally supportive classroom.

Date: Sept 17, 2025 AM (8:30-11 AM) or PM (12:30-3:00) * choose one of these two sections.
Location: Education Centre

Register on myPD using this registration link

Rainbow Health Foundations Course Learning Opportunity

The DDSB is committed to supporting the well-being of all students and staff. In alignment to the commitments in our Multi-year Strategic Plan, the Mental Health and Well-Being Plan, as well as our Anti-Oppression Strategy and the Compendium of Action to Support 2SLGBTQIA+ Students, Staff, and Families, we have purchased a number of codes/enrollment keys for you to participate in the Rainbow Health Ontario (RHO) 2SLGBTQ Foundations course.

Rainbow Health Ontario (RHO), a program of Sherbourne Health, developed this seven-module course on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and Two-Spirit (2SLGBTQ) health for healthcare and social service providers. These short self-directed modules will help build your foundational knowledge for providing care to 2SLGBTQIA+ students, staff and families, and can be accessed at your convenience. This course is intended to support our commitment to provide inclusive, affirming, welcoming, culturally sensitive care; collectively strengthening our practices as a District.

Please see the linked Registration Instructions document that will assist with creating an account and how to enroll. Please use your work email when registering.

The enrollment key is: **zGe41?%g3F26** (insert where you see **APPLY COUPON**). Please do not share this code.

The key is case-sensitive, copy and paste the code in the enrolment key field, please ensure no extra spaces are being pasted into the field.

** You have 30 days to complete the course from the date of enrollment**

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to any member of the DDSB Mental Health Leadership Team:

- Carolyn Ussher – Senior Manager and Clinical Lead- Social Work
- Mike Menheere – System Lead, Positive School Climates
- Sara Schleien – Senior Manager and Clinical Lead - Psychological Services
- Steffanie Pelleboer – Mental Health Lead



Updates

Multilanguage Learners

Reminder schools that have multilanguage learners can access Inclusive Student Services in the case when a MLL teacher is not available. MLL students may require additional time for testing, clarification of information and more.

ISS Team Meetings and Teachers of Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Blind Low Vision

Please invite your Teacher of the Blind Low Vision (TOBLV) and Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TODHH) to any team meetings where your student with a Vision or Deaf/Hard of Hearing exceptionality is on the agenda. This would be especially important if your student is new to your school. Over the next month, please reach out to your TOBLV or TODHH to connect over IEP goals and expectations. They will be happy to assist in writing these with

you and the school team. If you are unsure which of our team members is working with the student at your school, please reach out to your Instructional Facilitator. They have a list of whom you can contact.

Students Approved for In-School Nursing Supports

Most students approved for school-based nursing care will have that support organized through community partners (Home and Community Care Support Services and local nursing partner) and communicated to the family and school team by the HCCSS Area Coordinator. Where the support is unfilled, Family Managed Health Care may be utilized, through an agreement, to support service at school.

The Family Managed Health Care (FMHC) program, also known as Self-Directed Care (SDC), is an alternative method for home care service delivery where eligible home care clients or their substitute decision-maker(s) receive funding to purchase or employ providers to deliver services in their care plan. Under the program specifications, nursing services provided in schools were excluded from FMHC. In the past two school years, the Ministry of Health allowed nursing services in schools to be delivered through FMHC, where the schools permitted.

Based on that experience, the Ministry of Health has continued the amendment to the SDC program specifications to include nursing services in schools with the same parameters on an ongoing basis.
This means that where a student has approval for school-based nursing care, and that position is unfilled through community partner processes, the family may choose to shift home support care into school to support access. This is actioned through a three-way Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the family, the district and the nurse providing care. We have developed a Durham DSB template specific FMHC in schools.

Please reach out directly to the ISS System Lead supporting this portfolio, Conor Jinkinson, with your ISS Facilitator copied, if seeking to activate.

Blood Glucose Monitoring

As this is highly individualized for each student and supported through the Plan of Care for Students with Diabetes, school based staff are encouraged to reach out to their ISS System Lead for specific support around questions that can't be answered through the Plan of Care.

Community Partners Visiting Schools

We are very fortunate to have a number of community partners who collaborate with us to support students. **Grandview is our School Based Rehabilitative Services (SBRS) partner and an extension of DDSB staff, so should be welcomed into any of our schools as they provide essential services**. There is also a Memorandum of Understanding for Kinark's

Connection For Students (CFS) program where they can support our school teams. A reminder of our third-party service provider procedure as in general only Grandview and CFS should be providing service on site in our schools. Additional community support should **not be providing service in schools (eg ABA, IBI, speech therapy, etc)** as this conflicts with our own professional services staff and their responsibilities; **but collaboration with them should be welcomed at all times.**

Grandview Kids - School Based Rehabilitation Services

All SBRS referrals to Grandview Kids must be submitted online. However, a new requirement was introduced this Fall, which requires you to speak with your school's Occupational Therapist (OT) **before** submitting a referral. Your school's OT will determine if a referral is required or if there are remaining Tier One service offerings that may be implemented.

To ensure Grandview Kids has updated information for the Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs), please email **service.navigation@grandviewkids.ca** with the following information:

Subject line: SERT contact for [insert school name]

Name: If there are multiple staff, please include the Grade(s) that each SERT/PST supports.

Email address: Please include an email address for each SERT listed.

If you would like an SBR Service Report (a list of the students at your school on the waitlist and in service delivery), please indicate this in your email.

Grandview Kids offers a School-Based Rehabilitation Services Newsletter bi-annually. Please visit the SERT binder to view the most recent issue. The current issue highlights the Occupational Therapy Tiered Intervention Model and changes to speech therapy services. Stay up to date with SRBS services by subscribing to the newsletter.

Students with Gifted Identification - New to Board or Privately Assessed:

If you have a student who is new to the DDSB and had a gifted identification with their previous board and/or a DDSB student who has had a private assessment completed, they must first be reviewed by Dr. Schleien BEFORE an identification can be made with the DDSB. Please have parents fill in consent for gifted review form (found in SERT OneNote) and send both the form and assessment to the Facilitator for Gifted Programming - Helen Cavano (helen.cavano@ddsb.ca) for review and next steps.

New Enrollments

For new students to the Durham District School Board, home school is to register student upon proof of address. If there are further questions regarding programming and class placement, please reach out to your ISS Instructional Facilitator.

New student enrollments with complex needs, please remember to have family/guardian complete the Inclusive Student Services new to DDSB Enrollment Package

Supplemental Registration Package

Once the Supplemental Package is completed and returned to the school, please send to Nicole Thom with cc' to your ISS team in an encrypted email. Each ISS role will determine if service referral is appropriate. Facilitators are available to support transitioning new students with additional strengths and needs into school, as well as any additional clinical staff whose service is activated. Effective transition planning is an important part of welcoming new students.
Please make sure to request and include any relevant documentation, assessments and/or reports available.

Students moving within Durham District School Board

If a student moves from one school to another within the board, please have the sending school change the next school year indicator to the new home school.

Parent/caregiver is to bring proof of address to the new home school.

If a student requires a Special Education class placement, please notify your ISS Instructional Facilitator (IF).

Student Transportation

Please note, if schools are being asked for medical information from DSTS to support a specific student transportation plan, the communication is to be through school to family and school to DSTS on behalf of the student/family. In support of student, please forward the required information, in an encrypted file, directly to DSTS. Do not cc your IF and/or System Lead due to privacy.

Safety Plans for Staff Supporting Students on Buses

Where a student has a safety plan, administrators are being reminded that it is essential that all staff supporting students on the bus are familiar with the safety plan and any specific information regarding safe travel on the bus.

NEW Transportation Guide

As we continue to prioritize inclusive and student-centered practices, we are sharing the new "Fostering Skills Supporting Student Transportation" guide. The Durham District School Board (DDSB) is committed to fostering success and independence for each student by providing a range of pathways, programs, opportunities and services. Transportation is considered an extension of the school day and can support our goal of fostering independence

for students. Developing programming to foster skills supporting transportation may be integrated into the student's learning program and recorded in their Individual Education Plan IEP. This guide is designed to support schools and students in developing the skills and confidence needed to transition successfully to bus transportation. It emphasizes fostering independence through intentional planning, individualized support, and alignment with each student's strengths, needs, and IEP goals.

Please see the Fostering Skills Supporting Student Transportation Guide

New SEA Technology/Equipment

When a new SEA device or piece of equipment arrives at the school, please follow the Arrival Instructions found in the SERT Binder. There are two formats, a Google Sheet and a Google Document. Both contain the same information. A very important step is to ensure the SEA device or equipment is included on the IEP under the resources tab. This will aid in tracking what belongs to who and can be cross referenced with the reconciliation report that Sandra Langevin sends out each year to ensure students have all their assets appropriately documented. When adding SEA Equipment to a Student's IEP in the Resource section please refer to the PSP Individual Education Plan (doc) found in the SERT Binder or under the Resources tab in PSP.

SEA Equipment Transfer within DDSB Schools

With the number of students who have moved across the system, there is likely some SEA equipment that will need to be transferred. Please follow the procedure outlined in the SERT Binder to determine with the receiving school which items OT recommends for continued use and then arrange for DDSB transport. This equipment will need to be clearly labelled with student name-SEA, destination school and have it ready for pick up.

Please note, all SEA equipment transferred to another school must be in good working order. Should the equipment require repairs when it arrives at another school, the sending school will be responsible for this service. SEA funds cannot be used for replacement or repair and the guidelines clearly state that all SEA equipment must be kept in good working condition.

Older Unused Technology/Equipment

If you have any SEA technology or equipment that is no longer used or if you don't know how to use it, please reach out to your Inclusive Technology Facilitator. Sometimes things that look old or unimportant are actually very useful and expensive tools!

Inclusive Technology Facilitators:

Caroline Mills - Pickering/Ajax/Uxbridge/North
Carolyn Wilson - Whitby/Oshawa/Scugog/North

ISS Impact Update - Regular Class Placement

Each month we share highlights of impacts of Inclusive Student Services related programs and services through the format of the “ISS Impact Update”. In addition to sharing information with key stakeholders including the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), this monthly resource is meant as a tool to support school teams in growing awareness and knowledge; SERTs are encouraged to share with your school-based colleagues.

Inclusive Student Services - Impact update (Issue 1)



Blind And Low Vision Services

Supporting Students with Low Vision – September Updates

- During the month of September, the Teacher of the Blind and Low Vision (TOBLV) will be reaching out to you via email or a school visit to review the needs of the students with low vision. At that time, the TOBLV will be reviewing what the level of support will be for the student(s) at your school (consultation or direct service).
- If you welcome any New to DDSB students and have concerns regarding their vision, after reviewing their Ontario Student Record (OSR), please contact Nicole Thom to identify the TOBLV assigned to your school for consultation.
- As you begin to schedule ISS Team meetings, please ensure to extend the invite to the TOBLV offering **direct service** to your low vision student(s). If your student is receiving **consultation**, connect with the TOBLV to confirm their preference regarding team meeting invitations.When you begin drafting Term 1 IEPs, please reach out to the TOBLV to determine appropriate accommodations and support for students with low vision.

September is CVI Awareness Month

- Cerebral/Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) is a brain-based condition and the leading cause of childhood blindness and low vision. It results from damage to the visual pathways or processing areas of the brain and is often underdiagnosed and misunderstood.
- To learn more about CVI, including its causes, common behaviors, impact, and available resources please click here
- Reach out to the TOBLV if you have questions!

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

By this point in September, the Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TODHH) supporting student(s) at your school, will have reached out via email/phone call, visited to set-up hearing assistive technology (remote microphone systems/RM) where applicable, and connected with classroom educators for further in-servicing around accommodations and strategies. If you have not yet been contacted by a TODHH, please reach out to System Lead, Nancy Adams, to make sure your students are connected with the appropriate member of the team.

IEP Updates

When drafting DHH student IEPs for term 1, please connect with your TODHH. There are specific sections the TODHH will support and update ex. recent hearing evaluation data (audiogram). The TODHH can provide suggested accommodations and transition plan points that are specific to students with different hearing levels.

Hushhups

All DHH students in elementary schools (K-8), should have Hushhups (blue tennis balls) on the bottom of their classroom chairs. These are purchased through student SEA claims. Typically 3 boxes are requested, which supports a new box for each year of a claim cycle (so the previous year's tennis balls do not need to be removed and reinstalled). If you need more, please speak to your TODHH.

Inclusive Language

When communicating about our DHH student population, we continue to shift away from a "deficit model" approach (hearing loss), and instead refer to an individual as having "different hearing levels". For many d/D/HH individuals (specifically those who are members of the Deaf community), having differing hearing levels is not considered negative. The use of "hearing impaired" has a similarly negative framing effect and suggests a lacking, rather than a difference.

New Referrals

Please be sure to contact Deaf and Hard of Hearing Programs should a student arrive at your school with an audiogram, hearing technology (hearing aids, or cochlear implants) or suspected varying hearing levels. Early intervention is critical to provide access and support to the student, their family and educators within the school community.

Booking an ASL Interpreter

As you start to plan your school's activities, parent/teacher conferences and IPRC meetings, please keep in mind those families who may need an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter to access the event. Interpreters can be booked through the Canadian Hearing

Society at CHS Interpreting Services. Advanced notice is needed and a minimum 2 hour block is required. Interpreter fees are the responsibility of the school and can be paid for using the school's “P”card. It is best practice to confirm the family is going to attend the event prior to booking, and asking if they have a preferred interpreter. Some common events you may encounter this need include: "Meet the Teacher/Open Houses", concerts and student recognition assemblies, interview night.

VRS Video Relay System

You may encounter parent(s) within your school community who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing themselves, and use ASL to communicate. In this case, ask if they have a Video Relay Number. This is a number you would call to connect with an interpreter. They will then video call the person you are trying to reach, and sign your message (interpret for the individual). This is a free service and essential for all CODA’s (Children of Deaf Adults).

Interpreters, Intervenors and LASW (Language Acquisition Support Workers)

Please ensure you are including support staff in your school's communication. Interpreters, Intervenors and the LASW, play a key role in supporting a student's access to the curriculum. Including them in planning and preparation (ex. sharing documents ahead of time, previewing vocabulary), is critical. Just a reminder that the role of an Interpreter is distinct from an educational assistant. An Interpreter’s role is to support communication for a child through the use of ASL.

Educational Language Interpreters Description

Language Acquisition Support Worker Description

International Week of Deaf People 2025



This event takes place every year during the last week of September, and it includes the International Day of Signed Language (September 23rd). The week promotes a celebration of d/Deaf identity and brings awareness to aspects of human rights (specifically access to signed languages).

Please refer to this **link** if you are interested in additional information.

Transition Coordinator & Work Experience Updates

Save the Date: Annual Life Beyond High School Event
Event Details:

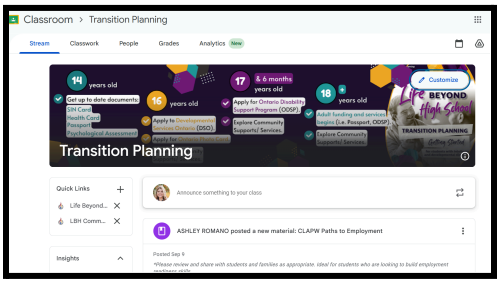
- **What:** The annual Life Beyond High School event is an in-person information fair connecting students with special education needs—particularly those with intellectual and developmental disabilities—with service providers who support the transition to life after high school. Drop in, no registration required.
- **When:** Wednesday, November 5, 2025, 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM
- **Where:** DDSB Education Centre, 400 Taunton Road East, Whitby



Our team will have the event promoted through DDSB's communications, but please share and encourage students and families to attend. You can access the **Life Beyond High School 2025 flyer** here.

Transit Training Resource & Photos:
The Transition Coordinator and Work Experience team have developed a Transit Training Toolkit to help teachers guide students in learning transit skills that support their transition to community services. This toolkit is designed as a reference guide for teachers and school teams, offering practical tips and strategies.
**Please note that this resource is for staff use only and is not intended to be shared directly with students.*
Transit Training - Resource (link)

We are also providing access to high-quality photos of DRT buses, bus stops, signage, and more. These images are intended to support the transfer of transit skills from the classroom to real-life settings.
DRT Photos - Downloaded & Labelled (link)



Reminder: Transition Planning Google Classroom
Our team regularly posts information on community programs, services and resources in the Transition Planning Google Classroom.

Invite Link: Transition Planning Google Classroom (link)
Class Code: *bxbqcs7*

The **Work Education Manual** is available on the Transition Planning, Work Education & Transition to Work OneNote under the Work Education and Transition to Work Program tab. This manual has information on implementing a Work Education Program as well as all the paperwork required to participate. This manual is used for both Practical Learning Programs and Transition to Work Programs. If you have any questions please reach out to **Braden Sherwood, Work Education Coordinator**. Work Education Manual

PowerSchool STUDENT PROGRAMMING (PSP)

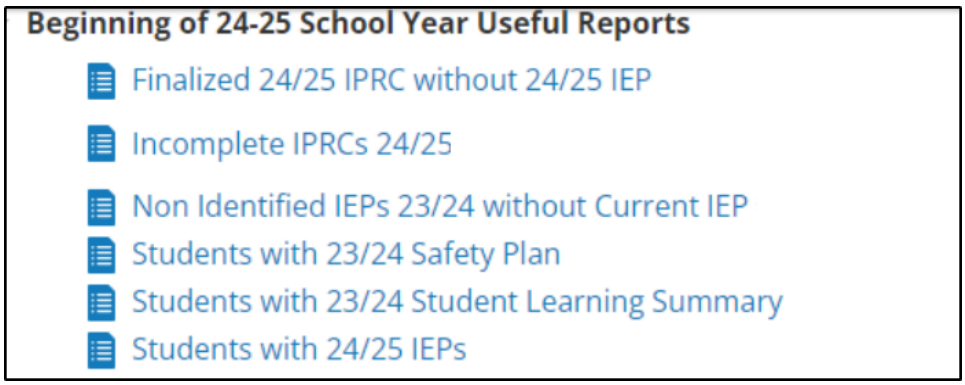
IPRCs and linking to an IEP

If a student has an existing finalized IPRC and you need to create a new one due to a change in exceptionality for example, please ensure the effective date of placement is different than the previous finalized Statement of Decision. In the same school year a student cannot have more than one SOD beginning on the same day otherwise the IEP will not update properly.

Calendar in PSP

Under Communications on the top blue bar in PSP in the drop down is a link to the Calendar found within PSP. In here you will see key dates such as when EA Allocation and Lunchroom Supervisor requests are due.

- Please review useful reports



- Create IEPs for the current school year for students with Non-Identified IEPs and for students with recently finalized IPRCs for 2024-25 school year that were previously incomplete
- Update the IEP date in the General Information for all IEPs for the current school year
- Co-create Student Safety Plans and Student Learning Summary documents as needed
- Update newly arrived SEA equipment in the resource section of the student's IEPs

Review IEP Resources for SERTs and Teachers in the PSP section of the SERT Binder for detailed documentation, slide decks and videos.

PSP Support

If you need to report an issue or have any questions about PSP, please **submit an incident** using the IT Service Desk. When creating an incident, please select the category of Software and subcategory of “Student Programming.”

TRAILS



Helping youth develop strategies to *support emotional health*

Many of our students experience emotional ups and downs throughout the time you entrust us to educate them and support their development. **Research indicates that students with solid self-awareness and good coping skills do better academically and socially during their school years and beyond.**

This term our school is working with TRAILS (Transforming Research into Action to Improve the Lives of Students) to support our students' social, emotional, and behavioral health. **We will be offering a skills group for students experiencing symptoms of anxiety and/or depression.**

The group will focus on strategies to support emotional health and enable students to

feel more in control of their emotions and better equipped to handle daily stressors.

Key Components

- Groups facilitated by TRAILS-trained school staff
- Participants learn a wide variety of research-backed skills to alleviate symptoms of stress, anxiety or depression
- Groups meet 1 time per week for 10 sessions
- Students involved in TRAILS will receive an excused absence for any missed class time

To learn more about TRAILS, visit TRAILStoWellness.org



Teachers will be requested to give students involved in TRAILS an excused absence from any missed class time.

To learn how to get your child involved in the TRAILS skill-building group, please contact your school counselors or social workers.

As with all of our communication with students, school health staff are required to respect students' privacy and will disclose personal information about a student only in situations in which the safety of the student is at risk, and then only to appropriate individuals, such as the student's parents/guardians or an outside agency, to the extent necessary to maintain safety.

DDSB
Ignite Learning





Durham District School Board

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

Guide for Families

September 2026

Every child deserves a way to communicate.

The DDSB is committed to applying human rights, anti-discrimination, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and accessibility principles, approaches, and actions in all aspects of its services and learning environments. Some students benefit from AAC—tools and strategies that support access to multi-modal communication across the student's day. This guide walks you through what to expect when your child receives school-based AAC support from our Speech, Language, and Hearing Services team.





Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Support Process at the Durham District School Board

Referral

Following collaboration with parents/caregivers and the school team, and with parents/caregivers consent, a referral is made to ISS for S-LP support.

Informed Consent and Learning About Your Child

The S-LP connects with parents/caregivers to obtain consent for services and gather key information about the child—including communication skills, strengths, and needs, personal interests and motivations, goals for the child's development, and background information, such as reports from private therapists or outside agencies.

Learning About Your Child at School

The S-LP collaborates with the school team to gather insight into how and why the child communicates in the educational environment. This process may involve observing the child during school routines, consulting with educators and specialists, and interactions through a variety of activities and assessment tools.

Next Steps

Based on the assessment findings, the student's current communication system, preferences, interests, and cultural and linguistic identity, the S-LP will collaborate with school staff and parents/caregivers to discuss next steps. To identify the tools and strategies that best support the student's communication at school, the S-LP may trial various low-, mid-, and high-tech options from the AAC Loaning Library.*

Low-Tech AAC

Includes any non-electronic method of communication (communication board or book).

Mid-Tech AAC

Includes recordable voice-output devices like single-message or buttons (Big Mack), sequential message (Step-By-Step with Levels), and static displays with multi-buttons (QuickTalker).

High-Tech AAC

Includes an iPad with specialized communication software (GoTalk Now+, TD Snap).

Ongoing Support

Based on dynamic assessment and information gathering, the S-LP will provide AAC tools and supports alongside training for key communication partners. This ongoing process involves continuous monitoring, team collaboration, promoting awareness of diverse communication methods, and making referrals to external agencies as needed.

**If the student's existing communication system meets their needs, the S-LP will collaborate with parents/caregivers and the school team to facilitate classroom integration and trial supplementary tools as appropriate.*

Step 1: Connecting to DDSB Speech-Language Pathology Services

If your child would benefit from access to additional tools/strategies to meet their communication needs, the school team may reach out to you to get your consent to explore additional support at school.

What Happens?

- The school team reaches out to the school-assigned Speech-Language Pathologist (S-LP).
- With your collaboration and consent, the team may start a pre-referral consultation.
- If appropriate, and with your consent, a referral is made to Inclusive Student Services (ISS) for speech-language pathology support.
- Depending on current caseload demands and the type of referral initiated, there may be a waiting list for school-based S-LP services.

Step 2: Informed Consent and Family Conversation

Before any formal involvement begins, the S-LP will contact you by phone to request informed consent for S-LP services.

During this conversation, the S-LP will:

- Ask questions to learn about how your child communicates, including any factors that may influence their communication at home and in the community.
- Learn about your child's identity, lived experiences, their communication strengths, needs, interests, and goals, and the communication tools/strategies they may be using at home, school, and/or in therapy.
- Talk about how communication assessments work, so you know what to expect.
- Explain how your child's private health information is collected, stored, and shared. S-LPs follow the ethical guidelines of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO) and comply with the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) to ensure your child's privacy.
- Review how the S-LP works with and supports the school team.
- Discuss AAC options, possible trials, and appropriate community agency referrals.

This is also your opportunity to ask questions and share what matters most to you and your child.

Step 3: Getting to Know Your Child

With your consent, the S-LP works closely with the school team to learn how and why your child communicates at school and identify any communication barriers.

What Does this Look Like?



- Observing your child's participation and access to communication in their classroom environments.
- Spending time in the classroom to observe how your child interacts and communicates with different people across different activities and settings.
- Collaborating with you and classroom staff to gain a full picture of your child's communication.
- Gathering information about your child's communication skills by interacting with them using a variety of activities, tools, and strategies.

Individualized Pathways

Every child's communication journey is unique.

New Referrals:

If your child does not yet have a communication system (e.g., communication book, speech generating device), the team will explore different tools, symbols, and strategies to see what works best in the school environment.

- If your child meets the eligibility requirements, the S-LP can discuss a referral to the Communication and Writing Aids Service (CWAS) at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital. Services may take place at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, at home, or in the community.
- If the student does not yet meet the criteria for referral to CWAS and/or if use of the communication system is only supported in the school environment, the S-LP will discuss the options available through the school board to support and expand how they communicate. Examples include, mid-technology (mid-tech) and/or high-technology (high-tech) tools/devices funded through the Special Equipment Amount (SEA) and low-technology (low-tech) tools.
- When communication tools/devices are easily transportable and support communication outside of school, the tools/devices can travel between home and school with the student upon agreement of the family and school. Families are responsible for the tools/devices when taken home.

For Students with Existing Systems:

If your child already has a home device/communication system, the focus will be on supporting and integrating that system successfully in the classroom. The school team and family would collaborate to outline a plan for use of the device/communication system at school (e.g., transporting, programming).

- Families are responsible for the student's personal home device/communication system, including maintenance and repair.
- School staff are responsible for ensuring that the student has access to the device/communication system when it is at school and informing the family of possible new vocabulary to be added to support the student's access to the curriculum.
- S-LPs are responsible for supporting school staff with understanding the device/communication system and using strategies to facilitate communication at school.

Step 4: Moving Forward Together

Ongoing collaboration and partnership between the student, S-LP, family, and school is essential to success and may include:

Training and Support

The school-based S-LP:

- Trains, coaches and models AAC use and strategies for school staff, peers, and caregivers so that your child has access to communication partners who understand and use their communication system with them.
- Can provide school staff with access to training videos for additional learning.
- Can access additional support through the AAC S-LP. The DDSB AAC S-LP also provides school and system level AAC training and presentations upon request.
- Can support school staff with including AAC communication goals and requirements in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) as well as in school safety/emergency planning so that students who use AAC have access to communication in emergency situations.
- Helps communication partners learn how to support and incorporate your child's communication system (AAC) into meaningful interactions across the day within the classroom and greater school community.

Maintenance and Repair

The school team is responsible for ensuring that all DDSB created or SEA funded communication systems/devices used by students are in working order and for seeking support if a system/device requires maintenance or repair.

If there are issues with a student's *high-tech communication system* (e.g., iPad with communication software) ordered through the SEA process:

- The school team informs the school-based S-LP of the issue. The S-LP and/or school staff ensure a copy of the student's customized vocabulary file is saved.
- The school team submits a Help Ticket to DDSB IT Services, noting that the request is for a "communication device."
- IT Services ensure that a replacement device is provided to the student prior to removing the device that requires repair/replacement.
- It is recommended that all students with high-tech devices also have access to low-tech communication tools in the case of unexpected technology issues.



If there are issues with a student's *mid-tech communication system* (e.g., recordable devices like Quick Talker, Step by Step) ordered through the SEA process:

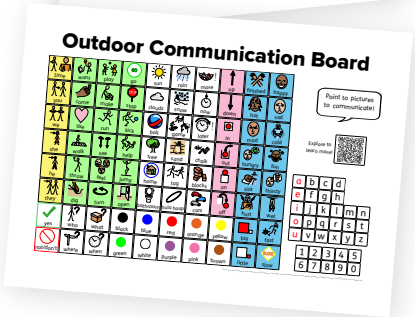
- The school team notifies the school-assigned S-LP that there are issues with the device.
- The S-LP will provide a loaner if one is available while the other device is being repaired or if a replacement device is ordered.
- It is recommended that all students with mid-tech devices also have access to low-tech communication tools in the case of unexpected technology issues.





If there are issues with a student's *low-tech communication system* (e.g., Flip N Talk, clarification book) created by the DDSB S-LP:

- The school team notifies the school-assigned S-LP that there are issues with the communication system.
- The S-LP will provide a loaner if one is available while repairing or replacing the original system.



Ongoing Assessment and Collaboration

- The school team, family, student, and S-LP work together to develop and update goals, accommodations, tools, vocabulary, and strategies as the student grows and changes to ensure they are functional and representative of their ongoing communication needs.
- School staff are responsible for updating your child's IEP to include how their communication tools/devices will be used to support their learning.
- At the start of each school year, caregivers and the school team are invited to collaborate to discuss how information about your child's day will be shared between home and school.
- The school team and S-LP collaborate to support your child's communication goals, as outlined in their IEP. Device use and progress monitoring is personalized and recorded directly by staff during meaningful and authentic classroom interactions, rather than through automated tracking features on the device.

Transitions

- The school team ensures continuity of AAC use by planning and supporting transitions (e.g., training new staff when the student changes grades or moves schools). Transition supports and checklists can be provided to the school team by the school-assigned S-LP.
- If your child moves to another DDSB school, school staff are responsible for the transfer of low, mid, and/or high-tech tools/devices from one school to another.
- If your child moves to another publicly funded Ontario school outside of the DDSB, the receiving school board must request the transfer of SEA funded tools/devices. SEA funded tools/devices do not transfer to post-secondary institutions, employment settings, private schools, homeschools, or outside of Ontario.



Learning and Awareness

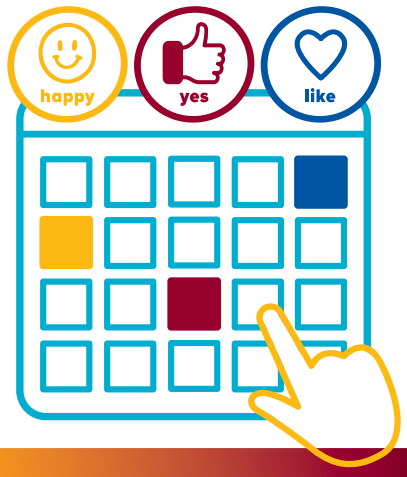
- S-LP services can provide ongoing school-based, system-level, and community learning opportunities about AAC and complex communication, including awareness and acceptance of diverse ways of communicating, as requested.
- S-LP services can support schools to create inclusive, AAC-friendly environments within and beyond the classroom (e.g., gym, office, common areas) that allow for all students to access multiple modes of communication.
- Refer to the DDSB ISS Update, Volume 10 for more information on AAC and how DDSB S-LPs support AAC services at school.

Community Connections

- With consent from the family, the school team and/or school-based S-LP can connect with community agencies (e.g., Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, Grandview Kids) and other professionals supporting the student to share information. A collaborative, team-based approach to AAC can ensure consistency of AAC use and foster generalization of skills across the student's environments.

Our Commitment to Families

- Supporting your child through every stage of their communication journey is a long-term collaborative process. Families, students, and school teams will work together to ensure every child is supported to communicate, participate, and express themselves in meaningful ways.
- Please reach out to your school team or S-LP Services if you have any questions related to AAC.





Durham District School Board

Inclusive Student Services

Special Education Community Symposium

Tuesday, February 10, 2026

6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Data Overview Parent/Caregiver Special Education Symposium – February 10th

Hosted by the DDSB Inclusive Student Services Department

Session	Key Learnings
The IPRC Process: What is an IPRC and what can I expect?	This session has been created to provide you with information about the process we follow in the Durham District School Board (DDSB) for consideration and decision-making regarding identification as an exceptional student and program placement. The session will explain the purpose of the Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meeting, who will attend, what the outcomes may be, what information will be shared, how you can collaborate with school staff, and what you can expect after the meeting.
Secondary Pathways for Students	Interested in learning more about course offerings available to students in Secondary school? Join us for a session that will explain the differences between the following courses: Academic, Applied, Locally Developed, College, University, Destreamed. Participants will also learn school-based support options available to students, and more about IEPs in Secondary
Understanding supports available in Elementary	Join us for an information session that will build understanding of the support that available for students in the elementary program. The session will focus on who is the school-based team that supports, what are the supports that are available, when and how do central Inclusive Student Services (ISS) become involved, and what community supports are available?
Understanding supports available in Secondary	This session aims to explore the support available in secondary schools. In this session, it will explore school-based teams, central staff teams, community support, and mental health and well-being support.
Alternative Learning Opportunities in Secondary	In Durham District School Board there are various alternative learning opportunities in our secondary schools. This session explores SAL (Supervised Alternative Learning), DASS (Durham Alternative Secondary School), and Credit Recovery.
Individual Education Plan (IEP) - A Collaborative Approach	Your feedback is an important part of your child's success at school. Join us for an information session dedicated to making the IEP process clear, collaborative, and effective. We will guide you through understanding identifications, what belongs in an IEP document, and how to maintain open lines of communication with teachers. Learn how to advocate for your child and work *with* the school team to create the best possible learning environment.

Understanding Placement Options	Would you like to understand the categories and definitions of exceptionalities plus the five placement options in Durham District School Board? This session will explain how students' needs are met through a variety of programs and placements within the DDSB.
Transition to Work and Post Secondary Pathways for Students	This session aims to build understanding about secondary pathways for all students and the options they lead to in life beyond high school. Simplifying how credits correlate to post-secondary opportunities for all students. Highlighting what to look for and leverage the IEP to support pathways from secondary to life after high school (i.e., transition planning, understanding accommodations etc.) Sample pathways from secondary grade 9 to post-secondary life. We will touch on both traditional routes to post-secondary education and pathways to Transition to Work Program as well as other community-based or employment-based opportunities. We will end with resources and tools for students and parents to utilize.

The evening will also offer additional sessions designed to provide learning about supports available to families including AI tools to support students, Speech Language Services, Social Works Services, Psychological Services, special education gifted placement orientation and includes community partners that offer supports to students and families.

8 Week Group Pilot Program:

ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT THERAPY THROUGH ART

BEYOND THE BRUSH

8 WEEKS
ONE PERIOD/WEEK
GRADES 10-12

BUILD EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE THROUGH ACCEPTANCE, DECISION-MAKING, AND MEANINGFUL ACTION.

SCAN ME

Join to learn, grow, and take action toward a better you!

Elementary INCLUSIVE SKILLS WORKSHOP

Tuesday, April 14, 2026

Welcome

Appendix N

DDSB
Ignite Learning

Individual Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Timeline Flowchart

TImelines Regulation 181/98 Section 5

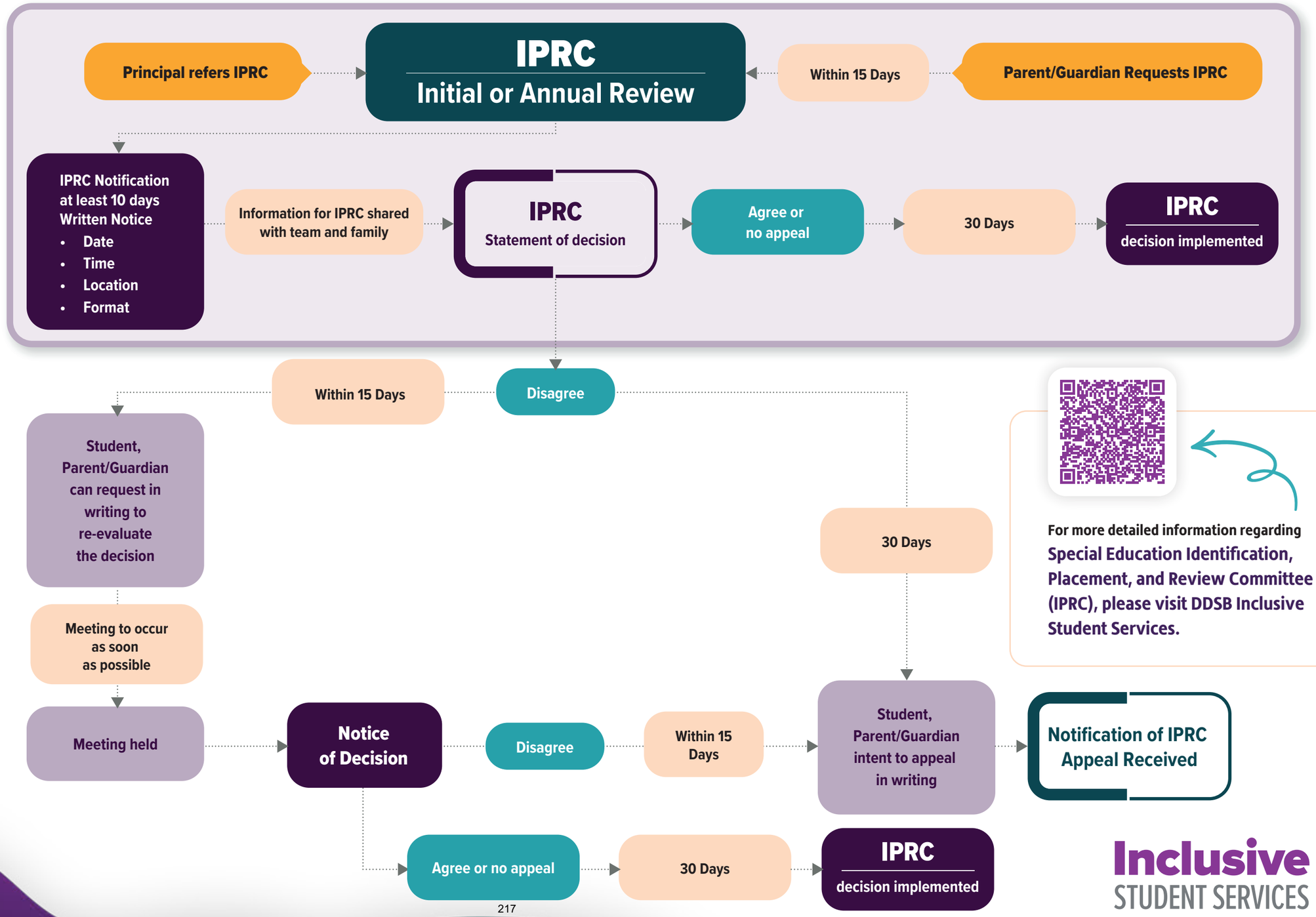
Legislation Education Act Regulation 181/98(21)IC.

May be made at any point after a placement has been in effect for 3 months.

A Parent/Guardian Guide to IPRC must be shared annually, there is an embedded link to the guide in the standardized letter in powerschool student programs.

Statement of Decision includes:
- **Exceptionality/ies**
- **Placement**
- **Effective dates of placement***

**Instructional Day*



For more detailed information regarding **Special Education Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), please visit DDSB Inclusive Student Services.**

Inclusive
STUDENT SERVICES

Special Education Glossary

AAC - Augmentative and Alternative Communication

ABA - Applied Behaviour Analysis

Advocacy - A collaborative process involving input and contributions from parent/guardians, students, school staff, and professional services that identifies appropriate instructional strategies and interventions to optimize the student's ability to achieve to their full potential.

ART - Autism Resource Team

ASD - Autism Spectrum Disorder

ASIST - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

AT - Advanced Technology

BMS - Behaviour Management System

BSP - Behaviour Safety Plan

Differentiated Instruction - allows teachers to address specific skills and difficulties and adapt instruction to suit differing characteristics

EA - Educational Assistant

ECE - Early Childhood Educator

FM System - Frequency Modulation System

IBI - Intensive Behaviour Intervention

IEP - Individual Education Plan

IPRC - Identification, Placement and Review Committee

PHIPA - Personal Health Information Protection Act

PowerSchool PSP - Special Education data base for tracking Special Education processes and completing forms

PPM 140 - Policy Program Memorandum, #140

SEA - Special Equipment Allocation

SERT - Special Education Resource Teacher

SIP - Special Incidence Portion

SMHO - School Mental Health Ontario

START - Short Term Assistance Response Team

The Tiered Approach - is a systematic approach to providing high-quality, evidence-based assessment and instruction and appropriate interventions that respond to students' individual needs.

Tier 1 - Assessment and instruction are planned in relation to the curriculum for *all* students, applying principals of Universal Design and Differentiated Instruction. The teacher observes, monitors student progress, and notes which students may be experiencing difficulty.

Tier 2 - On the basis of assessment results, differentiated instruction and interventions are planned for students who are facing learning, behavioural or social challenges. Student progress in response to these interventions is closely monitored, and instruction is adjusted as needed.

Tier 3 - For students who require intensive support to achieve learning goals, even more precise and individualized assessment and instruction are planned, often with the help of the in-school team, the Family of Schools Special Education Team and/or other resources. Monitoring of the student's response to these interventions continues.

Universal Design - provides teachers with broad principles for planning instruction and designing learning environments for a diverse group of students.

Appendix P

Workshop Name
Accessibility Training for EAs, SERTS, Teacher Librarians, NTIP staff
A Trauma Lens to Speech Language Pathology Practice
AAC for School Based Speech Language Pathologists
BMS - Basic Training
BMS - Refresher
Conditions for Learning
Declaritive Language and Co-Regulation: Positive Teaching Tools to Support Engagement and Learning with Neurodivergent Learners
Develpmental Class Collaboration Release for Staff
ECHO - Autism Program
Erin's Law
IEP Overview for NTIP Teachers
Inclusive Student Services for NTIP Teachers
Instructional Fecilitator Bi-Weekly Session (ie. Literacy and Numeracy Interventions, Assistive Technolgy)
Interpreter and Intervenor Collaboration
KTEA SERT Training Refresher
Lift andTransfer Training
Literacy in Action - Strategies for Student Success (EAs)
Mitigating Risk of Injury Mandatory Training
NTIP Orientation
Practical Learning Program Class Collaboration Release for Staff
Primary Resource Teachers-CoP and 7/8 SST
Responsive Sign Language
Secondary Curriculum Leads Meeting
Special Education Resource Teacher Community of Practice
STAR Training/LINKS
Structured Learning Part I and II
Supporting Students in a Mainstream Program (EAs)
Teachers of Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Blind Low Vison - technology and assistive tool training
Transition to Work Program
Trauma Informed Practise - System Wide
Vision Assesment and Vision Impairments Porgramming
Workshop for Teachers Supporting Gifted Learners

*The items listed above represent a selection of the professional learning opportunities offered during the 2025–2026 school year; additional sessions were also available

Durham District School Board
400 Taunton Road East, Whitby, Ontario L1R2K6

Individual Education Plan

Student Information

Legal Name:	Sample Student	**Student Number:**	999999
Preferred Name:	Sample Student	**OEN:**	00000000
School:	Pierre Elliott Trudeau P.S.	**Date of Birth:**	
Principal:		**Grade:**	05
		School Year:	2026-27

Draft

Interests, Strengths, and Needs

Interest(s):	Strengths:	Needs:
.		

Development of the IEP

Reason for Developing IEP: Student identified as exceptional by Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)

Current IPRC Data

Identified Exceptionality:

IPRC Date: *(MM/DD/YYYY)*

Placement:

Placement Start Date: *(MM/DD/YYYY)*

Reporting Dates

IEP Date: **First Reporting Date:** November 2026 **Second Reporting Date:** February 2027 **Final Reporting Date:** June 2027

Program Information

Program Exemptions and/or Substitutions : ☑

Date	Exemption	Substitution	Rationale for Exemption
	.		

Student (secondary only) is working towards the attainment of the: Ontario Secondary School Diploma

IEP developed by:

Staff Member	Position
.	

Sources Used in the Development of the IEP:

☑ Educational Assessment ☑ Clinical Assessment ☑ Board Staff ☑ Classroom Observations ☑ Classroom Schedule
☑ Medical Information ☑ Ontario Student Record (OSR) ☑ Parent(s)/Guardian(s) ☑ Previous IEP
☑ Previous Report Card ☑ Student ☑ Community Partner(s)

Educational Assessments

Type of Assessment	Assessment Date	Source	Role	Summary of Results
.				

Clinical Assessments

Type of Assessment	Assessment Date	Source	Summary of Results
.			

Provincial Assessment

Provincial assessment year? ☑ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☑ Grade 3 Reading, Writing and Math ☑ Grade 6 Reading, Writing and Math ☐ Grade 9 Math ☐ Grade 10 Literacy

Exemption with Rationale Student is unable to participate in assessment

Notes:
.

Exemption(s) (Confirmation sent to Parent or Guardian)

- ☑ Math
- ☑ Reading
- ☑ Writing

Alternative Versions Permitted by EQAO

Grade 3 & 6

- ☑ Sign language or an oral interpreter
- ☑ A Unified English Braille version with or without the audio version
- ☑ Additional assistive technology
- ☑ Verbatim scribing of answers/responses

English-language learners can receive the following special provisions:

- ☑ Digital or paper language resources

Accommodations

Environmental Accommodations - *Changes or supports in the physical environment of the classroom and/or school*	**Instructional Accommodations -** *Adjustments in teaching strategies required to enable the student to learn and to progress through the curriculum*	**Assessment Accommodations -** *Assessment adjustments in assessment activities and methods required to enable the student to demonstrate learning*
☑ Access to self-regulation tools	☑ Ability grouping	☑ Adaptive equipment (Specify):
☑ Adaptive equipment (Specify):	☑ Access to self-regulation tools	–
.	☑ Alternative communication (Specify):	☑ Alternative communication (Specify):
☑ Alternative seating	.	–
☑ Alternative workspace	☑ Audio recording	☑ Alternative setting
☑ Assistive devices (Specify):	☑ Augmentative communication (Specify):	☑ Assistive communication (Specify):
.	.	–
☑ Custom devices and/or furniture (Specify):	☑ Buddy peer tutoring	☑ Augmentative communication (Specify):
.	☑ Check-ins	–
☑ High structure	☑ Chunking	☑ Colour cues
☑ Proximity to instructor	☑ Community service & social skills	☑ Digital copies
☑ Quiet setting	☑ Computer hardware (Specify):	☑ Individualized due dates
☑ Reduction of audio/visual stimuli	–	☑ Individualized time for assessment (e.g., additional time)
☑ Special lighting	☑ Concrete/hands-on materials	☑ Inclusive technology (Specify):
☑ Use of headphones	☑ Contracts	–
	☑ Curriculum differentiated by breadth	☑ Large-size font
	☑ Curriculum differentiated by depth	☑ More frequent breaks
	☑ Develop critical thinking skills	☑ Oral/Non-Written responses
	☑ Developing independent research skills	☑ Prompts to return student's attention to task
	☑ Digital copies	☑ Recorded responses
	☑ Dramatizing information	☑ Reduced/uncluttered format

Draft Draft Draft

Environmental Accommodations - *Changes or supports in the physical environment of the classroom and/or school*	**Instructional Accommodations -** *Adjustments in teaching strategies required to enable the student to learn and to progress through the curriculum*	**Assessment Accommodations -** *Assessment adjustments in assessment activities and methods required to enable the student to demonstrate learning*
	☑ Duplicated notes ☑ Extra time for processing ☑ High structure ☑ Inclusive technology (Specify): – ☑ Manipulatives ☑ More frequent breaks ☑ Note-taking assistance ☑ Partnering ☑ Reduced/uncluttered format ☑ Reinforcement incentives (Specify): – ☑ Repetition of information ☑ Rewording/rephrasing of information ☑ Self-awareness and responsibility development ☑ Time management aids ☑ Using interests, talents and abilities ☑ Visual cues	☑ Reduction in the number of tasks ☑ Verbatim scribing

Subjects, Courses or Alternative Programs to which IEP applies

Subject/Course	Program Type
.	Modified below grade level
_	Alternative
_	Modified at grade level

☑ Course: .

Program Type: Modified below grade level

Current Level of Achievement (usually from June report card)

Letter Grade/Mark	Curriculum Grade Level	Strand
.		

☑ **Strand: .**

Annual Program Goal:

.

Term/Semester 1 Expectations

Specific Expectation	Teaching Strategy	Assessment Method
.		

Term/Semester 2 Expectations

Specific Expectation	Teaching Strategy	Assessment Method
.		

☑ Course: _

Program Type: Alternative

☑ **Area of Focus: _**

Entry Level of Achievement

_

Annual Program Goal:

_

Term/Semester 1 Expectations

Specific Expectation	Teaching Strategy	Assessment Method
_	_	_

Term/Semester 2 Expectations

Specific Expectation	Teaching Strategy	Assessment Method
_	_	_

Draft

☑ Course: _ Program Type: Modified at grade level

Current Level of Achievement (usually from June report card)

Letter Grade/Mark	Curriculum Grade Level	Strand
–	–	–

☑ **Strand: _**

Annual Program Goal:

–

Term/Semester 1 Expectations

Specific Expectation	Teaching Strategy	Assessment Method
–	–	–

Term/Semester 2 Expectations

Specific Expectation	Teaching Strategy	Assessment Method
–	–	–

Human Resources

Type of Service	Frequency	Location

Health Services/Supports

Type of Service	Frequency	Location

Specialized Equipment

Specialized Equipment

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Equipment Part of Cluster Claim

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Consultation Log

Date	Description of Consultation	Parent/Guardian/Student Feedback/Outcome of Consultation	Contact By
	.		

Transition Plan

Overall Goal(s):

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Actions	Person(s) Responsible for Actions	Timeline
.		

Draft

Principal's Responsibility

The Principal has the legal requirement to implement and monitor the IEP. The plan has been developed according to the Ministry standards, addresses the student's strengths and needs, and the learning expectations will be reviewed and student progress monitored at least once every reporting period.

Principal Signature

Date

Durham District School Board consents to the use of an electronic signature for Individual Education Plan. Acceptable forms of electronic signature include clicking the required box, the typing of the name of the parent/guardian or student (over 18 years of age) or the inclusion of an image of the undersigned's signature, so long as the electronic signature is sufficient to identify the undersigned.

Draft

Durham District School Board
400 Taunton Road East, Whitby, Ontario L1R2K6

Individual Education Plan

Student Information

Legal Name:	Sample Student	**Student Number:**	999999
Preferred Name:	Sample Student	**OEN:**	00000000
School:	Pierre Elliott Trudeau P.S.	**Date of Birth:**	
Principal:		**Grade:**	05
		Current School Year:	2026-27

Consultation Form

Parent/Guardian Involvement: Your input into the development of the IEP is valuable. Please indicate below how you would like to be further involved in the consultation process:

- ☐ I have reviewed the IEP and do not require further consultation at this time.
- ☐ I would like to set up a meeting to further discuss the programming in the IEP.

Please add additional comments below:

Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
Student Signature (if 16 years of age or older)	Date

Durham District School Board
400 Taunton Road East, Whitby, Ontario L1R2K6

Individual Education Plan

Student Information

Legal Name:	Sample Student	**Student Number:**	99999999
Preferred Name:	Sample Student	**OEN:**	00000000
School:	Ajax H.S.	**Date of Birth:**	
Principal:		**Grade:**	09
		School Year:	2026-27

Draft

Interests, Strengths, and Needs

Interest(s):	Strengths:	Needs:

Development of the IEP

Reason for Developing IEP: Student identified as exceptional by Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)

Current IPRC Data

Identified Exceptionality:

Language Impairment

IPRC Date: *(MM/DD/YYYY)*

Placement: Regular Class with Indirect Support

Placement Start Date: *(MM/DD/YYYY)*09/05/2023

Reporting Dates

IEP Date: **First Reporting Date:** November 2026 **Second Reporting Date:** February 2027 **Third Reporting Date:** April 2027

Final Reporting Date: June 2027

Program Information

No Program Exemptions and/or Substitutions

IEP developed by:

Staff Member	Position

Sources Used in the Development of the IEP:

- [x] Educational Assessment
- [x] Clinical Assessment
- [x] Board Staff
- [x] Classroom Observations
- [x] Classroom Schedule
- [x] Medical Information
- [x] Ontario Student Record (OSR)
- [x] Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
- [x] Previous IEP
- [x] Previous Report Card
- [x] Student
- [x] Community Partner(s)

Educational Assessments

Type of Assessment	Assessment Date	Source	Role	Summary of Results
.				

Clinical Assessments

Type of Assessment	Assessment Date	Source	Summary of Results
.			

Provincial Assessment

This student is taking the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC)? ☑ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Provincial assessment year? ☑ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ Grade 3 Reading, Writing and Math ☐ Grade 6 Reading, Writing and Math ☑ Grade 9 Math ☑ Grade 10 Literacy

Alternative Versions Permitted by EQAO

Grade 9

- ☑ Extended periodic supervised breaks
- ☑ Sign language or an oral interpreter
- ☑ Additional assistive technology tools, such as Google Read&Write
- ☑ Verbatim scribing of responses (refer to the Guidelines for Scribes section)

Alternative version, which contains single-selection questions only and is available in the following formats:

- ☑ Printable PDF (regular or large print)
- ☑ Unified English Braille (contracted and uncontracted)
- ☑ Online including audio with and without full descriptions of all graphics
- ☑ Audio MP3s with and without full descriptions of all graphics

Grade 10

- ☑ Extended periodic supervised breaks
- ☑ Sign language or an oral interpreter
- ☑ Verbatim scribing of responses (refer to the Guidelines for Scribes section)
- ☑ Additional assistive technology tools, such as Google Read&Write or Kurzweil

An alternative version, which contains multiple-choice and open-response questions only and is available in the following formats:

- ☑ Printable PDF (regular or large print)
- ☑ Unified English Braille (contracted and uncontracted)
- ☑ American Sign Language (ASL) video

Accommodations

Environmental Accommodations - *Changes or supports in the physical environment of the classroom and/or school*	**Instructional Accommodations -** *Adjustments in teaching strategies required to enable the student to learn and to progress through the curriculum*	**Assessment Accommodations -** *Assessment adjustments in assessment activities and methods required to enable the student to demonstrate learning*
☑ Access to self-regulation tools ☑ Adaptive equipment (Specify): . ☑ Alternative seating ☑ Alternative workspace ☑ Assistive devices (Specify): . ☑ Custom devices and/or furniture (Specify): .	☑ Ability grouping ☑ Access to self-regulation tools ☑ Alternative communication (Specify): . ☑ Audio recording ☑ Augmentative communication (Specify): . ☑ Buddy peer tutoring ☑ Check-ins ☑ Chunking	☑ Adaptive equipment (Specify): . ☑ Alternative communication (Specify): . ☑ Alternative setting ☑ Assistive communication (Specify): . ☑ Augmentative communication (Specify): . ☑ Colour cues

Draft

Environmental Accommodations - *Changes or supports in the physical environment of the classroom and/or school*	**Instructional Accommodations -** *Adjustments in teaching strategies required to enable the student to learn and to progress through the curriculum*	**Assessment Accommodations -** *Assessment adjustments in assessment activities and methods required to enable the student to demonstrate learning*
☑ High structure ☑ Proximity to instructor ☑ Quiet setting ☑ Reduction of audio/visual stimuli ☑ Special lighting ☑ Use of headphones	☑ Community service & social skills ☑ Computer hardware (Specify): . ☑ Concrete/hands-on materials ☑ Contracts ☑ Curriculum differentiated by breadth ☑ Curriculum differentiated by depth ☑ Develop critical thinking skills ☑ Developing independent research skills ☑ Digital copies ☑ Dramatizing information ☑ Duplicated notes ☑ Extra time for processing ☑ High structure ☑ Inclusive technology (Specify): . ☑ Manipulatives ☑ More frequent breaks ☑ Note-taking assistance ☑ Organization coaching ☑ Partnering ☑ Reduced/uncluttered format ☑ Reinforcement incentives (Specify): . ☑ Repetition of information ☑ Rewording/rephrasing of information ☑ Self-awareness and responsibility development ☑ Time management aids ☑ Using interests, talents and abilities ☑ Visual cues	☑ Digital copies ☑ Individualized due dates ☑ Individualized time for assessment (e.g., additional time) ☑ Inclusive technology (Specify): . ☑ Large-size font ☑ More frequent breaks ☑ Oral/Non-Written responses ☑ Prompts to return student's attention to task ☑ Recorded responses ☑ Reduced/uncluttered format ☑ Reduction in the number of tasks ☑ Verbatim scribing

Draft

Subjects, Courses or Alternative Programs to which IEP applies

Subject/Course	Program Type
.	Alternative
.	Modified below grade level
.	Modified at grade level

☑ Course: . Program Type: Alternative

☑ Area of Focus: .

Entry Level of Achievement

.

Annual Program Goal:

.

Term/Semester 1 Expectations

Specific Expectation	Teaching Strategy	Assessment Method
.		

Term/Semester 2 Expectations

Specific Expectation	Teaching Strategy	Assessment Method
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☑ Course: . Program Type: Modified below grade level

Current Level of Achievement (usually from June report card)

Letter Grade/Mark	Curriculum Grade Level	Strand
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☑ Strand: .

Annual Program Goal:

.

Term/Semester 1 Expectations

Specific Expectation	Teaching Strategy	Assessment Method
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Term/Semester 2 Expectations

Specific Expectation	Teaching Strategy	Assessment Method
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Draft

Course: . | Program Type: Modified at grade level

Current Level of Achievement (usually from June report card)

Letter Grade/Mark	Curriculum Grade Level	Strand

Strand: .

Annual Program Goal:

.

Term/Semester 1 Expectations

Specific Expectation	Teaching Strategy	Assessment Method
.		

Term/Semester 2 Expectations

Specific Expectation	Teaching Strategy	Assessment Method
.		

Human Resources

Type of Service	Frequency	Location
	.	

Health Services/Supports

Type of Service	Frequency	Location
	.	

Specialized Equipment

Specialized Equipment

.

Consultation Log

Date	Description of Consultation	Parent/Guardian/Student Feedback/Outcome of Consultation	Contact By
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Transition Plan

Overall Goal(s):

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Actions	Person(s) Responsible for Actions	Timeline
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Draft Draft

Durham District School Board
400 Taunton Road East, Whitby, Ontario L1R2K6

Individual Education Plan

Student Information

Legal Name:	Sample Student	**Student Number:**	99999999
Preferred Name:	Sample Student	**OEN:**	00000000
School:	Ajax H.S.	**Date of Birth:**	
Principal:		**Grade:**	09
		Current School Year:	2026-27

Consultation Form

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Please add additional comments below:

Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
Student Signature (if 16 years of age or older)	Date

DDSB
Durham District School Board

DURHAM CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
Learning and Living in Faith

Fostering Skills Supporting Student Transportation



2025-2026

Developed by the Durham District School Board Inclusive Student Services department

Introduction

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) is committed to fostering success and independence for each student by providing a range of pathways, programs, opportunities and services. We strive to help every student meet their full potential while fostering the highest level of independence possible.

Independent or family-guided student travel (e.g., rolling, riding, walking) to and from school is prioritized where it is safe and practical. Durham Student Transportation Services (DSTS), in collaboration with the DDSB, assesses the best mode of transportation, where applicable, for each student based on their strengths and needs, while promoting independence and inclusion.

Accessible transportation is planned on an individual basis to support each student based on requirements. Please view Accessible Student Transportation—DSTS for more information.

Transportation planning is reviewed on an ongoing basis (minimum annually or upon changes to the skills and accommodation considerations) of a student. Plans are created by the school in consultation with the family/guardians.

Requests for accessible transportation require:

- Substantiation of accommodation needs within a student's program
- Support by a regulated health professional when health/medically related

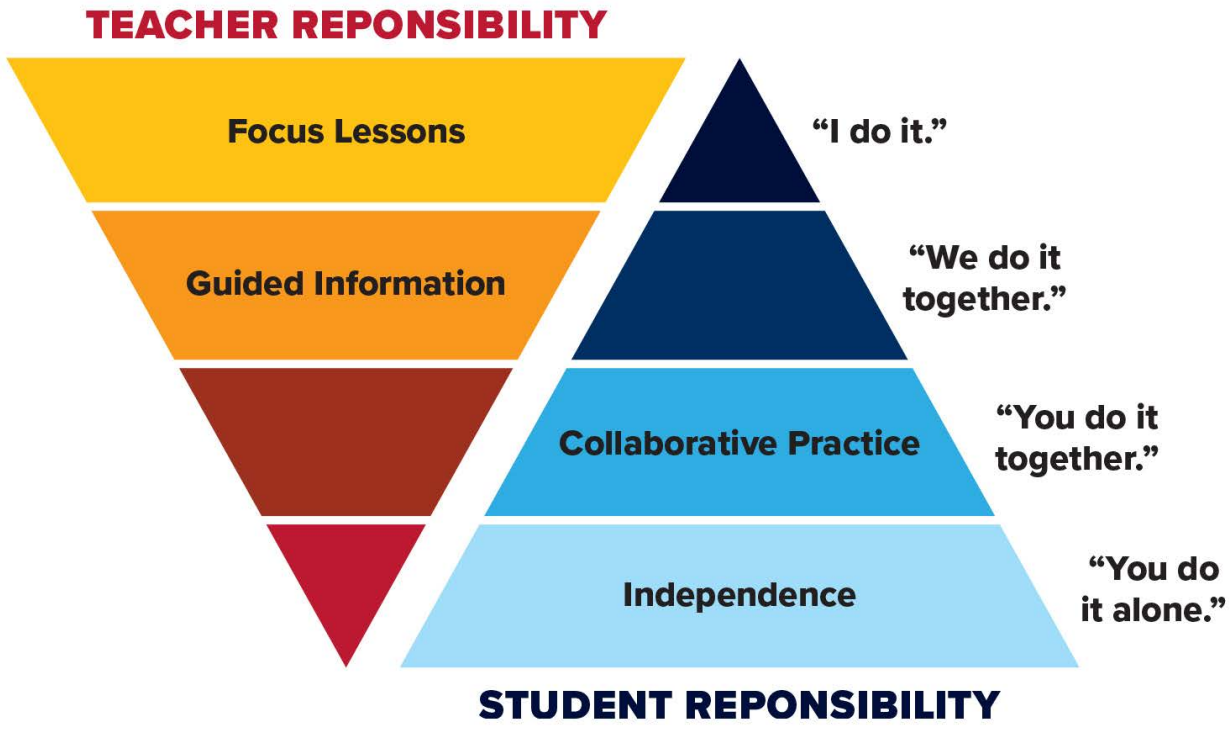
When transportation is provided by the school board and DSTS, it is considered an extension of the school day and supports our goal of fostering independence. Activities during bus rides may be integrated into the student's learning program and recorded in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) similar to other classroom activities.

Fostering Independence

Positive transportation experiences go beyond the movement from one location to another. For students utilizing student transportation, planning is an essential aspect of a holistic, student-centered educational strategy. This strategy includes establishing a structured framework that prioritizes safety, inclusion, and the cultivation of life skills. Intentional planning of transportation skills, building independence as individually defined for the student, is an essential element for student development; we foster an environment conducive to growth, making it a key part of a student's educational journey.

Assessing a student's readiness for bus independence, setting incremental goals, and designing systematic educational experiences tailored to individual skill development help facilitate transitions and prepare students for real-world challenges. Effective transition planning for bus independence outlines the necessary daily, short-term, and long-term changes in programs and pathways, detailing the actions required now and in the future to achieve the highest level of self-reliance.

A Model of Success for All Students



Resource: Fostering Student Independence—An Educator's Guide co-created by the DDSB and partner boards.

For all students accessing student transportation, intentional planning for the development of transportation skills is important building on layers of:

Tier 1: Universal Supports

- Bus routine established
- General safety procedures
- Visual supports and signage (seating plan, expectations for students on the bus)

Tier 2: Focused Supports

Additional support for some students

- Communication supports
- Positive behaviour supports
- Self-regulation skill development

Tier 3: Intensive Supports

Individualized high-level support for few students

- Communication supports and/or activity planning
- Sensory accommodations (e.g., noise cancelling headphones)
- Personalized seating (e.g., near the front, away from distractions)
- Individualized behaviour supports
- Visual/auditory cues
- Preparation and transition support (preview the bus ride, social stories, role playing, or a checklist)
- Where needed, staffing supports such as an Educational Assistant (EA)
- Preparation and transition support (preview the bus ride, social stories, role playing, or a checklist)

Transportation Independence Continuum

The transportation independence continuum is a student-centered approach that refers to the gradual progression of a student's ability to navigate transportation options and routines with increasing levels of autonomy. This approach ensures that the student's current strengths and needs are the primary factors in determining their level of independence within the continuum. The process of fostering independence is not static; it develops and evolves based on the student's readiness and short—and long-term goals, providing the least restrictive environment possible.

Different Transportation Opportunities

Standard Ridership	Peer/18 Passenger	Solo Ridership	Public Transit Ridership
Student may be at any level of independence; may require direct support from adult for social skills or regulation strategies; scaffolding, prompting and generalization of skills being practiced in and out of the classroom.	Student may be at any level of independence; may require direct support from adult for sensory or regulation strategies; scaffolding, prompting and generalization of skills being practcied in and out of the classroom.	Student has significant health, saftey or behavioral concerns; requires direct support for health or safety; significant sensory needs; has bus safety plan; high level of direct support required.	Student is preparing for pathways outside of secondary school; may be at any level of independence; might include community resources; scaffolding and generalization of skills being practiced in and out of the classroom.

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE

Consistent data collection enables informed decision-making about the effectiveness of instructional strategies. It facilitates the establishment of personalized goals and instruction that cater to each student's unique strengths and challenges. Additionally, it ensures that goals and instruction can be adjusted based on ongoing data, making certain they remain relevant and effective.



Transportation Independence Continuum

Fully Dependent

May look like:
Students relies on staff for transportation, with little to no independent travel; student requires prompting, redirecting, and/or intervention prior to bus use and while riding for medical, safety, self-regulation or general processing needs; staff rides both ways to support student; staff may require Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Other considerations:

Is the student medically fragile?

Does the student have injurious behaviours to others or self?

Bus safety plan?

What does the data tell us and what are our goals to support the transition to partial support?

How will we know it is working?

Partial Support

May look like:
Students can manage some aspects of transportation on their own, but may still require assistance for certain parts of their journey; student may require prompting, redirecting, and/or intervention prior to bus use and/or while riding; staff may require PPE; staff may be supporting one or more students.

Other considerations:

Is it possible for route coordination with DSTS?

Modified bus safety plan?

How are we transitioning to declining support?

What does the data tell us and how have our goals changed to reflect this?

How are we planning to transition to emerging independence?

How will we know it is working?

Emerging Independence

May look like:
Students can manage some aspects of transportation on their own, but may still require assistance for certain parts of their journey; student may require prompting, redirecting, and/or intervention before or after bus use.

Elementary:
Staff rides one way/ alternating days and time; staff picks up/drops off student at bus with plan to reduce support; student using strategies with some independence; requires minimal support with little to no safety concerns.

Secondary:
Student is able to use self-directed strategies while riding with no staff member; occasional prompting and staff support for non-routine transit situations; minimal prompting for routine transportation.

Independent

May look like:
Student independently utilizes transportation using self-directed strategies when needed.

Elementary:
Student rides independently; staff check-ins periodically; student using strategies consistently to maintain independence.

Secondary:
Student requires no prompting to follow routine transportation procedures; student requires fading, minimal support to follow non-routine transportation procedures (e.g., field trip).

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE

General Considerations and Reflective Prompts

A comprehensive, student-centered approach is crucial when making well-informed decisions about students' transportation needs. This approach, which considers a range of factors, can include:

Level of Independence

Consideration: What is the student's current level of independence? Can they manage their belongings (with or without prompts), ask for help using various strategies, and/or move throughout the school (washroom, integration), with or without support? For some students, a gradual increase in responsibility within the classroom/school will lead to generalizing skills for transportation.

Physical or Medical Accommodations

Consideration: Does the student have physical and/or medical conditions that require specific accommodations, such as specialized seating or medical equipment? Is this accommodation needed long-term or short-term? DSTS should be aware of any student who has a medical plan and/or requiring physical accommodations.

Following Instructions and Safety Rules

Consideration: Is the student able to follow and understand instructions such as how to board and disembark the bus, stay seated and follow other bus rules? Some students may require additional guidance, prompting or social scripts. Classroom activities modelling transportation can be tailored to develop these skills and then generalized to apply to bussing. Bus companies in partnership with schools, are also supportive, when able, to provide a practice opportunity with the physical equipment the student will be accessing.

Transitions

Consideration: How does the student manage transitions? What transition supports are needed? A predictable routine or visual schedule can help ease the transition for students with some difficulty. Gradual and planned exposure to the process may also build comfort over time.

Alignment with Student's IEP

Consideration: Any transportation decision must align with the goals outlined in the student's IEP, ensuring that transportation supports academic and developmental objectives. If the student's IEP includes the development of social skills or independence goals, transportation should be viewed as an extension of these goals.

Social and Behavioural Goals in the Student's IEP

Consideration: What are the student's social and/or behavioural goals? It is important to remember that transportation can be a valuable opportunity for positive social interactions, enhancing the overall student experience.

Bus Safety Plan

Consideration: Does the student require a Student Safety Plan noting specifics related to transportation? A plan may be created for students who may be at risk of injury due to behavioral concerns. Refer to the DDSB Mitigation Risk of Injury (RI) Behaviours and Safety Support Strategies procedure for additional information and planning resources including:

- Appendix D–Classroom, School and Bus Safety Audit
- Appendix I–EA Supported Transportation for Students Requiring Alternative Transportation

As part of specific plans to support prevalent medical conditions (e.g., seizures) considerations for responding to situations while engaged in transit with student may be required and planned for as part of that specific plan.

If a bus safety plan is created, it should be reviewed regularly and updated as needed including consideration for when a Safety Plan may no longer be needed.

Monitoring and Flexibility

Consideration: How has the student grown and developed? Do they require the same level of support previously needed? Student strengths and support needs evolve; flexibility is key to making transportation decisions that are timely, responsive and support long-term development.

Potential Pathway Considerations During an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Opportunities

As part of the IPRC process conversations about student transportation, several factors should be considered. What growth has the student made over the course of the year and what are the goals moving forward? Consultation during the development or update of the IEP should reflect those discussions.

Transportation Independence Continuum

Student identified or reviewed through an IPRC meeting

Does the student require transportation due to medical diagnosis or exceptionality?
Was there an offer of placement for a program/service not offered at their home school?
If offer of placement is at their home school, are they able to independently travel to school?

NO

The student does not require transportation and is able to independently travel (walk, roll) to school.

YES

The student is not able to independently travel (walk, roll) to school and will require transportation. Is the student able to ride on standard student transportation with peers?

NO

Are there accommodations, culturally responsive, relevant, and trauma-informed supports that can be put in place? If yes, what are they? If no, what skills need to be developed? What does the data say and what strategies will be utilized?

YES

Recommend standard student transportation.

NO

Student may require alternative transportation. Are there health, safety, or behavioral concerns? How do you know? What strategies are being used? What are the transition goals and how are systematic approaches being used in the classroom? What plan is in place to reduce the level of support?

YES

Recommend standard student transportation.

NO

What level of support does the student need to be successful (health, safety, behavior)? What skills do they currently have? How can we plan and support the generalization of skills to develop greater independence? What plan is in place to reduce the level of support? Consideration for peer ridership at any level of independence.

YES

What are the behavior, safety, or health concerns? What level of support is required for student success? How do you know? What skills do they currently have? How can we plan and support the generalization of skills to develop greater independence? What plan is in place to reduce the level of support? Consideration for peer or solo ridership based on the significance of needs (supported by data). Where appropriate a plan is established to reduce support and increase independence.

Transportation should be provided in the most inclusive/ least restrictive environment. Transportation should always discuss whether a student can be safely transported with regular student transportation. Where it is deemed appropriate, students may require alternative transportation. Data collection, program planning, and monitoring is an integral component to reduce the level of support and increase the independence of students.

DSTS—mTransport

DSTS, in partnership with its member school boards, has introduced a student transportation card system building towards all school bus vehicles. This system, known as mTransport, enables students to scan a QR code transportation card at a tablet reader when boarding and exiting the bus. Each scan records the student's presence on the vehicle, along with the corresponding time and location.

mTransport serves as an important communication tool between DSTS, school bus operators, and schools. Through the Family Portal, families have the option to receive notifications regarding the estimated arrival time of their child's bus, as well as alerts when their child taps their card upon boarding or disembarking. In the event of an emergency, the system provides authorities with rapid access to accurate passenger manifest information.

Transportation cards are issued by DSTS to students who meet transportation eligibility criteria and are distributed through their schools.

Within the 2025-2026 school year, implementation extends to 18 passenger school buses. DSTS will engage with schools to begin issuing transportation cards to eligible students. The process will include collaboration with school staff to determine which students can independently use the cards and to identify any necessary support, training or transitional measures. Students may alternatively opt to download a QR code to a personal phone or tablet.

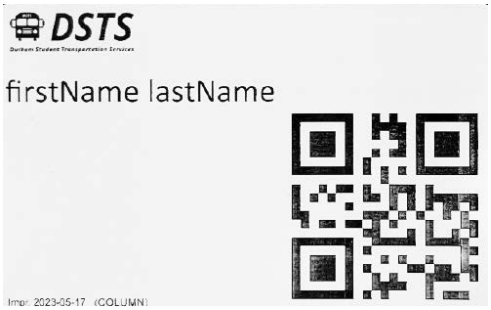
Tips for Elementary Students:

Please see intended set up below on how to properly affix the card. One reel and card holder will be provided by DSTS for elementary students. If desired, parents can black out the name on the card for further privacy as only the DSTS transportation card code is required for the tablet.



Tips for Secondary Students:

Secondary students will be provided with a physical card. A photo of the DSTS transportation card code on a student's personal device for scanning is the preferred method.



For more information about the mTransport system, please visit dsts.on.ca

Additional Information and Resources

DSTS mTransport Bus Technology Introduction Flyer

mTransport Parent Information Sheet

DSTS Replacement Cards and mTransport App Email Registration

Card Set up for Elementary Students

Card Set up For Secondary Students

Elementary Resources

Secondary Resources



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