



SD 57 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PARENT HANDBOOK

Inclusion describes the principle that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their educational programs. (BC MOE)



Inclusive Education Department
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The Inclusive Education Service delivery model is based upon the Continuum of Support AND the following principles.

Inclusive Education is:

An integrated system of support and resources for all students

- Support and resources for all students can be obtained within one integrated system. An integrated system recognizes the expertise of school-based staff, and district specialists, in addressing the needs of all students, including those with identified learning and behavioral challenges. Supports may differ for individuals and groups, but the supports provided are premised by the early identification of student needs.

An inclusionary model of school attendance

- All students have the opportunity to be included with their peers in their home catchment areas, and with the necessary essential supports and resources in place at their local school. However, this inclusionary model of school attendance does not imply total or full integration for all students at all times. Some students require significant accommodation and adaptation with respect to their learning environment at school and within the community.

Shared decision making and collaboration

- It is necessary to maintain a district focus while at the same time permit flexibility and school-based decision-making. Decisions made in schools concerning programs and services available to students are governed by the values, mission and vision outlined by the Board of School Trustees. Communication and collaboration are critical in ensuring the engagement and commitment of staff, students, and parent/legal guardians.

An emphasis on developing a student profile for educational decision-making

- All students benefit from the development of a student profile that focuses less on labeling and categorization and more on the determination of programming needs and the provision of effective interventions. Direct and frequent progress monitoring of student performance leads to informed decision-making and strategic interventions for students with special educational needs.

A proactive approach to service delivery that focuses on prevention and early intervention

- A proactive approach, and a continuum of support, with a focus on prevention and early intervention, will have a greater potential for meeting the daily academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs of all students.

Home and school collaboration in educational decision-making and delivery of services

- Home and school collaboration implies that caregivers and educators form a partnership for the purpose of working toward mutually defined academic, behavioral, social, and emotional goals.
- In today's schools, change is a common experience. It is important to acknowledge that when a change in practice occurs, individuals (i.e. teachers, education assistants, youth care workers, parent/legal guardians, principal/vice- principals, specialists) and school communities may enter the process at different stages and proceed at different rates. Networks for promoting effective communication, training, and skill development must be established and maintained. At the base of the process for change is the overarching goal of improving educational services to all students.

Continuum of Support SD No. 57– Meeting the Needs of all Children

Continuum of Support



The following description and accompanying graphic provide a framework for a comprehensive service delivery system to support and address the needs of students within School District No. 57. The Continuum of Support is a collaborative model that promotes partnerships amongst students, parent/legal guardians, teachers, school and district staff, and community agencies. The Continuum of Support describes the process that should occur in prevention, early intervention, and programming for all students.

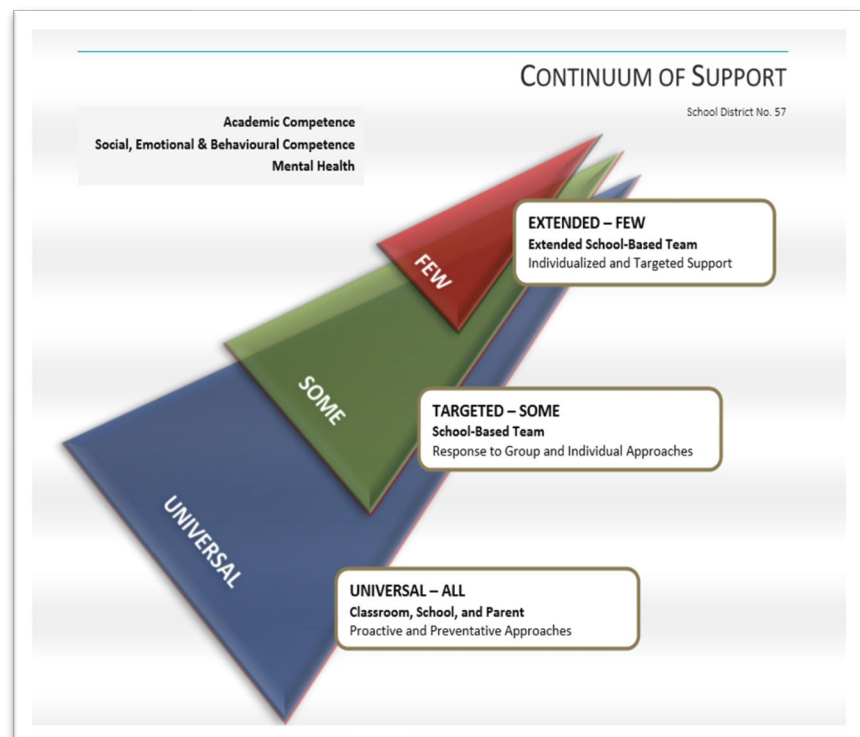
The Continuum of Support focusses on the collaboration necessary to improve the learning of all students and to close achievement gaps for struggling learners. It's grounded in research from Response to Intervention (RTI), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Differentiated Instruction (DI) and Inclusive Education. This identifies teacher collaboration, sharing of effective instructional practices, and problem solving as critical factors for improving student learning. The Continuum of Support maximizes the success and independence of all learners.

The Continuum of Support is a systematic collaborative process of planning and generating probable solutions to mutually defined problems with the goal of providing comprehensive and effective intervention.

The Continuum of Support empowers educators to align essential learning outcomes, use reflective inquiry to identify the most effective instructional practices, develop a culture of collaboration, and provide proactive interventions to prevent students from falling behind academically, behaviourally, socially, and emotionally.

The Continuum of Support reinforces the belief that all students:

- can learn at optimal levels
- are encouraged to reach their full potential
- learn in different ways, at different rates and in different places
- are engaged in enriching and challenging programs
- have the right to appropriate educational programming and required supports
- are provided equitable access to all areas of the curriculum
- come from diverse backgrounds and want their differences to be respected
- want to be recognized and acknowledged for personal achievements



To be inclusive, at all levels of the Continuum of Support consideration is given to recognizing:

- Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction
- the strengths of individual students
- supports that build upon the individual students' strengths
- the classroom as the primary site of educational programs
- a sense of safety and belonging within the school community
- clear and tangible supports for the classroom teacher
- recognition and celebration of the teaching-learning process
- decision making through collaboration
- the importance of effective communication
- parent/legal guardian involvement is essential
- home, school and community partnerships

Universal (Tier 1) – Supports for All

School-based plans that includes:

- creating a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment
- assessment strategies
- supports (e.g., universal, targeted and individualized)
- processes for collaboration
- processes for development, communication and monitoring of individual support plans
- assesses the performance of all students

Classroom plans that include:

- initiating in-depth, systematic classroom observation and evaluation
- introducing variations in instructional approaches and evaluating the success of these teaching techniques and instructional materials
- collaborating with the parent/legal guardian and, when appropriate, the student regarding concerns and progress
- requests for recent screening of vision (within a year), hearing, or other health concerns that may contribute to challenges with learning

Universal Strategies and Supports

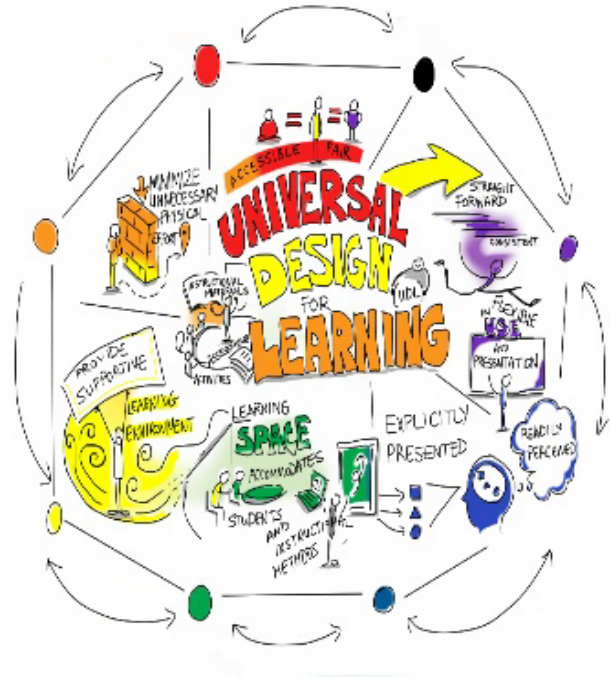
The Continuum of Support represents strategies and supports that will benefit and meet the educational needs of most students in the school. These universal supports are based upon the concept of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL is an educational approach that benefits all students by reducing barriers to learning and addressing the different learning needs of students.

Universal supports include:

- anticipating and valuing diversity
- welcoming and caring learning environments
- promoting positive mental health
- differentiated instruction
- assessment for learning
- access to learning technologies
- supports for positive behavior

Targeted (Tier 2) - Supports for Some

Tier 2 is an assessment and intervention process, which is usually coordinated by the support teacher and/or learning assistance teacher working alongside the classroom teacher and other members of the school-based team. Interventions at this stage will be additional to those provided through classroom and whole school support.



Who is on my Child's School Based Team?

The collaborative school based team usually includes the following people:

- the principal
- the classroom teacher
- a learning assistance or resource teacher
- other specialists such as school counsellors

What does my child's School Based Team do?

This group meets to support classroom teachers in meeting the needs of students with special needs. When a teacher has a concern, the team meets to collaboratively problem solve and develop an action plan. The team may provide consultation on instructional or classroom management strategies, planning and coordination of services for a student, or access to additional school, district, community or regional agencies.

Tier 2 describes a more targeted set of supports and interventions for a smaller number of students.

These supports might include:

- flexible groupings
- supplemental instruction
- opportunities for additional practice
- small group social skills instruction (e.g. conflict resolution)

Extended (Tier 3) – Supports for Few

Tier 3 is characterized by collaboration with members of the Extended School Based Team. The Extended School Based Team includes the members of the School Based Team in addition to other specialists from Inclusive Education, which may include an Occupational Therapist (OT), a School Psychologist, a Speech Language Pathologist, a teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, a Teacher for students who are visually impaired, and a Mental Health Clinician. This level of intervention is for children with complex and/or persistent learning needs whose progress is considered inadequate despite carefully planned, implemented and monitored Tier 1 and 2 interventions. Collaboration at this level provides an opportunity to utilize the expertise of the Inclusive Education Department staff to review the current interventions and provide further assistance.

This review may lead toward renewed intervention planning within the context of existing school resources. An extended school-based team is generally comprised of the school-based team with the addition of district staff.

This level of **intensive** and **individualized** support includes:

- a review of prior interventions/accommodations
- systematic review and re-analysis of prior problem-solving efforts (considers multiple assessment procedures of review including interview, observation, testing of learning, and aspects of instruction, curriculum, and environment)
- evidence of response to Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions (i.e. ongoing classroom and school-based assessment and non-responsiveness of a student to interventions).
- determination of the magnitude and pervasiveness of the problem

School-based Team (SBT) and Extended School-based Team (ESBT) members build a shared understanding of a student's

Academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs to:

- determine root causes for academic, behavioral, social, and emotional concerns
- choose evidence-based supports or interventions to address specific academic or social-emotional concerns
- select supports or interventions and monitor them for results and make changes to supports and interventions in response to student progress



Continuum of Support Flowchart

TIER 1 - UNIVERSAL

Problem Identification at classroom/school-wide

- teacher starts a student profile (observations, testing, work samples)
- teacher discusses concerns with parent/legal guardian and student (if appropriate) – learning, giftedness, attention, social, emotional, behavior, speech, language, communication
- file review completed
- teacher inquiries about the student’s physical health: vision, hearing, allergies/asthma, diet, sleep patterns, recent physical exam
- clarify the problem, select one or two areas of concern and implement strategies to develop positive alternatives
- allow enough time to determine if the intervention is successful (e.g. six to eight weeks)
- adaptations made to curriculum (including enrichment opportunities) and/or environment (see adaptations checklist)
- document adaptations/interventions including frequency and duration
- **share student response or lack of response to interventions at SBT meeting**

TIER 2 - TARGETED

School-Based Team (SBT) Meeting

- present student at SBT; share work samples, discuss current intervention strategies
- strategies and interventions need to have been tried and data collected for discussion
- monitor/document interventions and progress; discuss at the review date
- allow enough time to determine if the intervention is promoting success (e.g. six to eight weeks)
- possible outcomes:
 - School-based support and interventions:
 - learning Assistance (LA) support - increase supports as needed
 - additional/different classroom strategies/interventions
 - school based counselling
 - support from an Educational Assistant (EA) or Youth Care Worker (YCW)
 - support from an Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW)
 - student returns to SBT for further school-based collaboration
 - **when school resources have been exhausted and student remains unresponsive, the student may be referred to ESBT for further collaboration**

TIER 3 – EXTENDED

Extended School-Based Team Meeting

- to collaborate with school based and Inclusive Education Department staff members
- to develop and implement strategies/interventions
- to coordinate support for students based on information gathered at Tier 1 (Classroom) and Tier 2 (SBT) of the Continuum of Support
- **attendees** include: SBT (principal / vice-principal, classroom teacher, support teacher), Speech & Language Pathologists, School Psychologists, District Resource Teachers, and possibly - OT/PT, Vision/Hearing Resource Teachers, Hospital/Homebound Teachers)
- systematic review and re-analysis of prior problem-solving efforts (consider multiple assessment procedures of review, interview, observation, testing of multiple domains of the learner, instruction, curriculum, environment)
- evidence of Response to Intervention (RTI) – i.e. ongoing school-based assessment and non-responsiveness of a student to interventions
- discuss possible strategies and intervention
- possible outcomes
 - potential for referral and consent to a specific Inclusive Education Department staff, if they decide appropriate clinical decision
 - revisit and potentially intensify school-based supports and interventions
 - revisit and try new interventions and support
 - referral to a physician or community specialist

Special Education Services: BC Education at a Glance

The table below outlines the roles and responsibilities for some individuals involved in your child's education.

Category A	Physically Dependent
Category B	Deaf/Blind
Category C	Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability
Category D	Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment
Category E	Visual Impairment
Category F	Deaf or Hard of Hearing
Category G	Autism
Category H	Students Requiring Intensive Behavior Intervention or Students with Serious Mental Illness
Category K	Mild Intellectual Disability
Category P	Gifted
Category Q	Learning Disability
Category R	Students Requiring Moderate Behavior Support or Student's with Mental Illness

Ministry of Education Categorical Designations of Students with Special Needs (1701)

This section is to support an understanding of the BC Ministry of Education's process of identification of students with diverse abilities. This section also explains the designation process used in School District No. 57.

Students formally designated as individuals with special needs have disabilities that are intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional, or behavioral in nature. Additionally, students with special needs may have a learning disability, or possess exceptional gifts or talents. Special educational needs are those characteristics, which make it necessary to provide a student undertaking an educational program with resources that may be different from those which are typically required by most students. Special educational needs are identified during the assessment of a student; and they are the basis for determining an appropriate educational program (including necessary resources) for that student. In cases where students with special needs have been identified prior to enrolment, or when students have obvious and severe special needs, which have not been previously identified, the school-based team should respond promptly to a teacher's request for additional planning and intervention.

Special needs categories are established to assist school districts in identifying the needs of students and providing appropriate educational programming. For example, a student who is hard of hearing should receive the appropriate services, regardless of the cause of the hearing impairment. Similarly, if a student presents atypical behaviors or intellectual impairment, it is the intensity of the disability and the interventions provided that dictate the category in which the student is reported.

Students will be identified according to the following Ministry of Education guidelines as outlined in the Special Education Services Manual (p.40):

- The current 'categorical' system is not intended to specifically identify all medically diagnosed conditions and syndromes that may have an impact on the student's needs and educational program.
- A medical diagnosis by itself does not determine the appropriate special needs category or service required.
- Identifying and reporting students should involve careful determination of the nature, extent and impact of their disabling condition(s) and the nature and extent of educational interventions required.

Category A - Physically Dependent

Definition

A student with dependent needs is completely dependent on others for meeting all major daily living needs. They will require assistance at all times for feeding, dressing, toileting, mobility and personal hygiene. Without such assistance and personal care support, attendance at school would not be possible.

Some students are born with conditions or disabilities that make them dependent, while others acquire conditions or disabilities. For some students, increasing independence as they learn, and grow is a reasonable expectation. For other students, decreasing independence may occur due to degenerative conditions or terminal illness.

Identification and Assessment

Assessments should integrate current, relevant information related to their intellectual, social/emotional, sensory, physical and communicative abilities, as well as their ability to perform activities of daily living at school. There must be an Individual Education Plan that recognizes the broad range of intellectual abilities of the student, and that addresses the specific educational, health and personal care needs as well as the strategies to address those needs. Developing an appropriate plan for a student with multiple needs frequently requires input from several specialists who are not typically part of a school-based team. Careful documentation and clear procedures are required to address the health needs of these students while in school.

Category B- DeafBlind

Definition

A student with deafblindness has a degree of visual and auditory impairment which, when compounded, results in significant difficulties in developing communicative, educational, vocational, avocational, and social skills. To be considered deafblind the student's vision and auditory impairments can range from partial sight to total blindness and from moderate to profound hearing loss.

Identification and Assessment

Districts should have current information that describes the sensory acuities (vision and hearing), physical development, orientation and mobility (skills and knowledge), social development, academic abilities, educational achievement, and communicative competence of students who are Deafblind. This information is best obtained for students who are Deafblind through a multidisciplinary assessment process.

Category C and K - Intellectual Disabilities

Definition

Students with intellectual disabilities have general intellectual functioning significantly below the mean, as well as significant limitations in adaptive functioning in at least two of the following skill areas as appropriate to the student's age: communication, self-care, home living, social/interpersonal skills, and use of community resources, self-direction, functional academic skills, work, leisure, health and safety.

Students can experience intellectual disabilities across a range: mild to profound. A diagnosis of intellectual disability should only be made when a student has significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive functioning.

Identification and Assessment

A student with an intellectual disability will often be identified before entering the school system. For students with a mild intellectual disability, however, difficulties with adaptive behavior may not have been previously documented. A psycho- educational assessment will be used to determine a student's level of functioning and should be based on a variety of measures of intellectual ability and adaptive behavior, as well as information from the family and, where available, other service providers.

Category D - Physical Disabilities or Chronic Health Impairments

Definition

A student is considered to have a physical disability or chronic health impairment based on the need for special educational services due to one or more of the following:

- nervous system impairment that impacts movement or mobility
- musculoskeletal condition
- chronic health impairment that seriously impacts students' education and achievement

A medical diagnosis, by itself, does not determine the need for special educational services by students with physical disabilities or chronic health impairments.

Students are only eligible for funding in this category if their functioning and education is significantly affected by their physical disabilities or chronic health impairments. Two students with the same physical disability may have very different levels of need. For example, one student with cerebral palsy may be seriously impaired in mobility, independence, cognitive ability and using a wheelchair, while another student with the same diagnosis may participate completely independently in a regular education program.

In some cases, students diagnosed through the Complex Developmental Behavioral Conditions (CDBC) (*see Glossary for more information*) Network as children and youth with complex needs may be included in this category. Regionally, the CDBC Network has been established to assess children and youth with complex needs, including children and youth who may have fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD). A clinical diagnostic assessment by the CDBC Network or by qualified specialists (psychiatrist, registered psychologist with specialized training, or medical professional specializing in developmental disorder) is required. The assessment must include and integrate information from multiple sources and various professions from different disciplines that indicates the student with FASD or the complex developmental behavioral conditions is exhibiting an array of complex needs, with two or more domains being affected (social emotional functioning, communication, physical functioning, self-determination/independence, and academic/intellectual functioning). If reported in this category, such students might be receiving extensive intervention and support.

Identification and Assessment

Assessments should integrate current, relevant information related to the student's intellectual, social/emotional, sensory, physical and communicative abilities as well as his or her ability to perform activities of daily living at school. Individual Education Plans should consider specific health care and personal care needs and outline specific strategies to address those needs. An extended school-based team would typically include medical professionals and consultation with parents in order to develop and implement an effective Individual Education Plan (*IEP*; see page 36 for more information on an *IEP*).

Category E - Visual Impairments (CAT E)

Definition

Visual impairment is a generic term that covers a range of difficulties with vision and includes the following categories: blind, legally blind, partially sighted, low vision, and cortically visually impaired.

For educational purposes, a student with visual impairment is one whose visual acuity is not sufficient for the student to participate with ease in everyday activities. The impairment interferes with optimal learning and achievement and can result in a substantial educational disadvantage, unless adaptations are made in the methods of presenting learning opportunities, the nature of the materials used and/or the learning environment. It is not intended to include students described as having visual perceptual difficulties unless they also have a vision loss as described below.

Identification and Assessment

Schools personnel should recommend to parents that their child see an Optometrist whenever they suspect a student is having trouble or is having trouble learning which may be due to vision problems.

General health information about school-age children and their eyes is available at the following website: <http://www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/hfile53b.stm>. Health Authorities vary in the services they provide in communities to identify vision problems in young children. A case finding approach that identifies children who may be at risk is preferable to annual screenings.

School districts should develop and implement referral procedures to ensure that every visually impaired student is identified and receives an appropriate educational program. In order to plan the educational program, the teacher of the visually impaired should conduct functional vision and learning media assessment to identify the educational implications of the student's vision loss. In the case of students with a severe visual impairment, a qualified orientation and mobility instructor should also assess the students' skills in orientation and mobility.

Category F - Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Definition

A student considered to be deaf or hard of hearing is one who has a medically diagnosed hearing loss that results in a substantial educational difficulty.

A student who is deaf or hard of hearing has an audiological assessment by an audiologist that affirms a bilateral hearing loss, a unilateral loss with significant speech/language delay, or a cochlear implant. Students with a diagnosis of central auditory processing dysfunction are not considered for this category unless there is an additional diagnosis of peripheral hearing loss.

In general, the support needs of students with unilateral hearing loss can be managed by classroom adaptations. A student with a unilateral hearing loss should not be reported for funding unless the hearing loss is moderate to profound (the affected ear has a pure tone average loss of 50 dB or greater for the frequencies 500 Hz to 4000 Hz) and there is evidence of support from a qualified educational professional.

A student with educationally significant problems, which are directly attributable to the unilateral hearing loss, may only be reported in this category if qualified personnel conduct an assessment annually to provide evidence that the hearing loss seriously affects the student's education. The assessment typically includes audiology, speech language, communication, and/or social skills development.

Identification and Assessment

Most children with significant hearing loss will have been identified through an audiological assessment prior to entering the school system. Any student referred for special education services during his or her school career should be referred for a hearing assessment in order to determine whether an intermittent or chronic hearing loss is the primary cause of any exhibited learning or behavioral problem.

Hearing loss is generally measured in terms of decibel loss using standards agreed on internationally. However, decibel losses do not always correlate with educational implications and are therefore not a sole criterion for determination of need for educational intervention. Following the identification of a student's hearing loss an assessment to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the student in the areas of language development and communication skills may be required. This assessment, usually administered by a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing, may include the administration of standardized tests in the areas of ability and achievement, as well as curriculum-based assessment and observation and teacher reports. Program planning decisions and recommendations for placement of the student in a specific program should occur only once a full assessment has been completed.

A critical part of the assessment process is determining the method of communication to be used in the educational setting. The Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport and Ministry of Health will select assistive living equipment from a set list of available equipment. The Ministry of Education, through the Auditory Outreach Program, is responsible for maintaining this list and making it available to the health authority

audiologist for selection. Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport and Ministry of Health will provide hearing aid selection, fitting, verification and monitoring services. Ministry of Education, through its boards of education and participating independent school authorities may monitor remote microphone hearing assistance technology in accordance with best practices on the Board of Hearing Aid Dealers.

Category G - Autism Spectrum Disorder

Definition

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a term used to describe a group of lifelong neurodevelopmental disabilities characterized by the manifestation of behavioral characteristics across multiple areas of functioning. ASD is defined and diagnosed through the observation of behaviors. Characteristics are observed, in varying degrees, in social relationships, communicative competence, pattern and range of interests, and sensory responsiveness. The impact of ASD can range from mild to severe and may improve or change across an individual's life.

Students with ASD exhibit impairments in:

- communication
- reciprocal social interaction
- restricted repetitive patterns of interests and behaviors

The Ministry of Education uses the definition of ASD as defined in the Standards and Guidelines for the Assessment and Diagnosis of Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in British Columbia, produced by the Ministry of Health. ASD includes all of the following:

- Autistic Disorder
- PDD-NOS/Atypical Autism
- Asperger Disorder/Syndrome
- Rhett Syndrome
- Childhood Disintegrative Disorder

Identification and Assessment

On January 1, 2004, the Province introduced Standards and Guidelines for the Assessment and Diagnosis of Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in British Columbia that govern the identification and assessment of students under the age of six for a diagnosis of autism. The Ministry of Education adopted these Standards.

The Standards require that a clinical diagnostic assessment, undertaken after January 1, 2004 must be conducted by a qualified specialist (registered psychologist, pediatrician, neurologist or psychiatrist) with broad experience in diagnosing children with autism and developmental disabilities. The assessment must include and integrate information from multiple sources and various professions from different disciplines. Assessment must include psychological assessment of cognitive level and adaptive functioning using standardized norm-referenced instruments; a comprehensive speech-language- communication evaluation using standardized norm-referenced instruments; and a comprehensive medical evaluation by a pediatrician including a detailed physical exam and appropriate laboratory investigations. Additional assessments may include occupational therapy assessment, psychiatric assessment or other specialty assessment as indicated.

Category H – Students Requiring Intensive Behavior Intervention or Students with Serious Mental Illness

Definitions

Students who require behavior supports are students, whose behaviors reflect dysfunctional interactions between the student and one or more elements of the environment, including the classroom, school, family, peers and community. This is commonly referred to as behavior disorders. Behavior disorders vary in their severity and effect on learning, interpersonal relations and personal adjustment.

Students identified in this category are those most in need of intensive interventions. They are expected to be less than one percent (1%) of the student population province wide. These students should have access to coordinated school/community interventions, which are based on inter-service/agency assessment processes that are required to manage, educate, and maintain the students in school and in their community.

Identification and Assessment

The process of identification and assessment of students with behavior disorders or mental illness sometimes begins at the classroom level, although these students are often identified in the community by mental health professionals. To be identified in this category, the behaviors in question should not be transitory but should generalize to different settings and individuals.

When teachers first notice a problem, they will consult with the parents and attempt alternate strategies to manage the behavior or support the student in the classroom. If these prove unsuccessful, the teacher may seek assistance from other school-based services or from the school-based team. The teacher's observations should be incorporated into an identification and assessment process for educational purposes, as should the assessments of other professionals.

The school-based team may access other school or district support services, and/or request additional assessment. It may also be appropriate at this stage to involve the family's physician, child and youth mental health services, or other community agencies in the identification and intervention process.

Assessment should:

- analyze the student's functional behaviors in various settings and with different people who regularly are a part of her/his environment (functional behavior assessment)
- integrate information from the different aspects of a student's life
- focus on strengths as well as needs
- rule out or address other conditions which may be precipitating or contributing to the behavior (e.g., hearing loss, learning disabilities, side-effects of medication)
- clarify the characteristics of the behavior disorder or mental illness
- address the possibility of other medical or health impairments
- contribute to the process of planning and evaluating the student's educational program

The findings of the assessment should be used to plan support, interventions, and services needed by the student.

Category P - Gifted

Definition

A student is considered gifted when they possess demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of exceptionally high capability with respect to intellect, creativity, or the skills associated with specific disciplines. Students who are gifted often demonstrate outstanding abilities in more than one area. They may demonstrate extraordinary intensity of focus in their particular areas of talent or interest. However, they may also have accompanying disabilities and should not be expected to have strengths in all areas of intellectual functioning.

Identification and Assessment

Early identification of students who are gifted is an important element in planning and delivering appropriate educational programs for these students. Some gifted students whose abilities are not identified and addressed early may exhibit secondary emotional and behavioral difficulties. District screening and identification procedures should be in place to ensure consistency of access to programs designed to support gifted students. Every effort should be made to ensure that screening and identification procedures are unbiased with respect to language, culture, gender, physical ability, learning or other disability.

No single criterion should be established for access to or exclusion from services for students who are gifted. Rather, identification and assessment should be carried out using multiple criteria and information from a variety of sources, all of which are valid components for identification. These should include several of the following:

- teacher observations including anecdotal records, checklists, and inventories
- records of student achievement including assignments, portfolios, grades and outstanding talents, interests and accomplishments
- nominations by educators, parents, peers and/or self
- interview of parents and students
- formal assessments to Level C of cognitive ability, achievement, aptitude and creativity

A student who is talented in areas other than academics should also have an assessment of intellectual abilities, as it is important information for educational planning.

Category Q - Learning Disabilities

Definition

In May 2002, the Ministry of Education adopted the following definition of learning disabilities, adapted from the definition developed by the Canadian Learning Disabilities Association (January 2002).

Learning disabilities refers to a number of disorders that may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding or use of verbal or nonverbal information. These disorders affect learning in individuals who otherwise demonstrate at least average abilities essential for thinking and/or reasoning. As such, learning disabilities are distinct from global intellectual disabilities.

Learning disabilities result from impairments in one or more processes related to perceiving, thinking, remembering or learning. These include, but are not limited to language processing, phonological processing, visual spatial processing, processing speed, memory and attention, and executive functions (e.g. planning and decision-making).

Learning disabilities range in severity and may interfere with the acquisition and use of one or more of the following:

- Oral language (e.g., listening, speaking, understanding)
- Reading (e.g., decoding, phonetic knowledge, word recognition, comprehension)
- Written language (e.g., spelling and written expression)
- Mathematics (e.g., computation, problem solving)

Learning disabilities may also involve difficulties with organizational skills, social perception, social interaction and perspective taking. Learning disabilities are lifelong. The way in which they are expressed may vary over an individual's lifetime, depending on the interaction between the demands of the environment and the individual's strengths and needs. Learning disabilities are suggested by unexpected academic under-achievement or achievement that is maintained only by unusually high levels of effort and support.

Learning disabilities are due to genetic and/or neurological factors or injury that alters brain function in a manner that affects one or more processes related to learning. These disorders are not due primarily to hearing and/or vision problems, social-economic factors, cultural or linguistic differences, lack of motivation, inadequate or insufficient instruction, although these factors may further complicate the challenges faced by individuals with learning disabilities. Learning disabilities may co-exist with other disorders such as attentional, behavioral or emotional disorders, sensory impairments, or other medical conditions.

Identification and Assessment

Schools and school boards are responsible for assessing students for planning instruction and support services and for identifying students with special needs.

Students with learning disabilities may not demonstrate obvious special needs before entering the school system. Due to their ability to perform well in some areas, academic difficulties may be misunderstood and viewed as lack of motivation until the learning disabilities are identified.

Identifying learning disabilities as early as possible can facilitate early intervention and may minimize ongoing learning difficulties. Due to the variations among learning disabilities, students demonstrate a range of patterns of difficulties and strengths. As a result, learning disabilities may be identified at a various stages of the student's school life. Identifying learning disabilities requires multiple sources of both formal and informal assessment information. Ability, academic achievement and cognitive processes should be addressed through systematic documentation of the student's classroom performance and response to varying instructional approaches as well as through standardized measurement.

A process of systematic assessment and documentation identifies students with learning disabilities based on their:

1. Persistent difficulty learning and
2. Average or above average cognitive ability and
3. Weaknesses in cognitive processing.

Persistent Difficulty Learning

The student's opportunity to learn is a primary consideration in identifying learning disabilities. Persistent difficulty refers to restricted progress that cannot be explained by inadequate attendance, cultural or linguistic differences, sensory deficits, social emotional factors, health issues and/or poor/insufficient instruction. Current research describes persistent academic difficulties as inadequate response to instruction or intervention.

Learning disabilities may be suspected when a student has had appropriate opportunities to learn but has not demonstrated expected progress toward learning outcomes related to:

- oral language development (listening, speaking, understanding)
- acquisition of pre-academic skills such as recognition of letters and numbers in the early primary years
- acquisition of reading, written language, and/or numeracy
- retention, organization, understanding or use of verbal and/or non-verbal information (e.g. demonstrating organizational skills, using symbols understanding visual aids, applying/generalizing learning)

Evidence of persistent learning difficulties may include curriculum-based assessment, standardized achievement tests and/or portfolios of student work. Assessment data should document systematic attempts to address the student's difficulty through instructional adaptations as well as the extent of the student's ongoing difficulties in spite of the variations in instructional approaches.

Average or Above Average Cognitive Ability

Another way to estimate cognitive ability is to use a battery of norm-referenced measures, commonly known as level B

tests, to assess academic skills that depend upon the student's ability to reason. Such measures might be focused on mathematical problem-solving, reading comprehension, written expression and listening comprehension. Not all tests that focus on these skills can be assumed to yield a valid estimate of ability. If academic measures are used to estimate ability, school boards should ensure that the measures employed are appropriate for this purpose. The use of more than one measure is important.

Students with average or above potential will score at or above one standard deviation below the mean for their age on standardized tests.

Weaknesses in Cognitive Processing

Students with learning disabilities have impairments to processes related to perceiving, thinking, remembering or learning.

Their learning difficulties may arise from deficits in various aspects of:

- attention
- language, phonological and/or visual-spatial processing
- processing speed
- memory, and/or
- executive functions (e.g., planning and decision-making)

Identifying a student's processing difficulties provides an explanation for academic difficulties and facilitates the implementation of appropriate instructional approaches that may enable the student to demonstrate improved progress.

Social-emotional status should also be considered when investigating possible learning disabilities.

- Students with learning disabilities may demonstrate social problems as the result of their deficits in perceiving or processing visual clues and/or some aspects of language. These may appear as difficulties with social perception, social interaction and perspective taking.
- Students may develop emotional difficulties, with or without social problems as the result of frustration and self-esteem issues developing secondary to their learning disabilities.
- Some students with average ability who do not have learning disabilities may demonstrate persistent difficulty learning due to stress associated with neglect, abuse, family upheaval, trauma, or other social problems.

Specialized assessment is required for formal diagnosis of learning disabilities. Level B and Level C assessments must be conducted by appropriately qualified professionals who can interpret results considering the student's opportunities for learning, learning patterns, approach to tasks and response to instruction.

In some cases, learning disabilities may be identified in clinical settings. The assessment may be multidisciplinary, supplementing psycho-educational assessment with information from the speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist or other medical personnel.

Assessment of a student to identify a learning disability should integrate information from a number of sources including the family, classroom teacher, counsellors (if involved), learning assistance or support records, formal student records, and any relevant medical reports (such as OT, PT, SLP), in addition to current test results.

Category R – Students Requiring Moderate Behavioral Support with Mental Illness

Definition

Students can experience behavior, social/emotional, or mental health problems that range from mild to serious. Most students with social/emotional difficulties can be supported in school through regular discipline, counselling, and school-based services. A smaller number of students require more intensive support.

Students who require behavior supports are students, whose behaviors reflect dysfunctional interactions between the student and one or more elements of the environment, including the classroom, school, family, peers and community. This is commonly referred to as behavior disorders. Behavior disorders vary in their severity and effect on learning, interpersonal relations and personal adjustment.

Students Requiring Moderate Behavior Support or Students with Mental Illness Students who require Moderate Behavior Support demonstrate one or more of the following:

- behaviors such as aggression (of a physical, emotional or sexual nature) and/or hyperactivity
- behaviors related to social problems such as delinquency, substance abuse, child abuse or neglect

Students with Mental Illness are students who have been diagnosed by a qualified mental health clinician as having a mental health disorder. Students with mental illness demonstrate one or more of the following:

- negative or undesirable internalized psychological states such as anxiety, stress-related disorders, and depression
- behaviors related to disabling conditions, such as thought disorders or neurological or physiological conditions

To be identified in the category Moderate Behavior Support or Mental Illness, students must also meet the following criteria:

- the frequency or severity of the behaviors or negative internalized states have a very disruptive effect on the classroom learning environment, social relations or personal adjustment
- they demonstrate the above behavior(s) or conditions over an extended period of time, in more than one setting and with more than one person (teachers, peers)
- they have not responded to support provided through normal school discipline and classroom management strategies

Identification and Assessment

The process of identification and assessment of students with behavior disorders or mental illness sometimes begins at the classroom level, although these students are often identified in the community by mental health professionals. To be identified in this category, the behaviors in question should not be transitory but should generalize to different settings and individuals.

When teachers first notice a problem, they will consult with the parents and attempt alternate strategies to manage the behavior or support the student in the classroom. If these prove unsuccessful, the teacher may seek assistance from other school-based services or from the school-based team. The teacher's observations should be incorporated into an identification and assessment process for educational purposes, as should the assessments of other professionals.

The school-based team may access other school or district support services, and/or request additional assessment. It may also be appropriate at this stage to involve the family's physician, child and youth mental health services, or other community agencies in the identification and intervention process.

The findings of the assessment should be used to plan support, interventions, and services needed by the student.

Who is able to provide my child with a diagnosis and designation?

	Category	Examples of trained specialists who can provide diagnosis
A	Physically Dependent	BC Children's Hospital/Sunny Hill
B	Deaf/Blind	Ophthalmologist and Audiologist
C	Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability	School Psychologist Clinical Psychologist
D	Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment	Family Physician and/or Pediatrician (e.g. diabetes) NHAN (CDBC)
E	Visual Impairment	Ophthalmologist
F	Deaf or Hard of Hearing	Audiologist
G	Autism	BCAAN, NHAN, Clinicians in Private Practice
H	Intensive Behavior Intervention/ Serious Mental Illness	Psychiatrist (mental health)
K	Mild Intellectual Disability	School or Clinical Psychologist
P	Gifted	School or Clinical Psychologist
Q	Learning Disability	School or Clinical Psychologist
R	Moderate Behavior Support/Mental Illness	Psychiatrist (mental health)

What is the process in receiving a psychoeducational assessment in SD57?

School Psychologist Service Priorities (as per Ministry of Education guidelines)

Priority 1:

Transition for young adults with intellectual disabilities (Category K and C), as per the inter-ministerial agreement for individuals with developmental disorders, or extremely low adaptive functioning in the case of individuals with FASD (Category D) and Autism (Category G) – the year in which the student turns 16 years old. This includes consultation meetings with parents who need help accessing services.

Priority 2:

Grade 7 students who have already been identified in their initial assessments where the initial assessment is 3 years old or older. These include students in category C, K, Q (in some cases D and G)

Once the first two priorities are completed district wide, the focus will be on:

Priority 3:

Students who are suspected of having a learning or intellectual disability (Category Q, K and C) as determined by the district problem solving process.

Priority 4:

Seasonal priorities – Kindergarten Transition from April to June.

Priority 5:

Grade 12 students enrolled in post-secondary education who have a current designation of Category Q.



District Psycho-Educational Assessment Priorities Grid

Classification	Initial Assessment	Re-Assessment
Mild, Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities	Grade 4	Ideally Grade 7 – however, could be as late as grade 9 or beyond
	Prior to grade 4	MUST be re-assessed prior to entering high school
	Grade 5 through 7	Grade 10
	Grade 10 through 12	Reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and re-assessed if deemed a requirement to support life outside of education.
Learning Disabilities	Grade 4 or earlier	Ideally grade 7
	Grade 5 through 6	Ideally 4 years post initial assessment
	Grade 7 through 12	Reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and re-assessed if deemed a requirement to support life outside of education.

More about Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting

Introduction to Assessment

Assessment is an ongoing process of collecting data to guide teaching instruction and to evaluate student learning. Assessment is a collaborative process that may involve the student, parents, school staff, and community agencies. Assessments help teachers identify strengths and needs for the purposes of determining what educational interventions would be most appropriate for a student.

The reasons why students are assessed vary considerably across the educational community. Teachers use assessment results to determine instructional needs, select appropriate curriculum, evaluate instructional programs, and make evidence-based decisions about student progress and advancement. Parent/legal guardians use assessment results to find out how well their children are doing and to decide what they need to do to support their learning. Students look for feedback on whether, and how well, they have learned what has been taught. Principal/vice-principals use assessment information to determine program placements, consider funding or resource allocations, and as a basis for school improvements leading towards achievement goals.

For some, student assessments may involve Support Teachers. They may also involve Inclusive Education Department staff or other agencies.

The assessment process may be informal or formal and may include:

- conducting classroom observations to determine student strengths and challenges
- interviewing the student, teachers, parents, and others involved to determine multiple perspectives on the Students' strengths and challenges
- planning with the classroom teacher and/or school staff to decide which assessments will be used to identify students who are at risk, or who may need interventions for learning and/or behavior reasons
- administering, gathering and/or synthesizing information from a variety of sources to determine the complexity and severity of students' learning needs

Some key purposes for assessment include:

- screening/identification
- eligibility/designation/placement
- determining performance or instructional levels
- diagnostic skills checks

Assessment should not be an afterthought. It must be carefully built into the planning and implementation of instructional activities. This also applies to individualized program planning for students with special educational needs.

- instructional decision making, program planning, goal setting
- program monitoring (ongoing feedback about instruction effectiveness)
- student progress evaluation

Formal Assessments

Formal assessment are standardized assessments that measures a student's ability and achievement relative to a group of students of the same age. Information from formal achievements tests may be required prior to a psycho-educational assessment, in collaboration with the school psychologist. Results of achievement tests show academic areas of strength and need used to help plan for instruction. Schools use some types of assessment to group students for instruction or to track student progress over time.

LEVEL A TESTS

These tests can be administered, scored and interpreted with the aid of the manual and a general knowledge of measurement principles and of the limitations of test interpretations. These assessments are usually completed in the classroom environment by the classroom teacher(s). This is the preferred collection of data for school psychologists to review.

LEVEL B TESTS

These are tests that require specific training for administration, scoring and interpretation. These tests are more complex than Level A tests and require sophisticated understanding of psychometric principles, the traits being measured, the client population and clinical issues involved in the setting within which the testing is done. This category would generally include most individual or group tests of achievement or interest, screening inventories and personnel tests.

LEVEL C TESTS

Tests that require advanced (graduate level) training for interpretation in the specific professional field to which the tests apply (i.e. clinical psychology, counselling psychology, school psychology, industrial/organizational psychology). These tests are more complex than Level A and B tests. In addition, these tests require a high degree of professional skill and judgment for their interpretation.

Questions to ask about assessments

(A Parent's Handbook on Inclusive Education. Inclusion BC, 2014. Chapter 4, p7)

You will probably have questions like the following for the case manager or school team members:

- What do you hope to find out from this assessment?
- Why is this assessment being done? Is it for funding/placement?
- Is previous information about my child's learning style/needs available?
- Will I get a copy of the assessment? Will I be asked to give approval for its distribution? The answer to each of these should be yes.
- Can I speak to the assessor so that I can understand the results?

As a parent, you may have concerns about how well your child knows the person who will be doing the assessment. Unfamiliar situations and people can be overwhelming. You may wonder how well your child will do if the assessor is a stranger. You may also have concerns about when and where an assessment will take place.

These factors may influence the results. Some parents do not want their children assessed under less than ideal

Circumstances. Some parents choose to have assessments done privately so that they can share results as they see fit.

After an assessment, you should get a summarized report of the results. This report will be shared with others, including the school-based team and, as appropriate, the student. According to the School Act, parents have to be informed as to how the report will be made accessible to others working with the student.

Ask to speak with the assessor if you need further information or help to interpret the results. Information gathered through assessments helps people to understand a student's level of functioning and identifies areas of need. This information is the foundation for planning.

Supporting My Child: What is my role as a parent?

(A Parent's Handbook on Inclusive Education. Inclusion BC, 2014. Chapter 2, p5)

Parental involvement is an important part of making inclusive education work. While the government of BC supports inclusive education through policy and law, and schools and school districts support it through policy and daily decisions, as a parent, you play the key role in your child's education. A formal educational process may not begin until your child enters kindergarten, but you have been guiding your child's learning from the beginning.

For most parents, being involved in their children's education can feel overwhelming — sometimes time-consuming, difficult, or exhausting. Parents of children with disabilities find that participating in their children's education is even more demanding. Participating in your child's education means trying to understand and influence a complex system of policies, laws, and priorities. It means working closely with people within the system. You will need to understand your child's rights, in addition, your rights and responsibilities, and also the roles and responsibilities of the professionals who work within the system.

This section of the handbook outlines the rights, roles, and responsibilities of the many people involved in your son or daughter's education. Knowing the roles of each of these team members will allow you to build positive relationships, solve problems, and create the best possible future for your child and family. Building positive relationships and creating a team that works together to plan for your child's education will make your journey to an inclusive future possible

Remember — your child has a right to be in his or her neighborhood school and a right to be in a regular classroom.

Your child should also receive the supports he or she needs to be successful in that classroom.

The school is not doing something extra by providing those supports; it is the school's job to provide your child with an education. Keep in mind that most teachers and other professionals working within the system support inclusive education, but sometimes do not have the necessary supports for students with special needs. Teachers and other professionals sometimes have to take extra steps to make sure the system is doing its job — just as sometimes you have to go the extra mile to make sure the system is working for your child.

Remember, too, that as a parent you know your child best. That is why your role is so important in decisions that affect your child's education. You have watched your child grow and learn. You have witnessed their successes and challenges. You have learned about their likes, dislikes, strengths, and gifts. This knowledge is important for understanding how to teach your child. It will benefit the professionals who participate in your child's education.

You have a lot of valuable information to share with your son or daughter's school. You can begin by writing down everything you know about your child. You likely already have records of tests, reports, and correspondence that may be important to share. Before any meetings at the school, you may want to write down notes about the following:

- your child's likes and dislikes
- your child's strengths and needs
- your child's communication style
- your concerns and questions
- your child's hopes and dreams
- your hopes and dreams for your child's future
- how your child responds to rewards
- how your child responds to redirection and/or consequences

My Child's Rights and Responsibilities

The student is an important member of the educational team. How each student contributes to planning and decision-making will vary. This contribution may also vary over time as a student develops. Youth participation in planning positively affects outcomes, and the BC school system supports the inclusion of youth in planning.

The School Act says students are entitled to:

- consult with a teacher, principal, vice principal, or director of instruction with regard to that student's educational program, and
- appeal the decision¹ of an employee of a board if it significantly affects the education, health, or safety of a student, within a reasonable time from the date that the parent or student was informed of the decision.

1 Under the School Act, the failure of an employee to make a decision is also considered a decision.

The Ministry of Education policy says students have the following rights:

- to learn in safe and welcoming environments
- to have their needs identified in a timely manner
- to have these needs assessed in a comprehensive manner
- to receive an appropriate educational program to respond to identified strengths and needs.
- when possible, to contribute to planning for their own educational programs, especially for transition planning
- when possible, to provide an evaluation of the services they receive

Students have the following responsibilities:

- to follow the school rules authorized by the principal
- to follow the code of conduct or any other school board rules and policies

My Rights and Responsibilities as a Parent

Parents play a vital role in the education of their children with special needs by working in partnership with educators and other service personnel.

The School Act says parents are entitled to

- be consulted about the placement of their children with special needs
- be involved in the planning, development, and implementation of their children's education program
- be informed of a student's attendance, behavior, and progress in school
- receive annual reports about the effectiveness of educational programs in the school district
- examine all records kept by the school board pertaining to their children
- register their children in an educational program through a school district, independent school, home school, or regional correspondence program
- belong to a parent advisory council (PAC)
- appeal the decision of an employee of a board if it significantly affects the education, health, or safety of a student, within a reasonable time from the date that the parent or student was informed of the decision.

Inclusion BC promotes the following rights and responsibilities for parents, although some may not be recognized or protected.

Parents have the right to:

- be informed and involved in education decisions that affect their children
- be consulted, and to give consent, regarding the type and nature of all assessments, and to be informed of their results
- have concerns listened to, and responded to, promptly and respectfully
- have access to personnel such as teachers, teaching assistants, principals, board administrators, and board trustees for information and collaboration
- have concerns treated with confidentiality
- be able to observe their children in the classroom
- receive progress reports that can be understood
- be involved in the planning process and review of their children's educational program including the IEP

Parents have the responsibility to:

- be aware of school policies, programs, rules, and routines
- share concerns openly and immediately with the appropriate person
- respond to notes, memos, requests, etc.
- tell the teacher and the school when things are going well, and when they aren't
- describe concerns clearly and objectively
- be reasonably patient and respectful with the people and the process

What is a Case Manager/Resource Teacher?

The person who supervises the development of an IEP for a specific student with special needs.

Responsibilities include organizing and chairing meetings, acting as the school liaison for matters concerning that student, and seeing that IEP goals are met.

Being an Effective Advocate for my Child

(A Parent's Handbook on Inclusive Education. Inclusion BC, 2014. Chapter 3, p6)

You are an expert on your child and you know what your child needs to be successful. This is why you are the most important advocate for your child. Below is an outline of some of the most important advocacy skills.

Be organized

To be an effective advocate, you need to be organized. You will need to gather all relevant information about your child's needs as the basis for any of your requests. It is helpful to prepare a file. Keep copies of all correspondence, both letters you send and letters and reports you receive. Keep a journal or log of phone calls about your child. Keeping records of letters and calls will help you be prepared if a concern or problem arises.

Know the facts

Being a good advocate means knowing the facts. This includes knowing about your rights and about students' rights as defined in the School Act and other policies. For example, you need to know about funding policies and policies and regulations related to the development of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Identify the problem

To be good advocates, parents must learn to identify the key issue or problem. Sometimes this may relate to policies and funding. Other times it is related to people and attitudes. Once you have identified the problem, identify a solution and look for ways to remove barriers to the solution. Enlist staff at the school to help you problem solve. When seeking a solution, set your priorities and know your bottom line.

Identify key decision -makers

Good advocacy means knowing who is making the decisions that affect services. Depending on the problem and solution you have identified, you may need to advocate to different people. Being informed about roles and responsibilities will help you understand who can best resolve a problem. Knowing the protocol and the system's structure will help you know who to approach first. Proceed one-step at a time within authority structures.

Use a respectful and assertive communication style. Your communication style affects your chances of succeeding.

Here are some suggestions:

- Be assertive and clear but avoid being too forceful.
- Use a cooperative approach.
- Give positive feedback when things work.
- Be patient and supportive.
- Recognize that timing is important and that decision makers must balance many demands.
- Offer opportunities for people to get to know you and your child in more personal ways. Share your hopes, dreams, and stories. Bring pictures to meetings to keep the focus on your child. Include pictures with written letters.

Whom do I speak to if I have a concern about my child's education?

The flow chart on the following page outlines the individuals involved in navigating the hierarchy of the school team when advocating for your child. At the base of the chart, you will see the “Teacher” and the “Learning Assistance Teacher” and “Support Teacher”. When advocating for your child, always start here with either of these individuals. The Support Teacher will know you and your student best. If you are not satisfied with the outcome following bringing your concerns to this level, you can bring your concerns to the school vice principal or principal.



Preparing for and participating in meetings

(A Parent's Handbook on Inclusive Education. Inclusion BC, 2014. Chapter 3, p12)

Parents, school staff, district personnel may call meetings, or other professionals involved in your child's education. Meetings may be called to plan your child's educational program, discuss a transition to a new class or school, or resolve an issue. Whatever the purpose, meetings can sometimes be confusing or intimidating. This section provides some tips that can help you get what you need out of meetings.

Tips for preparing before a meeting

- Be clear on the purpose of the meeting
- Know your rights and your child's rights
- Prepare and distribute an agenda if you called the meeting
- Ask for an agenda if someone else has called the meeting
- Clarify what, if any, decisions will be made at the meeting
- Decide what materials to bring
- Prepare your own presentation, questions, or concerns
- Be realistic about what can be covered in one meeting
- Ask who will be attending and what their roles will be
- Invite support people who are familiar with you and your child (such as therapists) or other support people you may need (such as translators). Seek help from the school to arrange this if necessary
- If you invite support people: notify the person who called the meeting that others will be attending, prepare supporters with copies of relevant materials, and let supporters know the meeting's purpose
- When possible attend a meeting with your child's other parent, or ask a friend or other supporter to attend the meeting with you

Tips for participating in a meeting

- Ask everybody there to introduce themselves and explain their role
- Ask questions and express your opinion
- Seek facts and clarification, if necessary
- Be open to ideas
- Use good communication skills. Begin statements with "I"
- Take careful notes, or have someone else take them for you
- Make sure that information presented by professionals is understood
- Bring a photo of the student if the student isn't attending
- Be assertive but not confrontational
- Summarize the discussion and review the decisions made
- Don't agree on a decision or sign anything if you aren't comfortable with it
- Remember that you have the right to think about requests before making a decision. School staff also have this right

- Ask for a copy of minutes taken by others
- Identify the next steps and identify who's responsible for carrying them out, and set reasonable timelines
- Set follow-up meetings if necessary

Following up after a meeting

- Review your minutes and add anything you missed
- Compare your notes with minutes taken by others
- Respond in writing to the person who chaired the meeting (or the principal), outlining your understanding of major points covered or decisions made. Indicate whether you agree. Also note dates set for completing tasks, describe your future role or responsibilities, and include positive feedback

The School's Role in Supporting My Child

Who coordinates your child's education?

(A Parent's Handbook on Inclusive Education. Inclusion BC, 2014. Chapter 2, p17)

Someone should be charged with coordinating your child's educational program and the services of other professionals. This person is sometimes called a case manager, but it may be the principal, the resource teacher, the learning assistance teacher, or the classroom teacher.

Ask the principal who is responsible for coordinating your child's educational program. You will want to develop a relationship with that person. It is your right to be part of the team that discusses your child's educational program and any changes to your child's support services.

You may want to ask the coordinator the following questions:

- When and how often can we meet?
- How will I be notified of planning meetings?
- How will I be involved?
- Will my child be out of the regular class for any period of time, and if so, for what purpose?

The value of building school relationships

(A Parent's Handbook on Inclusive Education. Inclusion BC, 2014. Chapter 2, p20)

It is important to build relationships with people throughout the school system, including those at the school board level. Take opportunities to inform and educate your school board members about the philosophy of inclusion and issues related to children with special needs. Remember, policies are not written in stone, so building more support for special education and the philosophy of inclusion can ultimately change policies.

Individual Education Plans (IEP)

(A Parent's Handbook on Inclusive Education. Inclusion BC, 2014. Chapter 4, p9)

An IEP is a document that describes an educational program that has been developed for one specific student with special needs. It includes only the details of the educational program that have been

modified or adapted. IEPs must also identify the support services required to implement the program. IEPs for special needs students are a requirement under the School Act, mandated by Ministerial Order M19/00. This order directs school boards to ensure that an IEP is in place for a special needs student as soon as practical after a student's special needs are identified. The order requires that the IEP be reviewed annually and, when necessary, revised or cancelled. It also requires that parents and students where appropriate, must be consulted about the preparation of the IEP.

Each student's IEP will be different, reflecting his or her personal learning needs.

The IEP Process

(A Parent's Handbook on Inclusive Education. Inclusion BC, 2014. Chapter 4, p13)

Creating an Individual Education Plan involves three main steps:

- developing and writing the plan
- implementing and evaluating the plan
- reporting on student progress toward the goals in the plan

This is an evolving process: sometimes, as the student's needs change the planning team changes or refines an IEP's goals.

Developing an IEP

A meeting to develop an IEP usually takes place in the fall after a new teacher has had a chance to get to know the student. Parents should be invited to attend this meeting, and when appropriate the student should be included.

The team involved in the IEP needs to gather relevant information before developing a plan. This may include assessments from previous years and reports from various professionals. Sometimes parents will be asked to prepare for the first IEP meeting by filling in forms about their child's interests, likes, strengths, dislikes, needs, and challenges. Even if you haven't been asked, it can be helpful to compile this information for the IEP meeting.

Tips for preparing a parent report for an IEP meeting:

(see Appendix 2. Gathering information about your child that may be useful for educational planning purposes)

- Describe your child and outline his or her strengths and needs. Consider all social, educational, physical, and emotional aspects
- Describe what you want your child to learn. Include both short-term and long-term goals
- Include support documents, if necessary or relevant
- If the team is new to your family and child, or you're planning a critical transition, consider including photos or videos of your child's home life to demonstrate your child's skills, interests, or method of communication

It is also helpful to identify your expectations for the IEP meeting. Sometimes parents will work with the teacher or case manager before the meeting to ensure that their ideas and concerns will be addressed.

Team members usually come to IEP meetings prepared to develop a working document. This meeting is not for making critical decisions such as those about classroom placement. Instead, the team uses the IEP meeting to identify goals and objectives for student learning and to explore strategies to support students to achieve those goals.

An IEP also usually includes a process for reviewing the plan. The Ministry requires that IEPs be reviewed only once a year, but it is sometimes possible for the IEP team to meet more often. The frequency of reviews, like the complexity of the IEP itself, will depend on the individual student's needs. Work with the team at your son or daughter's school to develop a suitable plan for review meetings. Once an IEP is established, the annual review may be less extensive than the first development meeting.

Preparing an IEP to deal with a critical transition may require more time than regular annual IEP reviews. In addition, if extra support is needed in the new environment, it is important to document this need early to ensure that the support is in place when the transition occurs. After the IEP meeting, the case manager will create a written copy of the IEP, incorporating the key information discussed. During the meeting, ask when you can expect to get a copy of the IEP. Follow up to make sure you get a written copy.

The following questions may help you to assess the IEP and to inform follow up conversations around your child's IEP following a designation. You can also request a further conversation with your child's case manager following the IEP meeting after you have had some time to process the information you have received.

- Are the goals clearly stated?
- Are the goals practical and realistic?
- Do the goals promote inclusion?
- Are the goals functional and age-appropriate?
- Will these goals enable my child to develop to his or her individual potential?
- Do the goals prepare my child for the future?
- Will the strategies motivate my son or daughter?
- Do they incorporate his or her interests and strengths?
- Do they include all program options and extracurricular opportunities?
- Are there both long-term and short-term goals?
- Are the people responsible for helping meet the goals noted?
- Does the IEP include a list of additional services required, such as speech and language/occupational therapy?
- Are upcoming transitions incorporated into the IEP?
- How will my child's progress be measured or evaluated, and by whom?
- How will we know when the goals have been reached?

Frequently Asked Questions about the IEP Process

Are IEPs required for students without identified special needs?

No. IEPs are required only for students who have been formally identified as students with special needs and reported as such with the BC Ministry of Education

What is a Student Support Plan?

A Student Support Plan is for students whose needs are ongoing, individualized and exceptional. It is a short, summary document for students without a BC Ministry of Education designation, who require a written plan to support their learning needs and maximize achievement levels.

When a student with a designation from another district or province enrolls in a class mid-year, what is the process to ensure the designation continues?

Support Teachers review all files:

- Student Permanent Record file
- Special Education File
- Learning Assistance File
- Working File
- ELL File

What is the accountability of the classroom teacher concerning the IEP?

The classroom teacher has responsibility for collaborating in IEP development, implementing the plan, and including information about goals and objectives from the IEP within communicating student learning reports.

When a student is given a special education designation within the school year when should the IEP be written?

For students newly designated throughout the school year an IEP should be written in a timely and practical matter as the resource teacher/case manager gets to know your child better, or soon after receiving the Ministry designation

Communicating Student Learning

Evaluation and Reporting

The BC Ministry of Education and Child Care requires reporting on ALL students' achievements including those who are supported with an IEP. Progress and summative reports for students with special needs should be provided on the same schedule and in the same format as used for all students in the school.

Roles and Responsibilities

Classroom teacher(s) has the overall responsibility for reporting on ALL students in the class, including those with an IEP. The classroom teacher(s) works in collaboration with the case manager to report on the progress of the students with an IEP. Where there are more complex cases (i.e. Category A and Category C), the case manager will take a more collaborative role in supporting the classroom teacher(s) as the progress and summative reports are written.

Where the specialist teacher (Learning Assistance, ELL, Support) is responsible for providing direct instruction for some portion of the student's educational program, that specialist teacher should provide written reports. This report will include information about the support, the reason it is being provided and the student's progress toward goals for inclusion. This report will be included with the report of the classroom teacher(s).

ALL students are eligible to receive universal assessment supports to support their learning – not just students with disabilities and diverse abilities, or those with an Individual Education Plan

SOME students may require more targeted assessment supports – again, not just students with an IEP. It is important to note that targeted assessment supports include the use of universal supports as well

FEW students will require specific assessment supports to support their learning. Typically, this includes students with complex needs who have moderate or profound intellectual disabilities.

- *A student whose learning is supported through specific assessment supports will have individualized learning goals that are substantially different from the learning standards outlined in the curriculum and are specifically selected to meet the student's individual needs. These students are assessed and evaluated in relation to the goals and objectives established in the student's IEP.*
 - Students with significant cognitive disabilities and diverse abilities are usually working on a School Completion (Evergreen) Certificate rather than a Certification of Graduation (Dogwood Diploma).

Evaluation in reference to individualized learning goals

It is also important to note learning experiences in the classroom for students on an IEP should still be connected with the same content and competencies as their peers are exploring but with adaptations/modifications to meet their unique needs

Students with disabilities and diverse abilities whose learning is supported by individualized learning goals must have an IEP that outlines their goals and the methods for evaluating the goals. Students receive feedback in a manner that is identified in the individualized learning goals of their IEP (e.g., scales, letter grades and percentages, descriptive feedback). The four-point **Provincial Proficiency Scale** is used to communicate student learning in all area of learning. It is a requirement for students reporting in **Grades K-9**. The four points on the scale are Emerging, Developing, Proficient, and Extending.

The Provincial Proficiency Scale

EMERGING DEVELOPING PROFICIENT EXTENDING

The student demonstrates an initial understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.	The student demonstrates a partial understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.	The student demonstrates a complete understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.	The student demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.
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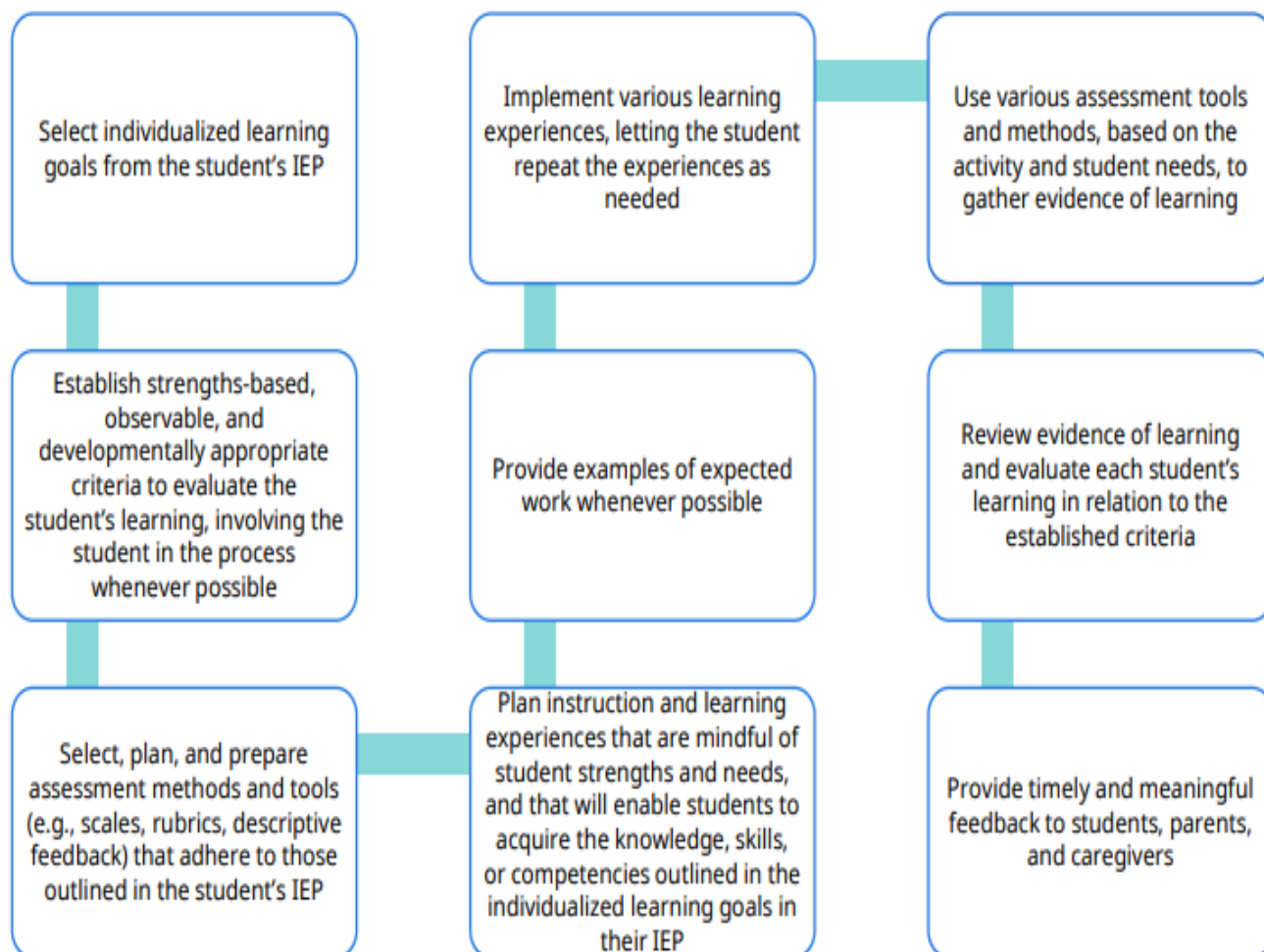
A student with an IEP or student learning plan should not be automatically assessed as Emerging or Developing or at a lower letter grade and percentage because they use supports to access and demonstrate their learning. If, with the supports, the student is demonstrating learning in relation to the learning standards, then they should be assigned a scale indicator or letter grade and percentage according to the learning they have demonstrated. The use of supports does not mean they are not adequately meeting the learning standards. These students are still taught in connection with the learning standards of the curriculum but they are assessed and evaluated in relation to the goals outlined in the Individualized Education Plan.

Letter grades and percentages are used in **Grades 10-12** to indicate a student's learning in relation to the learning standards.

Letter grade	Percentage range	Definition
A	86–100	The student demonstrates excellent or outstanding learning in relation to the learning standards.
B	73–85	The student demonstrates very good learning in relation to the learning standards.
C+	67–72	The student demonstrates good learning in relation to the learning standards.
C	60–66	The student demonstrates satisfactory learning in relation to the learning standards.
C–	50–59	The student demonstrates minimally acceptable learning in relation to the learning standards.
F	0–49	The student has not demonstrated, or is not demonstrating, minimally acceptable learning in relation to the learning standards. Prior to assigning an F, it is important students, parents, and caregivers are made aware of any concerns and given a chance to address the needs of the student.
SG	N/A	Standing Granted: Although completion of normal requirements is not possible, sufficient evidence of learning has been demonstrated to warrant, consistent with the best interests of the student, the granting of standing for the area of learning and grade. Standing Granted may be used in cases of serious illness, hospitalization, late entry, or early leaving, but may only be granted by an adjudication process authorized by the principal, vice-principal, or director of instruction in charge of a school.
TS	N/A	Transfer Standing: May be granted by the principal, vice-principal, or director of instruction in charge of a school on the basis of an examination of records from an institution other than a school as defined in the School Act. Alternatively, the principal, vice-principal, or director of instruction in charge of a school may assign a proficiency scale indicator or letter grade and percentage on the basis of an examination of those records.
IE	N/A	Insufficient Evidence: The student, for a variety of reasons, has not provided sufficient evidence of learning in relation to the learning standards.

Descriptive feedback includes concise, strengths-based, written comments or documented conversations that are aligned with the learning standards and describe student learning, as well as identifying specific areas for future growth. A strengths-based approach recognizes that student learning is dynamic and holistic, and that students demonstrate their learning in different ways and at different rates. Feedback is focused on what the student can do and what they are working towards. Descriptive feedback is required in **Grades K - 12**.

Evaluation referenced to individualized learning goals involves the following process:



Transition Planning for Students with Special Needs

In the educational setting, transition planning is focused on the successful passage of students from home to school, from one educational level or setting to another, and from the educational system to life in the community.

The purpose of a transition meeting is to provide a continuum of planning and support for students who require additional considerations as they move from home to school, school to school, or school to community.

For students with special needs, planning and preparation for each transition must begin well in advance - sometimes several years prior to the change. The more intense the student's needs the more formal and comprehensive the plan must be. A well-planned transition is a partnership. It involves collaboration among all interested parties, including the parent/legal guardians, the student, school staff, Inclusive Education Department staff, and local community agency representatives. Key activities in the transition process will include:

- Preparing students
- Linking environments from both transition directions
- Facilitating student support team collaboration

Transition planning is about planning for life. Its key purpose is to ensure that a student successfully moves through the school system and ultimately leaves school with the necessary skills to meet desired societal outcomes. These desired outcomes include life goals such as:

- Positive social relationships
- Independent or supported community living placements
- Participation in appropriate postsecondary education
- Participation in appropriate recreational activities
- Relevant employment opportunities

Kindergarten Transitions

Starting school is a major milestone. It can be a stressful life event for any student, but students with special needs, and their parent/legal guardians, may experience heightened levels of anxiety about entering the school system. Preparation is key – for the parent/legal guardian, the school, and the child. A successful transition involves school principals/vice- principals and teachers working in partnership with parent/legal guardians, professionals from preschool settings, and Inclusive Education Department staff.

Planning school entry for students with special needs begins well before September start-up. As children are registered in kindergarten, it is the parent/legal guardians' responsibility to share relevant background information concerning their child.

The process for students entering Kindergarten who have a medical diagnosis begins in early spring. Inclusive Education Department receives information packages from the Prince George Child Development Centre and other community agencies (Northern Health Authority and the Native Friendship Centre) for students who may be formally designated as a student with special needs in accordance with BC Ministry of Education criteria.

It is the school's responsibility to determine an appropriate classroom placement, collaborate with the Inclusive Education Department staff, provide required environmental supports, and develop an educational program to meet student's need. In general, some key activities for the resource teacher to consider for Kindergarten entry will include:

- Asking parents/legal guardians to provide relevant reports and assessment information
- When applicable, ensure the parent/legal guardian has signed a consent form to obtain/release/mutually exchange information to share documentation with Inclusive Education Department staff
- Discuss school programs, facilities, placement options, and support service procedures with the parent/legal guardian
- Meet with family and involved agencies to develop a school entry plan
- Assist family in preparing their child for school (e.g. school tours, classroom visits, practicing new routines, specific school procedures)
- Arrange for necessary supports (personnel, specialized resources) and environmental accommodations to be in place for September
- Keep lines of communication open and work toward establishing positive home/school relationships
- Be proactive, anticipate the kind of information parent/legal guardians will need and take the time to address their concerns and questions.

Parent/legal guardians will have questions about the program planning process, home/school communication, the Inclusive Education Department, and the assignment of EA time, as well as any number of other concerns.

School-based support teams, or parent/legal guardians, may also request a transition meeting to facilitate transition to Kindergarten. If the school organizes a meeting at the request of a parent/legal guardian, or an outside agency, ensure that the appropriate Inclusive Education Department contact is invited to the transition meetings.

Transition Planning Within a School

Within the school building, students with special needs may require preparation for transitions between locations, grades and teachers. These preparations can help ensure that student movement is accomplished with a minimum of anxiety, disorientation or resistance. Advance planning familiarizes the student, staff and other students with new situations and is a proactive strategy that can minimize potential problems.

If parents are querying a plan for a student in the absence of an EA and/or a teacher, the first point of contact is the school principal. Request a meeting to discuss new plans moving forward to support transition.

Consider:

- Ensuring appropriate supports are available in advance
- Giving advance warnings to students when a transition to a new activity or location is about to occur
- Instructing students on what to expect; how to move; cues to be used
- Using a visual schedule to highlight the day's sequence of events and activities
- Providing other staff with key information to help them plan for a student in alternate settings or activities in the building (e.g., teacher preparation time or elective teachers)
- Assigning a peer buddy to assist during transitions

School to School Transitions

The period of transition from one school to another, or from elementary school to secondary school, requires proactive planning and clear communication with the parent/legal guardian and receiving school. This collaborative planning helps prepare students and their families for the changes to come.

Support Teacher's responsibilities include:

- Sharing information between the sending and receiving school concerning:
 - Appropriate curriculum and program materials
 - Effective instructional formats
 - Assistance required
 - Behavior and management considerations
 - Other agency involvement
 - Other pertinent factors related to student performance
- Arranging student and family visits to acclimatize to the new environment
- Familiarizing the student with features (key people and places) of the new environment

The Transition plan should reflect the student's interests and preferences, current accomplishments and skills, what they still need to learn, as well as the long-term goals developed when planning with their families.

The following suggestions can help increase a student's confidence and comfort to make the transition to school as successful as possible:

- Start planning for the transition well in advance.
- Keep the focus on the student.
- Determine how the system can meet the student's needs.
- Make planning a cooperative effort between the student, the parent/legal guardian, school-based staff members (classroom, resource room, special educators, and assistants) and other Inclusive Education Department staff.
- Receiving Support Teachers should observe the student in the present classroom setting to consider how the student relates to the teacher and other students.
- Have the student visit the new location, where they can be oriented to the new environment, and become familiar with building differences and similarities.

- Increase the duration of visits in the new setting as the move gets closer.
- If the student has a friend from the sending class, suggest that they invite their friend to accompany them on visits prior to the transition.
- Try to buddy the student with a helpful student in the new setting.
- Introduce the student to key people (principal/vice principal, counsellor, YCW, resource teacher, homeroom or new teacher)
- When transitioning to secondary school, teach skills specific to the secondary school setting

The Support Teacher at the student's current school will coordinate a meeting between:

- Receiving and sending school personnel (classroom teachers, EAs)
- Appropriate Inclusive Education Department staff
- Parent/legal guardians and student (where appropriate)

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the student's strengths, areas of need, best practice/strategies, and determine the appropriate programming.

School to Community Transitions

Transition planning is about planning for life. It requires the participation of everyone who will be involved in creating and providing service and supports for the student with special needs. Planning for transition from school to community should occur as early as possible as and no later than grade 10.

The support teacher should:

- Offer functional vocational experiences prior to leaving school
- Plan activities for both secondary school transition services and adult service agencies (social, financial and life skill workers) serving youth with disabilities
- Provide a way for educators and other agencies to coordinate their services and share information
- Prepare an exit report and attach copies of relevant documentation
- Connect families to service agencies before a student leaves high school
- Assist with the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives
- Contact Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities (STADD) Navigator
- Help ensure that the services support the youth's goals and leads to successful adult life outcomes
- Help identify and cultivate natural supports in the community.

The support teacher, or STADD Navigator (if appropriate), will coordinate a meeting early in the school year to establish transition goals. The transition team could consist of:

- School personnel (classroom teachers, counsellor, EAs)
- Appropriate Inclusive Education Department staff
- Representatives from community services
- Parent/legal guardians
- Student (where appropriate)

The transition team should meet at least twice per year to ensure all transitions paperwork is in place for a successful shift from school to adulthood.

It is critical for the young adult with a disability to actively participate in the transition planning process. This might involve advance preparation, such as asking the student to talk individually with each team member before the meeting or helping the student craft a written invitation for each team member. It is very easy for adults to take over, making the young person a passive observer instead of a leader in the process. The team must make conscious efforts to provide the young person with ways to express his or her own dreams for the future, agree or disagree with other members of the team, and be actively involved in the team's ongoing efforts. Students with all types of disabilities - regardless of the severity of the disabilities - should be included in the transition planning process.

The transition planning process for leaving school will differ according to the individual needs of each student and the people involved. Students can be supported and their transition to post-school activities improved by the resource teacher.

Transition Considerations

Transitioning into Kindergarten or to another Elementary School	Transitioning into Secondary School or to another Secondary School	Transitioning out of Secondary School
What is the routine upon arriving at school? What door do students enter? What is the routine at noon? Where in the school is the classroom located? Where is the washroom relative to the classroom? Are students expected to use the washroom independently? Are there rules for playground use at lunchtime and recess? How much time are students expected to sit in their desks? What level of support will be available? What are the teachers' expectations regarding behavior? What are the opportunities for interaction with peers? What are the student's expectations for problem solving/resolving conflict? What are the teacher's expectations for the student's ability to problem solve/resolve conflict?	What are the key locations in the building? What is the timetable? How do those transitions occur? How will the student be able to access key locations? What do you do in an emergency procedure? Do students use lockers? What kind of lock is used? What are the organizational skills that are required? Binder system? Who are the key people? How many different classrooms will the student use? Can the student access all parts of the building? What opportunities does the school provide for in-school and community work experience? What is the usual dress of secondary students? Do students use tote bags and lunch bags? Are there food services available in the school? What is the routine of the cafeteria? The school stores. The vending machines. What coins are required? What extra-curricular activities are available? What are the opportunities for interaction with peers? Does the student have access to community recreational facilities? What activities are available at noon hour? After school?	Where will the individual be living? With whom will the individual be living? What will the individual be doing during the day? What will the individual be doing during leisure time? What further education or training plans does the student, or family, have? Will they be working/have a job? If yes, what will be the mode of transportation to/from work and do they need to begin preparing for this now (i.e. Taking the bus, driving, etc)? Will they/can they be responsible for their own finances? Do they have alternate plans if things do not go as originally planned and prepared (i.e. Budget, transportation, unforeseen circumstances etc)? Do they understand how to plan for groceries and food supplies such as budget amounts as well as how to get to the nearest grocery store and home again? Will they need alternate plans if things do not go as planned?

Where can I find more information and help?

(A Parent's Handbook on Inclusive Education. Inclusion BC, 2014. Chapter 4, p9)

On-line information and services Inclusion BC www.inclusionbc.org/inclusive-education

Inclusion BC's website has a section on inclusive education. It provides helpful information, updates and links to other resources. A directory of Inclusion BC member organizations provides information about support services available throughout BC. Inclusion BC also distributes the booklet, *12 Inclusive Activities: A guide for youth group leaders (2004)*.

BC COALITION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

<http://www.bccpd.bc.ca>

This site is a place of support, information and advocacy for people with all disabilities. Their Advocacy Access Programs include help sheets on a multitude of topics.

BC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDANTS ASSOCIATION (BCSSA)

www.bcssa.org/topics/topicsfront.html#special

This website features many publications helpful in understanding the school system, including *Every Principal's Guide to Special Education in British Columbia*.

BC TEACHERS FEDERATION - TEACHING TO DIVERSITY

www.bctf.bc.ca/TeachingToDiversity/parents.html

This BCTF site provides information to support teachers and all those who support learners. It includes a directory to several helpful on-line resources for parents.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING (CACL)

www.cacl.ca

This national association works with other disability rights organizations for the benefit of people of all ages who have an intellectual disability. A federation of ten provincial and three territorial community living associations, comprising 420 associations, it has over 40,000 members.

COMMUNICATION ASSISTANCE FOR YOUNG ADULTS (CAYA)

www.cayabc.org

This organization operates as a project created through Special Education Technology BC (SET-BC) and provides services for adults aged 19 years and older who require an augmentative/alternative communication (AAC) system due to a severe communication disability.

INCLUSION PRESS

www.inclusion.com

Inclusion press provides information on person-centered planning, and training for facilitators of MAPS and PATHS. This site also lists resources available for sale.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION - NATIONAL WEBSITE

www.inclusiveeducation.ca

This site acts as a meeting place for school representatives, families, and community members and promotes an inclusive vision of education in Canada. The Canadian Association supports it for Community Living.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION - PROVINCIAL RESOURCE PROGRAMS

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/sid/resources.htm

This site provides information about provincially funded resource programs available to districts and schools for students with intellectual disabilities. This includes educational alternatives (school programs) and consultative services (specialists who visit schools to offer training and/or to set student-learning goals).

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION — SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCES

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/welcome.htm

This site features many resources, including guides for schools, which provide detailed information about teaching students with a range of special needs. Some titles in the series are:

- Awareness of Students with Diverse Learning Needs (two volumes)
- Teaching Students with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
- Teaching Students with Autism
- Students with Intellectual Disabilities
- Teaching Students with Learning and Behavioral Differences
- Teaching Students with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects
- Students with Hearing Loss
- Teaching Students with Acquired Brain Injury
- Teaching Students with Mental Health Disorders (two volumes)

POVNET

www.povnet.org

This site focuses on anti-poverty work. It has a section on advocacy resources and lists advocates who are available throughout BC. PovNet provides up-to-date information about income assistance, disability benefits, housing and other poverty-related issues.

PROVINCIAL INTEGRATION SUPPORT PROGRAM (PISP)

www.pisp.ca

This outreach service assists BC schools to meet the educational needs of students with multiple/severe disabilities. It provides information, in-service training and teaching strategies to support the classroom teacher and support team.

Note: There is a waiting list for this program. Schools should send in referral forms as soon as possible.

PROVINCIAL OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR AUTISM AND OTHER RELATED DISORDERS (POPARD BC)

www.autismoutreach.ca

The team at this province-wide program includes teachers, special educators, registered psychologists, and/or autism specialists. The POPARD team can visit schools, provide workshops and other training, and consult with school-based teams about educational and behavioral programming. The POPARD office is located in Delta, BC.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY BC – (SET-BC)

This provincial program — with seven regional centers across the province — helps school districts throughout BC meet the technology needs of students with physical disabilities, visual impairments, and autism. Services include the following:

- assessment of students' abilities and need for technology
- program planning and transition planning, where technology is used to support learning outcomes
- equipment loans and technical support of loan equipment
- training and workshops in the use of equipment for teachers and other staff

Districts determine which students will receive SET-BC services in a given year, and school-based teams work with SET-BC consultants to consider student needs and educational goals. Eligibility for these programs is based on specific disabilities rather than needs, so some children are excluded from accessing these resources.

THE BC UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING OBJECT REPOSITORY

<http://www.setbc.org/bcudl/>

The BC UDL Learning Object Repository (BCUDL LOR) provides free, searchable, access to UDL learning objects and course materials. It was developed to assist educators across the province to create, manage, and share their teaching resources.

STEPS FORWARD INCLUSIVE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SOCIETY

www.steps-forward.org

This society of parents promotes post-secondary opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities and provides support to students with intellectual disabilities in colleges and universities.

Phone: (604) 782-1382

E-mail: tamara@steps-forward.org

SUNNY HILL EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTRE (SHERC)

www.bcchildrens.ca/Services/SunnyHillHealthCtr/LearningEducation/EducationResourceCentre/default.htm

SHERC runs a library with books, videos, journals, board games, and other educational materials designed for children with disabilities. These resources are loaned to people with disabilities, their families, care providers, and other professionals working in BC. Loans can be arranged in person, by phone, email, or fax, and materials are mailed within BC free of charge.

3644 Slocan Street, Room S225

Vancouver BC V5M 3E8

Toll Free: 1-800-331-1533 Phone: 604-453-8335 ext. 1

Fax: 604-875-3455

Email: sherc@cw.bc.ca

THE ASSOCIATION FOR PERSONS WITH SEVERE HANDICAPS (TASH)

www.tash.org

This international advocacy organization includes people with disabilities, their family members, other advocates, and people who work in the disability field. It promotes the full inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities.

TRANSITION PLANNING FOR AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/adulthood.htm

This site provides information about planning for the transition to adulthood for youth with special needs. It has a link to *Your Future Now: A transition planning & resource guide for youth with special needs and their families*. This guide, based on best practice, includes a step-by-step planning process and a workbook.

Also a great resource, *The Cross-Ministry Transition Planning Protocol for Children and Youth with Special Needs*: http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/pdf/transition_planning_protocol.pdf

On-line publications and documents Inclusive Education (Inclusion BC)

<http://www.inclusionbc.org/our-priority-areas/inclusive-education>

This Inclusion BC publication is a companion to the parent's handbook on inclusive education. It makes the case for inclusive education by shattering myths, presenting research on the positive impact of inclusive education, and telling the stories of five students who, with the support of teachers and families, demonstrate the value of inclusion. Includes references and ideas for how to support and advocate for inclusive schools.

Know Your Rights

www.knowyourrights.ca/knowyourrights

This booklet from the Learning Disabilities Association of BC, South Vancouver Island Chapter, is for parents/guardians of children with learning disabilities or ADHD. It provides information to support their advocacy efforts to make sure that their children get the best education possible. There are two versions of *Know Your Rights*, one for parents/guardians and one for students.

The Manual of School Law K–12

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/

This manual contains the following documents:

- The School Act
- The School Act Regulations and Orders in Council
- School Act Ministerial Orders

Ministry of Education Policy Document:

K–12 Funding — Special Needs www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/funding_special_needs.htm
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/special_ed.htm

These websites provide details of the K–12 funding policy, including a chart of the categories eligible for funding and the amount that districts receive for each student recorded in each category.

Parent’s Guide to Individual Education Planning

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/iep

This 20-page booklet by the Ministry of Education contains an overview of Individual Education Plans (IEPs). It outlines the roles and responsibilities of IEP team members and includes sections on a parent’s role in planning and supporting his or her child’s IEP. A section on learning assessment, evaluation, in addition, reporting explains the basic difference between adaptations and modifications as they relate to the provincial curriculum and graduation requirements.

The Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/primary_program/primary_prog.pdf

This Ministry of Education handbook focuses on teacher roles and primary education.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS AND TEACHER ASSISTANTS/ EDUCATION ASSISTANTS

http://www.cupe.bc.ca/sites/default/files/2009_Roles_Resp.pdf

Prepared and recently updated by BCTF and CUPE

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES: A MANUAL OF POLICIES, PROCEDURE AND GUIDELINES

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm

This Ministry of Education manual was revised in 2011 and is intended mainly for administrators, school-based teams, and special education professionals, but may be of interest to parents. Divided into eight sections, it contains information on relevant legislation, ministry policy, and program standards. The manual is updated as needed so it should contain the most current information.

SUPPORTING MEANINGFUL CONSULTATION WITH PARENTS

http://www.bc-case.org/downloads/WVSD_brochure.pdf

The BC Council of Administrators of Special Education has prepared this helpful booklet.

Transition to School: An Information Guide for Parents www.makechildrenfirstpg.org/kindergarten.htm

This is a guide to assist parents with the transition to school for kindergarten age children.

Organizations that can help

Inclusion BC

Inclusion BC is a provincial organization that advocates for children, youth, and adults with developmental disabilities and their families to ensure justice, rights and opportunities in all areas of their lives. Inclusion BC provides information, referral to local services, workshops, and parent support.

227 Sixth Street,

New Westminster, BC V4L 3A5

Phone: (604) 777-9100 Toll free: 1-800-618-1119

Fax: (604) 777-9394

Website: www.inclusionbc.org E-mail: info@inclusionbc.org

BC Coalition of People with Disabilities / Advocacy Access

BCCPD is a cross-disability advocacy organization. It provides information and referrals for people with disabilities. Advocacy Access provides individual advocacy assistance.

204 – 456 West Broadway,

Vancouver, BC V5Y 1R3

Phone: (604) 875-0188 TTY: (604) 875-8835

Fax: (604) 875-9227 Advocacy Access Phone: (604) 872-1278

Website: www.bccpd.bc.ca E-mail: feedback@bccpd.bc.ca

BC Human Rights Tribunal

This is an independent, quasi-judicial body created by the Human Rights Code. The Tribunal is responsible for accepting, screening, mediating, and adjudicating human rights complaints. The Tribunal offers the parties to a complaint the opportunity to resolve the complaint through mediation. If the parties do not resolve the complaint, the Tribunal holds a hearing.

1170 – 605 Robson Street,

Vancouver, BC V6B 5J3

Phone: (604) 775-2000 Toll free: 1-888-440-8844 (in BC only)

Website: www.bchrt.bc.ca E-mail:

BCHumanRightsTribunal@gov.bc.ca

Ombudsperson's Office

The Ombudsperson investigates complaints about the unfair administrative decisions or actions of a public agency. There is a mobile office for complaint intake.

2nd Floor – 947 Fort Street,

Victoria, BC

Phone: 1-800-567-3247 (toll free) (250) 387-5855 (Victoria)

Fax: (250) 387-0198

Website: www.ombudsman.bc.ca

BC CPAC

British Columbia Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils

The BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC), a registered non-profit and non-partisan charity, represents the parents of 565,000 children attending public schools. As the provincially mandated voice of parents in public schools, **we** engage, empower and support parents for the success of all learners through collaboration, partnership and education, in a culture of acceptance, inclusion and equity.

Disability information and support Associations for Community Living (ACLs)

Many ACLs have staff members who provide support to families and individuals in communities throughout BC.

Check the Inclusion BC member directory for local resources at

www.inclusionbc.org/membership_directory/index.cfm, or phone the Inclusion BC office at (604) 777-9100 to locate support in your community.

Autism Community Training Society of BC (ACT BC)

ACT BC provides information, training, and vital support services to parents, paraprofessionals, and professionals who have or work with children with an autism spectrum disorder.

150– 2250 Boundary Road,

Burnaby, BC V5M 3Z3

www.actcommunity.net

Email: info@actcommunity.net

Autism Society of BC

This society promotes inclusion and the acceptance of people with autism spectrum disorder, and provides information and referrals to people with autism spectrum disorder and their families.

301 – 3071 East Hastings Street,

Burnaby, BC V5C 2H6

Phone: (604) 434-0880 (Vancouver area)

Toll free: 1-888-437-0880 (Outside Vancouver) Fax: (604) 434-0801

Website: www.autismbc.ca

Email: info@autismbc.ca

BC Centre for Ability

This organization provides individualized therapy and support services to disabled children and youth in their homes and communities. It also provides specialized community living services, comprehensive vocational, and support services for adults with disabilities.

2805 Kingsway,

Vancouver, BC VSR 5H9

Phone: (604) 451-5511 Fax: (604) 451-5651

Canadian Down Syndrome Society

The Canadian Down Syndrome Society is a national non-profit organization providing information, advocacy and education about Down syndrome to parents, families and self-advocates through all stages of life.

Phone: 1-800-883-5608 Fax: 403-270-8291

Website: www.cdss.ca

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association – British Columbia Chapter (CHHA–BC)

This organization helps people manage hearing loss and provides information. It advocates for hearing accessibility in BC and supports individual and collective action.

102-9300 Nowell Street,

Chilliwack, BC V2P 4V7

Phone: (604) 795-9238 Toll free: 1-866-888-2442

Fax: (604) 795-9628

Website: <http://chha-bc.org>

Cerebral Palsy Association of BC (CPABC)

This association provides advocacy and implements programs for people living with cerebral palsy. It encourages networking and provides information, publications, and public education.

801 -409 Granville Street,

Vancouver, BC V6C 1T2

Phone: (604) 408-9484 Toll free: 1-800-663-0004

Fax: (604) 408-9489

Website: www.bccerebralpalsy.com

E-mail: info@bccerebralpalsy.com

Down Syndrome Research Foundation (DSRF)

The DSRF develops educational and training programs, supplies information and research results, provides clinical support services, collaborates with other resource centers and community service providers, and raises funds to support research projects.

1409 Sperling Avenue,

Burnaby, BC V5B 4J8

Phone: (604) 444-3773 Toll free: 1-888-464-DSRF

Fax: (604) 431-9248

Family Network for Deaf Children (FNDC)

FNDC offers workshops, videos, a newsletter, and bulletins supporting and providing information to parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children and the communities that support them.

Phone: (604) 684-1860

Website: www.fndc.ca

Family Support Institute (FSI)

This province-wide organization supports families faced with the circumstances that come with having a family member who has a disability. Directed by families, FSI provides information, training, and province-wide networking to help families and their communities to build upon and share their strengths. The organization provides educational workshops and has resource materials, including videos available to parents and communities.

227 – 6th Street,

New Westminster, BC V3L 3A5

Phone: (604) 540-8374 Fax: 604 540-9374

Email: fsi@fsibc.org

Toll free: 1-800-441-5403

Website: www.familysupportbc.com

Learning Disabilities Association of BC (LDABC)

LDABC promotes the education and well-being of children and adults with learning disabilities.

3292 East Broadway,

Vancouver, BC V5M 1Z8

Phone: (604) 873-8139 Fax: (604) 873-8140

Website: www.ldav.ca

Email: info@ldav.ca

Lower Mainland Down Syndrome Society (LMDSS)

This society provides opportunities, support, and information to families of children with Down Syndrome.

201 – 13281 72nd Avenue,

Surrey, BC V3W 2N5

Phone: (604) 591-2722 Fax: (604) 591-2730

Website: www.lmdss.com

E-mail: lmdss@telus.net

Sunny Hill Education Resource Centre (SHERC)

SHERC runs a library with books, videos, journals, board games, and other educational materials designed for children with disabilities. These resources are loaned free of charge to people with disabilities, their families, care providers, and other professionals working in BC. For contact information, see listing under “On-line information and services.”

Vela Microboard Association

Microboards are small non-profit societies that create customized supports and services to address the needs of the one person they support. Vela provides support and information to family and friends who create micro-boards.

100 – 17564 56A Avenue,

Surrey, BC V3S 1G3

Phone: (604) 575-2588 Fax: (604) 575-2589

Website: www.microboard.org E-mail: info@microboard.org

Legal Supports

Community Legal Assistance Society (CLAS)

CLAS runs a Disability Law Program, which offers advice to those who meet certain financial and “test case” criteria. It provides free legal advice and representation on issues affecting people with disabilities.

Suite 300-1140 W. Pender Street,

Vancouver, BC V6E 4G1

Phone: (604) 685-3424 (Vancouver) Toll free: 1-888-685-6222

Fax: (604) 685-7611

Website: www.clasbc.net

Lawyer Referral Service

This service refers individuals to lawyers who will provide a consultation for up to 30 minutes for a fee of \$25 plus taxes. This consultation helps people determine if they have a legal problem, what it means, how long it will take to solve, and about how much it will cost.

Phone: (604) 687-3221 (Lower Mainland Vancouver) Toll free: 1-800-663-1919

(outside Lower Mainland)

Website: www.cba.org/bc/initiatives/main/lawyer_referral.aspx

Legal Aid — Legal Services Society (LSS)

LSS is an independent, non-profit organization that provides legal aid for people in BC with low incomes. Legal aid services range from legal information and legal advice to legal representation (a lawyer to handle your case). To obtain a legal aid lawyer, you must be financially eligible.

To find the address and phone number of a local legal aid office near you, see the LSS website: www.lss.bc.ca/legal_aid/legalAidOffices.php#legalAidOffices

If you cannot go to an office, call the LSS Call Centre and LawLINE:

Phone: (604) 408-2172 (Lower Mainland)

Toll free: 1-866-577-2525 (outside the Lower Mainland)

LAW STUDENT’S LEGAL ADVICE PROGRAM (LSLAP)

The LSLAP approach to the relationship between clinicians and clients enables students to take more time to explain the legal alternatives and the legal processes which are available to the client, thereby not only offering legal services to people who could not otherwise afford them, but also helping to de-mystify the law.

In this way, it is hoped, the LSLAP client comes away from the program more aware and more comfortable in exercising their legal rights.

U BC Faculty of Law, Rm 158, 1822 East Mall,

Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1

<http://www.lslap.bc.ca/main/?contact>

Phone: 604-822-5791 Fax: 604-822-1661

Glossary of Key Terminology

Continuum of Support describes the process that should occur in prevention, early intervention, and programming for all students.

Differentiated Instruction (DI) the process of tailoring lessons to meet each student's individual interests, needs, and strengths. Teaching this way gives students choice and flexibility in how they learn, and helps teachers personalize learning.

Extended School Based Team (ESBT) Team includes the members of the School Based Team in addition to other specialists from Inclusive Education, which may include an Occupational Therapist (OT), a School Psychologist, a Speech Language Pathologist, a teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, a Teacher for students who are visually impaired, and a Mental Health Clinician. Collaboration at this level provides an opportunity to utilize the expertise of the Inclusive Education Department staff to review the current interventions and provide further assistance. This review may lead toward renewed intervention planning within the context of existing school resources.

Individual Education Plan (IEP) A document that describes an educational program that has been developed for one specific student with special needs. It includes only the details of the educational program that have been modified or adapted.

Response to Intervention (RTI) Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. The RTI process begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all children in the general education classroom. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning. These services may be provided by a variety of personnel, including general education teachers, special educators, and specialists. Progress is closely monitored to assess both the learning rate and level of performance of individual students. Educational decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions are based on individual student response to instruction. RTI is designed for use when making decisions in both general education and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by child outcome data. *Excerpt from: What is RTI? See link for full article* <http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/what/whatisrti>

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) UDL is an educational approach that benefits all students by reducing barriers to learning and addressing the different learning needs of students.

School Based Team (SBT) Most schools have school-based teams that assist classroom teachers and help plan for special needs students. A teacher may contact the team with concerns about any aspect of a child's progress or behavior. This group meets to support

classroom teachers in meeting the needs of students with special needs. When a teacher has a concern the team meets to collaboratively problem solve and develop an action plan. The team may provide consultation on instructional or classroom management strategies, planning and coordination of services for a student, or access to additional school, district, community or regional agencies.

Appendix

1. When writing a letter to the school personnel advocating for your child, it may be helpful to include some of the points below:
 - Begin by expressing thanking the school for taking the time to read the letter. For example, this may sound like “I want to start this letter by saying thank you for your time. I believe that the team at the school has my child’s best interests at heart and that they value all children and their right to an inclusive, fair and equitable education.”
 - Identify what your main concerns are around the education of your child. For example, this could be number of things such as:
 - Access to support
 - Access to the curriculum in the classroom
 - Behavior concerns
 - Avoiding work
 - Indicate how this may be affecting your child academically, socially, emotionally and/or physically while at school and/or at home. For example, perhaps it is impacting his peer relationships, his ability to progress in his learning,
 - Express what you hope to achieve through writing the letter. For example, you may be hoping for a meeting to occur with the school team supporting your child (i.e. Support teacher, learning assistance teacher, classroom teacher, vice principal, principal, etc.). Alternatively, you may hope for a meeting with just the resource teacher and classroom teacher to start. Be clear around what your expectations are following the school receiving your letter.
 - Finish the letter by thanking the individual for their time and making it clear that you look forward to hearing back from them.
2. Gathering information about your child that may be useful for educational planning purposes:

The team involved in the IEP needs to gather relevant information before developing a plan. This may include assessments from previous years and reports from various professionals. Sometimes parents will be asked to prepare for the first IEP meeting by filling in forms about their child’s interests, likes, strengths, dislikes, needs, and challenges. Even if you have not been asked, it can be helpful to compile this information for the IEP meeting. See some suggested resources below to provide the team with meaningful information to support the needs of your child in developing a suitable educational program.



IEP PARENT INPUT

STUDENT NAME: _____

GRADE: _____

CASE MANAGER: _____

DATE: _____

CHILD'S STRENGTH: _____

CHILD'S WEAKNESSES: _____

TOP 3 WISHES FOR MY CHILD ACADEMIC AND/OR SOCIAL: _____

TOP 3 WISHES FOR MY CHILD ACADEMIC AND/OR SOCIAL: _____

SUZANNE PERREAULT
Counsellor, Inclusive Ed Advocate &
Workshop Facilitator



I WISH MY TEACHER KNEW...

NAME _____

I WOULD LIKE MY TEACHER TO... 

☐ WRITE BACK TO ME. ☐ SHARE WITH THE WHOLE CLASS.
☐ TALK WITH ME. ☐ SHARE WITH SCHOOL COUNSELOR.

I WISH MY TEACHER KNEW...

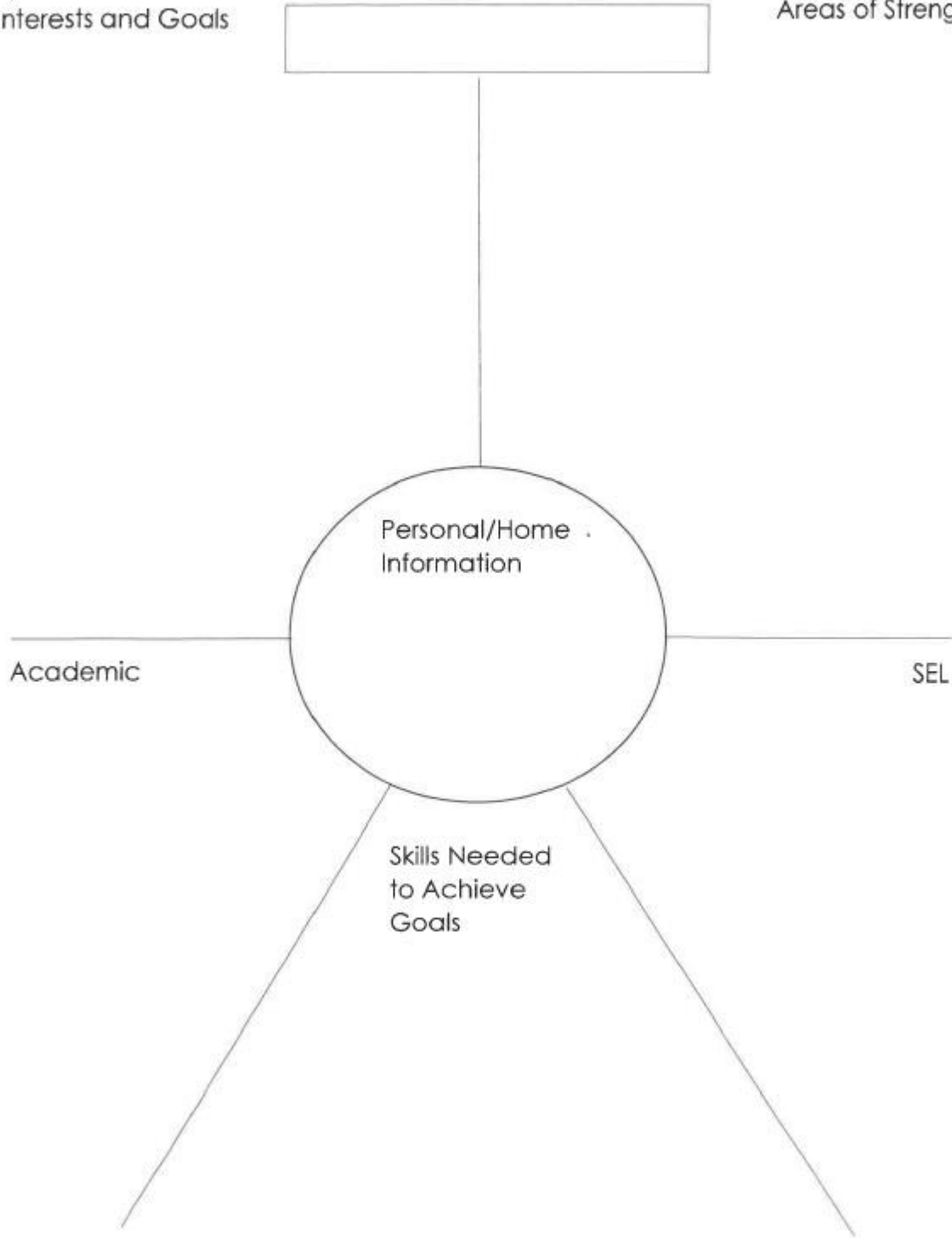
NAME _____

I WOULD LIKE MY TEACHER TO... 

☐ WRITE BACK TO ME. ☐ SHARE WITH THE WHOLE CLASS.
☐ TALK WITH ME. ☐ SHARE WITH SCHOOL COUNSELOR.

Interests and Goals

Areas of Strength





RECOGNIZE

The Good Stuff

THINGS, PEOPLE and PLACES that you adore:

One thing that you've worked **HARD** to achieve: _____

One thing that's going **WELL** right now: _____

Two subjects or pursuits you're excited about:

Two people you can count on for encouragement:

THREE THINGS to look forward to:

--	--	--



THE STUDENT'S VOICE

Place a checkmark beside the strategies that work best for you

- ☐ teacher explains aloud
- ☐ teacher writes directions on the board
- ☐ teacher does example on the board
- ☐ teacher asks another student to demonstrate
- ☐ teacher asks all students to try a sample at their desks
- ☐ I read the directions while the teacher reads them
- ☐ I read the directions on my own
- ☐ teacher shows me at my desk
- ☐ another student explains a second time and answers my questions
- ☐ I watch what another student does
- ☐ I try it on my own and then check with the teacher
- ☐ I try it on my own and then compare with another student

A. Tricks I use to keep myself organized _____

B. Tricks I use to keep myself focused and on task in class _____

C. Special things that teachers can do to help me learn _____

D. People who could encourage and support me: _____

E. Obstacles I need to avoid in working towards my goal: _____

F. I will celebrate my achievement by: _____
