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excellence**
DSBN 2023-2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

Learning and Growing Together

**SPECIAL EDUCATION
PLAN
2026-27**

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Section 1

MODEL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

A. FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

In the District School Board of Niagara (DSBN), Special Education is a collaborative process that encompasses the supports, services and strategies that provide opportunities for each student to reach their potential.

The general philosophy and service delivery model for the District School Board of Niagara is based on the following premises:

- Parents/guardians are an important part of a student's success and are therefore invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's education through ongoing communication between the family and school personnel.
- An In-School Team is expected to facilitate the collaborative problem solving, decision making and planning for students who are experiencing difficulty in their learning environment.
- An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is established for every student identified as Exceptional and any other student requiring an IEP as determined by the In-School Team.
- All students identified by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) as Exceptional, as defined by the Ministry of Education, are served in the most enabling environment available.
- A range of placements are available across the District School Board of Niagara.
- Age-appropriate opportunities for integration are planned, consistent with the learning needs of the student as part of the Individual Education Plan for each student.

B. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

- All students can learn and should experience learning success.
- All students with special learning needs will receive special education services to help meet those needs.
- Parents/guardians are an important part of a student's success.
- Students have a right to learn in the classroom setting that best meets their needs.
- School communities recognize the value and contribution of every student.
- Efforts to build or adapt educational services to accommodate students with disabilities in a way that promotes their inclusion and full participation are considered first. (*Ontario Human Rights Council*)

C. BOARD POLICIES

The Board's general model for Special Education is articulated within Board Policy D-9: Framework for the Provincial Special Education Services.

The Special Education Report outlined in the following pages complies with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Education Act and all regulations made under the Act.

Section 2 IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT, AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC) PROCESS

IDENTIFICATION AND PLACEMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC)

An Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) meets to decide if a student is exceptional and what placement and program will best support the student. The committee is made up of educators who meet with parents to talk child's special education needs. If a child is 16 years of age or older, they will be invited to take part in the meeting. The team works with parents to decide how to best support their child. This meeting happens once a year to review the decision. It can also happen more often if changes are needed.

The committee has three required members. A principal leads the meeting, and two other staff members take part. The District School Board of Niagara adheres to Ministry Regulation 181/98 and has established policies to reflect this regulation.

Regulation 181/98 outlines the responsibilities of the Board in identifying and placing students who have been identified as Exceptional. Prior to the IPRC being convened, parents/guardians will receive a Parents' Guide to Special Education. The Parents' Guide includes:

- in-depth information about the IPRC process.
- names and addresses of provincial and demonstration schools.
- lists of local associations eligible to be on SEAC.

The highlights that may affect practice are outlined below:

- The IPRC is required to define a pupil's exceptionality and lists the strengths and needs of the pupil
- If a pupil is placed in a special education class, reasons for the placement must be stated
- Parents/guardians and pupils aged 16 and over have a right to participate in all discussions and advocate for themselves. They may have a representative present to speak on their behalf or otherwise support them
- Parental input is welcomed at every IPRC
- The IPRC shall decide to place an exceptional pupil in a regular class when such a placement meets the pupil's needs and is in accordance with parental preference
- The IPRC may discuss Special Education programs and services and may make recommendations. The principal shall take committee recommendations into consideration for the development of the IEP
- An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed with the parent/guardian and pupil input, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older and must be developed within 30 school days after identification /placement

IPRC Membership (3 members mandatory)

- Principal to chair
- Learning Resource Teacher (LRT)/Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT)
- Classroom Teacher
- Consultant – Special Education is also available as a resource
- Although parents are not, by Ministry regulations, a member, they are an integral part of the collaborative process.

Role of the Principal - Chair

- Establish a warm, welcoming environment.
- Introduce all participants and establish the purpose of the meeting.
- Ensure that all relevant information is shared.
- Lead the discussion, keep the meeting focused and encourage input from all participants.
- Ensure that parents are included in the discussion and that they are comfortable with the decisions made.
- Summarize the decisions, explaining them clearly.
- Ensure that the necessary documentation has been completed.
- Secure signatures as appropriate.

Section 2 IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT, AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC) PROCESS

Location

IPRC meetings are typically held at the school attended by the student.

IPRC Data

For the 2025-26 school year there were 2702 IPRC Reviews at the DSBN.

Placement Decision Options

- Regular class with indirect support
- Regular class with resource assistance
- Regular class with withdrawal assistance
- Special Education class with partial integration
- Special Education class full-time

Annual Review

The date of the next Review must be noted. A Review must be held annually unless a parent/guardian chooses to dispense with the Review for that year.

Dispensing with the IPRC Meeting

There is an option for parents to dispense with the IPRC meeting when the meeting is reviewed. If the student has an identification and placement, parents may dispense (forego the meeting and keep things as is) and ask that the identification and placement remain the same for the upcoming year. If parents make this request, the student will continue with the current identification and placement, and a meeting will be offered one year from this date. Parents are required to sign documentation to support this request.

PRIOR TO THE IPRC MEETING

Parents/guardians are offered a Parents' Guide to Special Education

- prior to an assessment and/or
- in preparation for an IPRC.

School personnel should discuss the Parents' Guide to Special Education with parents/guardians. The LRT/SERT:

- Assembles all available information (i.e., Educational Profile)
- Confirms that any assessment results have been shared with the parents/guardians
- Confirms date with Consultant if their support is needed
- Issues an invitation to the IPRC meeting in writing 10 days in advance to the parents/guardians
- Invites the potential receiving school if a change in school program is being considered
- Prepares appropriate documents for the committee

At the Meeting – Framework of IPRC Meeting

- Parent/guardian input is welcomed and necessary.
- Student input is sought as appropriate.
- Interventions/strategies are reviewed.
- Strengths/needs are discussed.
- Progress is reviewed.
- Assessment results are discussed.
- A decision is arrived at and recorded:

1. Exceptional: designation - definition of exceptionality

Section 2 IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT, AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC) PROCESS

2. Placement:
- Regular class with indirect support
 - Regular class with resource assistance
 - Regular class with withdrawal assistance
 - Special Education class partial integration
 - Special Education class full time
- The most appropriate program, in response to the exceptionality and placement decision is discussed.
 - Agreement of parents/guardians is secured, and a copy of the decision is provided to parents/guardians.
 - The original is signed and placed in the OSR. (Ontario Student Record)

Following the Meeting

- Completed IPRC paperwork is filed in the OSR and provides documentation for Special Education Services
- The Board is notified (Administrative Secretary - Special Education, School Support Services) of the decision by submitting a copy of the parent/guardian signed IPRC form immediately by courier.

APPEAL PROCESS

It is the District School Board of Niagara's practice to endeavor to resolve issues or disputes prior to the commencement of an appeal process.

- After information gathering and further discussion, a second IPRC may be convened. Parents/guardians may request a second meeting with the Committee within 15 days of receiving the statement of decision. The request should be sent to the Principal of the school that the student presently attends.
- The chair of the IPRC will arrange for the committee to meet, as soon as possible, with the parent/guardian or pupil (16 or over).
- After discussion, the committee's decision will be forwarded in writing to each of the persons involved in the IPRC, stating whether any changes in the decision were made.
- Within 30 days of receipt of the original decision or within 15 days of receipt of the decision of the aforementioned second meeting, parents/guardians who disagree with the Committee's decision, must give written notification of their intention to appeal the decision to the Secretary of the District School Board of Niagara, 191 Carlton Street, St. Catharines, Ontario. L2R 7P4
- By filing a notice of appeal, a hearing by a Special Education Appeal Board is required.

All appeals will be handled in accordance with
Regulation 181/98 - Section VI Appeals from Committee Decisions

A parent/guardian may, by filing a notice of appeal, require a hearing by the Special Education Appeal Board in respect of a Committee decision:

- that the pupil is an exceptional pupil
- that the pupil is not an exceptional pupil
- regarding the placement of the pupil.

A notice of appeal shall indicate with which decision the parent/guardian disagrees and shall include a statement that sets out the nature of the disagreement.

The Special Education Appeal Board shall be composed of:

- one member selected by the Board
- one member selected by the parent/guardian of the pupil
- a chair jointly selected by the two members described above.

Section 2 IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT, AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC) PROCESS

Selection of the Board and parent/guardian selectees shall take place within 15 days of receipt of the appeal by the Secretary of the Board. Selection of the chair shall be made within the next 15 days.

No member or employee of the Board or Ministry of Education shall be selected under (i) nor will anyone with prior involvement be selected.

The chair of the committee making the contested decision will provide:

- a record of the committee proceeding including the statement of decision
- any reports, assessments, or other documents.
- There were no appeals conducted in the 2025-26 school year for DSBN.

The Board shall provide secretarial and administrative services and in accordance with policies that apply to members of the Board, pay travelling and other expenses incurred.

The chair will arrange for a meeting and shall give notice of the meeting to the parent/guardian (pupil 16 yrs. or over). The meeting shall take place within 30 days of the selection of the chair. The meeting shall be conducted in an informal manner.

- Any person who in the opinion of the chair may be able to contribute shall be invited to attend.
- Where the Appeal Board is satisfied that views and opinions have been sufficiently presented, the meeting will end.

Within 3 days, the Appeal Board will:

- agree with the committee and recommend that the decision be implemented
- disagree with the committee and make a recommendation to the Board about the pupil's identification, placement, or both.

The Special Education Appeal Board shall send a written statement of its recommendations to:

- a parent/guardian of the pupil
- where pupil is over 16, the pupil
- the chair of the committee
- the Principal of the school in which the pupil is placed;
- the designated representative of the Board.

A written statement shall be accompanied by written reasons for the recommendations.

Within 30 days of receipt of the recommendations, the Board shall decide what action to take and shall give notice in writing of the decision. The Board shall consider the Appeal Board's recommendation but is not limited to the action recommended. The notice to parent/guardian of the Board's decision shall include an explanation of the further right of appeal provided for by Section 57 of the Act.

The Board shall implement a decision when:

- a parent/guardian consents in writing
- 30 days have elapsed, and no further notice of appeal has been received
- an appeal under Section 57 is dismissed or abandoned.

There were no appeals conducted in the 2025-26 school year for the DSBN.

Section 2 IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT, AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC) PROCESS

District School Board of Niagara
191 Carlton Street St Catharines, ON L2R 7P4

Identification, Placement and Review Committee
IPRC Statement of Decision

Student Name _____ Date of Birth _____ OEN _____
Grade _____ Year _____

School _____
Parent/Guardian _____ Phone _____
Address _____

Effective Date _____ ☐ Initial IPRC ☐ Review IPRC
Current Status _____ Initial IPRC Date _____
Identification _____ Placement _____

Committee Members		Meeting Participants	
Name	Title	Name	Role
Committee Determination			
Decision			
Identification		Placement	
Reasons for Special Class Placement (if applicable)			

Date _____

Parent/Guardian Response to Statement of Decision
We'll agree with the above decision(s). ☐ Yes ☐ No

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Signature _____ Date _____

Student Signature if 16 or older _____ Date _____

Program	Location	Program Start Date	Next Review Date

Documentation to support IPRC Statement of Decision, Student Areas of Strengths and Needs and Recommendations for an IEP are listed on the reverse.

to the Parent/Guardian and Students 16 years of age and older

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Section 2 IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT, AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC) PROCESS



District School Board of Niagara
191 Carlton Street St Catharines, ON L2R 7P4

Identification, Placement and Review Committee IPRC Statement of Decision

Documentation to Support IPRC Decision:	
Area of Strength	Area of Need
Program Recommendations	

to the Parent/Guardian and Students 18 years of age and older

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Section 3 SPECIAL EDUCATION PLACEMENTS PROVIDED BY THE BOARD

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The District School Board of Niagara is committed to the following guiding principles regarding their Special Education Programs and Services.

- The Board provides Special Education programs and services to students based on individual need.
- Each exceptional student as defined by the Ministry of Education is served in the most enabling environment available for the student.
- Programs and services are consistent with the Board's Framework for the Provision of Special Education Services - Policy D-9.
- Placement of a student in a regular class is the first option considered by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC).
- A range of placements are available across the District School Board of Niagara.
 - Regular Class with Indirect Support
 - Regular Class with resource assistance
 - Regular Class with withdrawal assistance
 - Special Education Class with Partial Integration
 - Special Education Class Full Time
- An Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be established for every identified student and any other student requiring an IEP as determined by the In-School Team (IST) or ISSST (In-School Student Success Team).
- Appropriate accommodations and modifications based on a student's strengths and needs will be implemented.
- Age-appropriate opportunities for integration will be planned, consistent with the learning needs of the student as part of the Individual Education Plan for each student.
- Reporting will be consistent with the requirements of the Provincial Report Card.
- Alternative subjects or courses will be reported on the DSBN Alternative Report Card.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Services and programs provided are based on individual student strengths and needs and may result in:

- Accommodations provided by the classroom teacher to meet the students' needs.
- Development of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) under the guidance of the In-School Team.
- Planned intervention of an Elementary Learning Resource Teacher (LRT) or Secondary Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT)
 - Examples:
 - Joint planning with classroom teacher
 - In class support
 - Withdrawal to a resource room
- Support of the Special Education Support Services - Special Education Team.
- Special Education class placement as determined by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC).
- Support for application to outside agencies (e.g., Home and Community Care Support Services).

For all exceptionalities a range of placement options is available within the regular classroom, regular class with indirect support, resource assistance and withdrawal assistance. The LRT/SERT is a qualified Special Education teacher who may support students in regular education.

Special class placements are available for some students as outlined below.

Section 3 SPECIAL EDUCATION PLACEMENTS PROVIDED BY THE BOARD

The IPRC first considers placement in a regular class. When determining the most enabling environment, the IPRC reviews the students' strengths and needs. The programs listed below provide differentiated learning environments to support a range of student needs.

Integration remains an important part of these programs, as appropriate opportunities to learn and participate with peers support each student's inclusion, independence, and connection to the broader school community. These opportunities are planned individually and reflected in the student's IEP.

SEAC members make recommendations on any matter affecting the establishment, development, and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional students. SEAC meetings include special education updates and staff presentations that invite feedback on existing or newly developed special education placements.

CRITERIA USED FOR DETERMINING NEED TO CHANGE A STUDENT'S PLACEMENT FROM THE REGULAR CLASSROOM

- In-School Team reviews the strategies outlined in the student's IEP based on current assessment data
- Accommodations and/or Modifications as outlined in the student's IEP are adjusted as necessary
- Parents/guardians are key players in the decision-making process regarding their child's program
- Consideration is given to the appropriateness of the current placement by school, parent/guardian, and Special Education Support Services
- Change of placement, if required, is through the IPRC process for students that are identified, for those that are non-identified changes to placement are made through school and parent collaboration.

Structured Strategies Program

This program is intended to provide short-term intensive intervention for students with demonstrated need, so they can gain the skills needed to continue their education in their home school with learned strategies in place. The program is for students that require support for social and emotional regulation and social skills, as well as a highly structured environment. A blend of Ontario Curriculum and alternative programming is taught by a qualified special education teacher, and the class is supported by an educational assistant. Strategies may include, levelled breaks, sensory breaks, movement breaks, social skills programming, and assistive technology. The maximum class size for this program is eight (8) students.

Communication Program

This program supports students with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder or multiple exceptionalities that have significant needs in the areas of expressive and receptive communication skills. Programming is based around individual needs and addressed through alternative curriculum. Augmentative communication strategies are used to promote independence, communication, and sensory regulation. ABA Strategies and transition planning are an integral part of the program as well as, self-regulation and social skills programming. This program is taught by a qualified special education teacher and the class is supported by an educational assistant(s). The maximum class size for this program is eight (8) students.

Fundamental Skills Program

This program supports students with significant intellectual disabilities and alternative programming needs at the elementary level. Students are working on significantly modified curriculum expectations and programming is supplemented with functional skill development. In the program, students gain independent living skills, receive intensive academic support through individualized programming, and receive intensive support for physical needs as required. This program is taught by a qualified special education teacher and the class is supported by an educational assistant(s). The maximum class size for this program is ten (10) students.

Specialized School to Community Program

This program supports students with significant intellectual disabilities and alternative programming needs at the secondary level. Students may be working on modified Ontario Curriculum expectations and programming is

supplemented with functional and vocational skill development as needed. In this program students gain independent living skills, receive intensive academic supports through individualized programming, and receive support for intensive physical needs as required. Transition to the community is an integral part of the program, with a focus on building connections to community supports as students approach graduation. The maximum class size for this program is ten (10) students.

Elementary Part-Time Enrichment Program

This program supports students with an unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that would benefit from differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth serviced in the Elementary Part-Time Enrichment Program. Students access activities that promoted Higher Order Thinking Skills. Enrichment programming for students in grades 5 to 8 is offered at various sites throughout the board.

Alternative Learning Options

When the full range of Special Education placement options of the Board has been exhausted, the Board in consultation with parents/guardians, will explore DSBN provided alternative education options.

Other options include Provincial and Demonstration Schools, Instructional Outreach or placement in an Education and Community Partnership Program (ECP) or Care and Treatment Educational Program (CTEP), as available.

The Board will also support the parents/guardians in accessing alternative educational programming supports with various community partners and care and treatment facilities.

Section 4 INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEP)

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEPs)

In accordance with Ontario Ministry of Education IEP standards, IEPs are developed, implemented, monitored, reviewed, and updated to reflect the student's strengths, needs, accommodations, modifications, alternative expectations, assessment strategies, and transition planning, as applicable.

An Individual Education Plan is a written plan that outlines programming for a student with special education needs. An IEP defines a student's strengths and needs, identifying accommodations and/or modified expectations from the Ontario Curriculum or alternative expectations that make up a student's program. The IEP is a working document and as such, revisions and updates are to be expected. Parental input is sought in the development of the IEP and parents are informed about any changes to the IEP throughout the school year. A copy of the IEP is kept in your child's Ontario School Record (OSR).

All students identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) must have an IEP. Students who have not been identified as exceptional but are working with accommodations, or on modified or alternative curriculum will also have an IEP put in place.

Accommodations provide students with special teaching strategies, assessment strategies, human supports and/or individualized equipment to enable a student to learn and demonstrate learning. Accommodations do not alter the Ontario Curriculum expectations.

Modifications are changes made in the Ontario Curriculum expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs. Expectations may be at a different grade level and/or an increase or decrease in the number and/or complexity of the Ontario Curriculum.

Alternative expectations are developed to help students acquire knowledge and skills that are not represented in the Ontario Curriculum. Some examples include: social skills, orientation/ mobility training and personal care programs.

The IEP must include the following items:

- Reasons for developing the IEP
- A profile of the student, including the student's name, date of birth, student number, current grade, exceptionality, and placement, as well as the name of the student's school and its principal and the date of the student's most recent IPRC.
- Relevant assessment data
- The student's strengths and needs
- Specialized health support services required by the student
- The subjects, courses, or alternative programs to which the IEP applies
- Accommodations required by the student
- Any accommodations for or exemptions from provincial assessments
- The student's current level of achievement in every subject or course in which modified expectations are required and in every alternative program
- Modified or alternative expectations for the reporting period
- Teaching strategies and other accommodations tailored to the student's strengths, needs, learning style, and interests, to support learning and determine progress in achieving modified or alternative expectations
- Human resources (both teaching and non-teaching) to be provided
- Reporting dates for evaluations and an indication of the way in which student progress will be reported to parents
- A transition plan that identifies the student's goals and the steps and actions required to enable the student to achieve those goals
- A record of parent/student consultations
- A record of staff review and updating of the IEP
- Signatures of the principal, parent, and student if 16 or older

Should a parent have questions or concerns about their child's progress, or programming the following steps are suggested:

- The parent/guardian is requested to write down any questions or concerns regarding the IEP.
- The teacher with primary responsibility for the development of the IEP (elementary teacher(s) or secondary SERT) will arrange a time to meet with you to review your concerns or questions. Agreed upon changes can be made and a copy of the revised IEP sent home.
- Should any questions and/or concerns remain unanswered, a second meeting may be arranged to include the school Principal or Vice-Principal. The Administration can assist in answering your questions and will work with you to best serve your child.

Section 4 INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEP)



District School Board of Niagara
191 Carlton Street St Catharines, ON L2R 7P4

IEP

REASON FOR DEVELOPING THE IEP

☐ Student identified as Exceptional by IPRC
 ☐ Student not identified by IPRC but requires special education program/services, including accommodations and/or modified/alternative learning expectations

STUDENT PROFILE

Name _____ Date of Birth: _____
 Student OEN: _____
 School _____
 Principal _____ Grade Level _____ Term _____ School Year: _____
 Most Recent IPRC Date: _____ Date Annual Review Waived by Parent/Guardian: _____
 Exceptionality _____
 Placement: _____ Program _____

ASSESSMENT DATA

Listed below are the relevant educational, medical/health (hearing, vision, physical, neurological), psychological, speech/language, occupational, physiotherapy, and behavioural assessments.

Information Source	Date	Summary of Results

Relevant Medical Conditions ☐ Yes (Indicate type below) ☐ No

Health Support Services/Personal Support Required ☐ Yes (Indicate type below) ☐ No

STUDENT'S STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

Area of Strength	Area of Need

SUBJECTS, COURSES, OR ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS TO WHICH THE IEP APPLIES

Courses are identified as Accommodated only (AC), Modified (MOD), or Alternative (ALT).

☐ AC ☐ MOD ☐ ALT

☐ AC ☐ MOD ☐ ALT

Program Exemptions or School Compulsory Course Substitutions

☐ Yes (provide educational rationale) ☐ No

Educational Rationale

For secondary students only:

Student is currently working towards attainment of the:

☐ Ontario Secondary School Diploma
 ☐ Ontario Secondary School Certificate
 ☐ Certificate of Accomplishment

Grade: _____

Homeroom: _____

Section 4 INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEP)

Reporting Format

- ☐ Provincial Report Card
☐ Alternative Report

Reporting Dates:

ACCOMMODATIONS

(Accommodations are assumed to be the same for all subjects/program areas unless otherwise indicated.)

Instructional Accommodations	Environmental Accommodations	Assessment Accommodations

Individualized Equipment ☐ Yes (list below) ☐ No

TRANSITION PLAN

Actions Required at This Time: ☐ Yes ☐ No Transition support is required at this time.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Type of Service	Personnel	Initiation Date	Frequency or Intensity	Location

IEP DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Staff Member	Role

SOURCES CONSULTED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IEP

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ Academic Early Reading | ☐ Auditory Assessments | ☐ Classroom Assessments |
| ☐ IPRC Statement of Decision | ☐ Medical Documentation | ☐ Ontario Student Record |
| ☐ Parents/Guardians | ☐ Previous IEP | ☐ Provincial Report Card |
| ☐ Psychological Assessment | ☐ Speech/Language Assessment | ☐ Student |
| ☐ Other sources (list below) | | |

DATE OF PLACEMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

- ☐ 1) First day of attendance in new special education program
☐ 2) First day of the new school year or semester in which the student is continuing in a placement
☐ 3) First day of the student's enrolment in a special education program that he/she begins in mid-year or mid-semester as the result of a change of placement

Date of Placement:

Completion Date of IEP Development Phase (within 30 school days following the Date of Placement):

Grade:

Homeroom:

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Section 4 INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEP)

This IEP has been developed according to the ministry's standards and appropriately addresses the student's strengths and needs.

Principal's Signature _____

Date _____

LOG OF PARENT/STUDENT CONSULTATION AND STAFF REVIEW/UPDATING

Name _____

Grade Level _____

Homeroom: _____

Date	Staff	Type	Reason	Description of Activity	Feedback / Outcome

Involvement of Parent/Guardian and Student (If student is 18 or older)

I was consulted in the development of this IEP

☐ Parent / Guardian

☐ Student

I declined the opportunity to be consulted in the development of this IEP

☐ Parent / Guardian

☐ Student

I have received a copy of this IEP

☐ Parent / Guardian

☐ Student

Parent / Guardian and Student Comments:

Parent / Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

Student Signature (if 15 or older) _____

Date _____

Grade: _____

Homeroom: _____

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Section 5 SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF

The allocation of Special Education Staff is reviewed each year and allocated based on student needs. (*Full-Time Equivalent)

ABA Facilitator(8.0 FTE*)

The ABA Facilitator works with administrators, teachers and multi-disciplinary teams by providing and coordinating Applied Behaviour Analysis instructional methods and resources at the board and school level. The ABA Facilitator is responsible to the Student Achievement Leader - Special Education for the performance of assigned duties.

Braillist

The Brailist is a member of a multi-disciplinary resource team reporting to the Student Achievement Leader – Special Education and works closely with the Resource Teacher - Blind and Low Vision, and in consultation with a specialist teacher of the blind or deaf-blind.

Central Educational Assistant (14.0 FTE*)

The Central Educational Assistant provides resources and supports for programming in schools. They also may assist with Special Education processes and projects as required. The Central Educational Assistant reports directly to the Senior Manager of Special Education.

Chief Psychologist (1.0 FTE*)

The Chief Psychologist reports to the Superintendent responsible for Special Education. The Chief Psychologist assumes responsibility for monitoring and maintaining the system of psychological services delivery and provides resource support to Special Education, as assigned.

Consultant – Special Education (9.0 FTE*)

The Consultant – Special Education's duties consist of advising and assisting Superintendents, Principals, Teachers, Designated Early Childhood Educators, Educational Assistants, and Parents/Guardians in matters related to Special Education programs and services. The Consultant – Special Education is responsible to the Student Achievement Leader - Special Education for the performance of assigned duties.

Educational Assistant (EA) (506.0 FTE*) Educational Assistants are assigned to schools that have special education classes and to schools where there are students who require intensive support in regular classrooms. EAs support students with specified physical needs including visual, auditory, ambulatory, and personal care. Students exhibiting severe behavioural needs may also receive EA support to ensure the safety of themselves and others. Educational Assistants are under the supervision of the Principal and receive direction from the Classroom Teacher.

The Board's Educational Assistant Allocation and Placement Committee meets throughout the year to review student/school needs and determines the Educational Assistant assignments. This committee includes staff who are knowledgeable about the students with special education needs within their complement of schools.

Educational Audiologist

DSBN contracts the services of an Educational Audiologist who works collaboratively with the Resource Teacher - Deaf and Hard of Hearing to support the needs of students within the system.

Interpreter (4.0 FTE*)

The role of the Interpreter is to facilitate communication between students who are deaf or hard of hearing and others within the educational environment. In addition, the Interpreter functions as an integral part of the educational team by commenting on the interpreting process. The Interpreter works under the supervision of the school Principal and in consultation with a qualified teacher of the deaf.

Section 5 SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF

Intervenor (1.0 FTE*)

The role of the Intervenor is to support students with Acquired/Congenital Deafblindness to access information and interact with their environment. It is a position that requires maintaining the student's rights to privacy and dignity and ensuring personal student safety, recognizing the constraints inherent in working within a school setting.

Learning Resource Teacher (LRT) (108.5 FTE*)

The role of the Learning Resource Teacher (LRT) is to support students achieving success by providing resource assistance (in-class), withdrawal support and/or indirect service to exceptional and at-risk students in a collaborative manner. This school-based special educator is placed in elementary schools under the direct supervision of the Principal.

Occupational Therapist (1.0 FTE*)

The Occupational Therapist (OT) is responsible to the Student Achievement Leader - Special Education and is a regulated health professional who assesses and provides recommendations and strategies regarding fine motor skills, sensory processing skills, visual perception, and organizational skills necessary for success in the classroom.

Psycho-Educational Consultant (1.0 FTE*)

The Psycho-Educational Consultant provides services of a psychological nature under the supervision of a Member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario and participates in a multi-disciplinary team to problem-solve Special Education issues and the needs of individual students. The Psycho-Education Consultant is responsible to the Chief Psychologist for the performance of assigned duties.

Resource Teacher – Special Education (2.0 FTE*)

The Resource Teacher – Special Education provides program strategies or suggestions, resources and services to meet the needs of students requiring accommodation/modification of program within classrooms for students with Blind and Low Vision needs, and Deaf and Hard of Hearing needs. The Resource Teachers of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Blind Low Vision are responsible to the Student Achievement Leader - Special Education for the performance of assigned duties.

Special Education Information Coordinator (1.0 FTE*)

The Special Education Information Coordinator manages student records and special education data to support accurate reporting, documentation, and compliance requirements. The Coordinator works closely with schools, Special Education Support Services (SESS), and other departments to ensure information is up to date, timelines are met, and special education processes run smoothly and efficiently.

Special Education Information Technology Coordinator (1.0 FTE*)

The Special Education Information Technology Coordinator supports the effective use of technology to enhance access, engagement, and independence for diverse learners across the DSBN. As part of Special Education Support Services, this role provides training, coaching, resource development, and implementation support to staff, while collaborating with school teams and departments to ensure technology-based solutions are responsive to student and staff needs.

Special Education Teacher (101.0 FTE*)

Special Education Teachers support low enrolment special education programs, provides intensive, individualized programming and support for students with complex learning needs. The teacher collaborates with school staff, families, and community partners to develop and implement specialized educational programs, monitor student progress, and create inclusive learning opportunities that maximize student achievement, independence, and well-being.

Section 5 SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF

Special Equipment Amount (SEA) Supervisor (1.0 FTE*)

The SEA Supervisor, under the direction of the Student Achievement Leader – Special Education, will lead and support all aspects of SEA funding. This role would oversee the work of the SEA Team while acting as the lead SEA contact for the Ministry of Education. Additionally, the SEA Supervisor would be responsible for the ongoing development of SEA processes in compliance with Ministry guidelines, forward planning and troubleshooting, and the coordination of various DSBN departments to ensure exceptional SEA services at the system-level, school-level, and for individual students.

Special Equipment Education Assistant (4.0 FTE*)

The Education Assistant – Technology assists with the development, training and support for staff and students in the use of various software and assistive technologies to enhance learning outcomes.

Senior Manager Special Education (1.0 FTE*)

Senior Manager – Special Education is responsible for managing and coordinating the service delivery of Special Education supports and resources such as Board funding and allocations, and agency partnerships and protocols. The Senior Manager reports to the Superintendent of Special Education.

Social Worker (30.0 FTE*)

Social Workers are responsible to the Manager of Social Work and are members of the Support Triad (Consultant, Educational Assistant and Social Worker) that assist schools in programming and planning for students with significant emotional, behavioural, or mental health issues and cultural concerns.

Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) (25.0 FTE*)

The SERT is a resource to classroom teachers, provides in-class, withdrawal support and/or indirect service to exceptional and at-risk students, and is able to work with parents/guardians in a pro-active manner. This school-based special educator is placed in secondary schools under the direct supervision of the Principal.

Speech Language Pathologist (6.0 FTE*)

The Speech-Language Pathologist is a regulated health professional who assesses and provides ongoing support for the speech and language needs of students. The Speech-Language Pathologist is responsible to the Student Achievement Leader - Special Education for the performance of assigned duties.

Specialized Program Multidisciplinary Team

This team supports the Low Enrolment Programs throughout the board. The team has a special education consultant, ABA facilitators, , and central educational assistants. One of the key roles of this team is to build capacity with staff to provide intensive supports for students with complex needs. The team works with staff to support programming, various types of transitions, social skills and self-regulation skill building. Each team will have direct and immediate access to central resources such as a movement resource teacher, occupational therapist and psychoeducational support and other required services.

Student Achievement Leader – Special Education K- 8

The Student Achievement Leader - Special Education is responsible for the co-ordination and supervision of Special Education staff and grades K- 8 student supports and reports directly to the Superintendent responsible for Special Education.

Section 5 SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF

Student Achievement Leader – Special Education 9-12

The Student Achievement Leader - Special Education is responsible for the co-ordination and supervision of Special Education staff and grade 9 -12 student supports and reports directly to the Superintendent responsible for Special Education.

Superintendent for Special Education

The Superintendent responsible for Special Education supervises Special Education service delivery and support for the system. The Superintendent of Special Education reports directly to the Director of Education.

Section 6 SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT

SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT

The District School Board of Niagara has allocated funding for the purchase of specialized equipment required by students.

Examples of Specialized Equipment:

- therapy equipment (e.g., therapy balls, wedges, rolls, etc.)
- sensory equipment (e.g., weighted vests, lap pads, etc.)
- fine motor equipment (e.g., slant boards, pencil grips, etc.)

Criteria for Student Eligibility

Generally, a therapist makes a request for specialized equipment based on specific student needs. Requests are reviewed by Special Education Staff in consultation with the school principal.

Tracking Specialized Equipment

There is a central database used to track equipment assigned to meet student needs. When students move, or their needs change, equipment may be transferred or reallocated.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AMOUNT (SEA) CLAIMS

The Ministry of Education provides Special Equipment Amount funding to assist school boards with the cost of essential equipment required to support students with special needs to access the Ontario curriculum or board determined program or to attend school. All equipment must be deemed essential and be recommended by a qualified professional.

Examples of SEA Funded equipment:

- FM systems
- sensory equipment
- change tables
- ceiling lifts/portable lifts
- print enlargers
- amplification systems
- adaptive seating and workstations
- braille writers
- positioning devices
- computer hardware and specialized software
- warranties, service contracts, training associated with specific equipment

Criteria for Student Eligibility

A SEA Claim for equipment requires the following documentation:

- an assessment or assessments on file from an appropriately qualified professional such as a psychologist, audiologist, occupational therapist, or physiotherapist. The assessment must include a diagnosis of the condition that the equipment is meant to address and a recommendation regarding the specific types of equipment that the student requires to address their needs. The assessment must indicate that the equipment is essential to support the student. In some cases, more than one professional may need to be consulted.
- evidence of proof of purchase, such as a copy of any purchase orders and invoices.
- a current copy of the student's Individual Education Plan indicating the use of the equipment to support the student's program.

Section 6 SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT

Tracking SEA Claims

A letter detailing the SEA equipment is emailed to the principal and placed in the student's OSR. The District School Board of Niagara maintains a database that provides a detailed inventory of existing equipment. When a student graduates, or it is deemed that the equipment is no longer of benefit to the student, SEA funded equipment will be reallocated within DSBN.

SEA Portability

Equipment purchased through SEA funding is considered to be portable which means that it should be transferred when the student changes schools or moves to a different school board within Ontario. It is the responsibility of Special Education Support Services to contact the previous board to request the transfer of equipment and will incur any shipping or handling costs associated with the transfer of equipment.

The sending board will not be reimbursed by the Ministry, since the equipment was purchased on behalf of the student based on his/her needs. Equipment acquired through a "shared claim" does not always move to a new location with the student

Section 7 TRANSPORTATION FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

Transportation

Niagara Student Transportation Services (NSTS) is a consortium that services the District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) and the Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB). The mandate of NSTS is to provide safe, efficient, and effective student transportation services. In accordance with the Education Act, school boards may provide home-to-school or school-to-school transportation to students who are within the Board's jurisdiction or control. In all cases (other than those situations specified in the Education Act), transportation is a privilege, not a right, and it may be withdrawn at any time.

The approved Board student transportation policy sets the eligibility criteria and students may be provided transportation on the basis of distance, hazardous walking routes or approved program attendance. Transportation may also be provided to students with exceptional needs with the approval from the authorized department.

The Special Education Support Services' Department in consultation with the school and NSTS will determine if a student is eligible for transportation due to exceptional needs and defines the specific transportation requirements to maintain the safety of all students. (i.e., individual transportation, bus monitor etc.)

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that the school is aware of any health condition that may require immediate medical attention. The school provides this information for inclusion on the bus route copy so that the bus driver can respond accordingly in urgent situations. Transportation is an integral part of a student's school experience and should account for their personal abilities and needs. An Individual Student Transportation Plan (ISTP) is a key part of ensuring students have successful experiences in school.

There are times when decisions need to be made on whether a student with special needs will be transported with other children or whether it is in the best interest of the student to be transported separately. These decisions are made between the school teams, special education support service staff, NSTS, parents/guardians and reviewed by the Special Education Student Achievement Leaders, with final approval determined by the Superintendent of Student Achievement and Well-Being – Special Education.

In situations where a student does not qualify for transportation under the policy eligibility criteria, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to ensure that the student gets to and from school safely.

Information regarding students' specific transportation arrangements is available at www.nsts.ca.

NSTS applies the Board approved transportation policy and plans and administers service using contracted school buses, taxis or through a Public Transit Commission.

The Board's transportation procurement and selection process places a strong emphasis on student safety, particularly for students with exceptional or specialized transportation requirements. The safety criteria used in the tendering and selection of transportation providers for exceptional students are evaluated based on several safety-related criteria, including:

- Compliance with all applicable legislative and regulatory requirements;
- Vehicle safety standards, maintenance programs, and inspection records;
- Availability of appropriate accessibility and specialized equipment;
- Driver and monitor qualifications, licensing, and background screening;
- Specialized training related to student management, medical needs, and emergency response;
- Demonstrated safety performance and incident history;
- Emergency preparedness and communication protocols; and
- The provider's ability to safely accommodate and support the individual needs of exceptional students.

These criteria are part of the Home-to-School transportation tendering process and are monitored through contract management, performance reviews, and compliance oversight to support safe student transportation.

Section 7 TRANSPORTATION FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS



Individual Student Transportation Plan

Rationale:

Transportation is an integral part of a student's school experience and should account for their personal abilities and needs. An **Individual Student Transportation Plan (ISTP)** is a key part of ensuring students have successful experiences in school.

Insert
Photo
Here

Student & School Contact Info		Date Implemented:	
Student:		Grade:	
Home Address:		School & Address:	
Parent & Contact Info:		School Phone:	

Bus & Route Information (Route # _____)	☐ Modified Day:	Home/Corner Pick up time:	School Pick up time:	ETA Home/Corner Drop off time:
☐ Big Bus - Corner Stop ☐ Big Bus - Home Stop ☐ Small Bus - Corner Stop ☐ Small Bus - Home Stop	☐ Seatbelt Required* ☐ Booster Seat Required ☐ Car Seat Required* ☐ Support Harness Required*	*Note any use of specialized or restrictive seating for transportation must involve taking proper measurements for safety reasons by a licensed professional (OT/PT) and approved by a parent/guardian before being prescribed.		
☐ Climate controlled vehicle ☐ Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle ☐ Adaptive Stroller ☐ High-back ☐ Reclining ☐ Manual ☐ Motorized	☐ Other Considerations:			

Student Information	
☐ Completely Verbal ☐ Partially Verbal ☐ Non-Verbal ☐ Blind / Low Vision ☐ Deaf / Hard of Hearing ☐ Autism Spectrum Disorder ☐ Diabetes ☐ Epilepsy / Seizure ☐ Asthma ☐ Behaviour ☐ Sensitivity to sensory stimuli ☐ Shunt ☐ ELL ☐ Other: _____	

Section 7 TRANSPORTATION FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

Student Safety	
Does the student pose a safety risk while in transit? ☐ Yes ☐ No	
Explain:	

Strategies to Support Transportation			
☐ Strategic Seating ☐ Front of bus ☐ Back of bus ☐ Middle Section ☐ Window Seat ☐ Aisle Seat	☐ Sitting alone away from peers and staff (providing personal space)	☐ Sitting with a rider to help with regulation and staying seated	☐ Must be met by staff / parent / caregiver on drop off / pick up <u>at door to bus (hand off)</u>
☐ Use of chewelry	☐ Transition Tool / Item used while riding and seated	☐ Sensory Kit and/or Squeeze it Kit while riding	☐ Companion Animal
☐ Verbal prompts to go to and remain seated in upright position	☐ Guide to seat (e.g., holding hand, side by side escort, gestures)	☐ Use of visuals / picture system to prompt expected behaviour	☐ Limiting verbal dialogue to avoid escalation
☐ Conversing with student (e.g., friendly greetings, singing a familiar song)	☐ Use of Walker / Cane / Braces for mobility ☐ collapsible ☐ non-collapsible	☐ Step Stool Access	☐ Auditory Equipment (e.g. listening device)
Other Strategies to use:			

AUTHORIZATION/PLAN REVIEW

INDIVIDUALS WITH WHOM THIS PLAN IS TO BE SHARED: DSBN Teaching and Support Staff, Niagara Student Transportation Services

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Section 8 TRANSITION PLANNING

Transition Planning

The transition from school to work, further education, and community living can be particularly challenging for some students. The probability of a successful transition is significantly increased when schools work with parents/guardians, employers, community agencies, and providers of further education to develop coordinated transition plans for exceptional students. (*Transition Planning: A Resource Guide 2002*) Transition plans can include a variety of supports and may take place for different reasons. (e.g., school change, classroom change, transitions during school, staff changes). All students that are supported by an Individual Education Plan will have a transition plan in place.

Some examples of effective transition practices in the District School Board of Niagara include, but are not limited to:

Preschool Transition Process – DSBN staff work with local Preschool Resource Consultants and various community agencies to ensure preschoolers with educational needs enter DSBN schools successfully. Developing transition plans, sharing information and providing support to families new to DSBN are key components to the Preschool Transition Process

Transition for Students with Autism – Many individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have difficulty coping with novel and unexpected events or transition between activities and environments, leading to anxiety and/or behaviours. Appropriate planning for transition is vital in helping a student with ASD to prepare for and adjust for changes and should begin well in advance of the expected change for the student. In the DSBN, transition plans are included in the student's IEP and can include school to school, classroom to classroom and activity to activity supports.

Grade 8 to Grade 9 Transition – A transition form is completed for every student entering grade 9. This information is shared with the receiving school staff to ensure that the learning strengths and needs of each student are considered before the student even starts secondary school. For students with special education needs, a transition plan is developed as part of the individual education plan and transition meetings are held with staff from both the elementary and secondary school.

Transition for Students who are Deaf and/or Hard of Hearing – DSBN Resource Teachers – Deaf and Hard of Hearing, works collaboratively with the Infant Hearing Program, service agencies such as Speech Services Niagara (SSN), VOICE Auditory Verbal Therapists, American Sign Language Consultants and the Provincial Schools for the Deaf – Home Visiting Teachers to ensure a smooth transition to a school within the DSBN, and establish program goals for students.

Transition Aged Youth (TAY) Planning - Transition Aged Youth planning helps students with developmental disabilities prepare for adulthood. It brings together the student, family, school staff, and community partners to create one plan that supports the student's goals, daily living skills, community participation, work opportunities, and future adult services. TAY planning usually begins in Grade 9, or around age 14, and is reviewed each year until age 18. The school or a community agency may lead the process, but school staff help schedule, guide, or support the meeting. Students are encouraged to take part in a way that works for them, such as attending the meeting or sharing ideas in another accessible way. With consent, the completed plan is shared with the student, family, school, community partners, Contact Niagara, and the DSBN Special Education Consultant to support future adult service planning.

Section 1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities are an essential part of delivering special education programs and services. The roles and responsibilities within special education are outlined below.

The Ministry of Education:

- sets out, through the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda, the legal obligations of school boards regarding the provision of special education programs and services
- prescribes the categories and definitions of exceptionality
- requires through the Education Act that school boards provide appropriate special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils
- establishes the funding for special education through the structure of the funding model.
- requires school boards to report on their expenditures for special education through the budget process
- sets province-wide standards for curriculum and reporting of achievement
- requires through regulation that school boards to maintain special education plans, review them annually, and submit amendments to the ministry
- requires school boards through the Education Act and regulation to establish Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs)
- establishes a Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education to advise the Minister of Education on matters related to special education programs and services
- operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, who are blind, who are deaf-blind, or who have severe learning disabilities.

The District School Board:

- establishes school board policy and practices that comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda
- monitors school compliance with the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda
- requires staff to comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda
- provides appropriately qualified staff to provide programs and services for the exceptional pupils of the board
- plans report on the expenditures for special education
- develops and maintains a special education plan that is amended from time to time to meet the current needs of the exceptional pupils of the board
- reviews the plan annually and submits amendments to the Minister of Education
- provides statistical reports to the ministry as required
- prepares a parent guide to provide parents/guardians with information about special education programs, services, and procedures
- establishes one or more IPRCs to identify exceptional pupils and determine appropriate placements for them
- establishes a Special Education Advisory Committee
- provides professional development to staff on special education
- adheres to all applicable legislation.

The Special Education Advisory Committee:

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

Section 1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The School Administrator:

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

The Teacher:

- carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda
- follows board policies and procedures regarding special education
- works with the special education teacher to acquire and maintain up-to-date knowledge of special education practices
- works with special education staff and parents/guardians to develop the IEP for an exceptional pupil
- where appropriate, work with other school board staff to review and update the student's IEP
- provides the program for the exceptional student in the regular class, as outlined in the IEP
- communicates the student's progress to parents/guardians.

The Special Education Teacher:

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

The Early Childhood Educator,

in coordination and cooperation with the classroom teacher:

- plans for and provides education to children in Kindergarten
- observes, monitors, and assesses the development of Kindergarten children
- maintains a healthy physical, emotional, and social learning environment in the classroom
- communicates with families
- performs duties assigned by the principal with respect to the Kindergarten program.

Section 1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Parent/Guardian:

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

The Student:

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

Section 2 CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS OF EXCEPTIONALITIES

Categories of Exceptionalities

The following five categories of exceptionalities have been identified in the Education Act definition of *exceptional pupil*:

- behavioural
- communicational
- intellectual
- physical
- multiple

These broad categories include the following definitions, as clarified in the memo to school boards of January 15, 1999.

These categories are used as part of the IPRC process to help determine the most appropriate program and placement decisions in consultation and collaboration with parents/guardians.

Category	Ministry of Education Definition
Behavioural	
Behavioural	A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance, and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following: a) an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships; b) excessive fears or anxieties; c) a tendency to compulsive reaction;
Communicational	
Autism	A severe learning disorder that is characterized by: a) disturbances in: – rate of educational development; – ability to relate to the environment; – mobility;
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.

Section 2 CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS OF EXCEPTIONALITIES

Category	Ministry of Education Definition
Communicational	
Language Impairment	A learning disorder characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or the use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may: a) involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; and b) include one or more of: – language delay; – dysfluency; – voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based.
Speech Impairment	A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors; that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages; and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm, and stress.
Learning Disability	One of a number of neurodevelopmental disorders that persistently and significantly has an impact on the ability to learn and use academic and other skills and that: • affects the ability to perceive or process verbal or non-verbal information in an effective and accurate manner in students who have assessed intellectual abilities that are at least in the average range; • results in (a) academic underachievement that is inconsistent with the intellectual abilities of the student (which are at least in the average range) and/or (b) academic achievement that can be maintained by the student only with extremely high levels of effort and/or with additional support; • results in difficulties in the development and use of skills in one or more of the following areas: reading, writing, mathematics, and work habits and learning skills; • may typically be associated with difficulties in one or more cognitive processes, such as phonological processing; executive functions (e.g., self-regulation of behaviour and emotions, planning, organizing of thoughts and activities, prioritizing, decision making); • may be associated with difficulties in social interaction (e.g., difficulty in understanding social norms or the point of view of others); with various other conditions or disorders, diagnosed or undiagnosed; or with other exceptionalities; • is not the result of a lack of acuity in hearing and/or vision that has not been corrected; intellectual disabilities; socio-economic factors; cultural differences; lack of proficiency in the language of instruction; lack of motivation or effort; gaps in school attendance or inadequate opportunity to benefit from instruction.

Section 2 CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS OF EXCEPTIONALITIES

Category	Ministry of Education Definition
Intellectual	
Giftedness	An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.
Mild Intellectual Disability	A learning disorder characterized by: a) an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and supportive service; b) an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development; c) a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.
Developmental Disability	A severe learning disorder characterized by: a) an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development; b) an inability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development; c) a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.
Physical	
Physical Disability	A condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of pupils without exceptionalities who are of the same age or development level.
Blind and Low Vision	A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.
Multiple	
Multiple Exceptionalities	A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities that is of such a nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.

Section 3 PROVINCIAL AND DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS IN ONTARIO

PROVINCIAL AND DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS:

- are operated by the Ministry of Education and Training;
- provide an alternative education option;
- serve as a regional resource for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, who are blind or have low vision, who are deafblind or who have severe learning disabilities;
- provide outreach and home-visiting service to parents of preschool children who are Deaf or hard of hearing, are blind or have low vision, or are deafblind;
- provide school board teachers with resource services;
- provide professional development for teachers.

Provincial Schools

Branch 255 Ontario

Street South Milton,
ON L9T 2M5

Phone: 905-878-2851

PROVINCIAL SCHOOLS IN ONTARIO

SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

[W. Ross Macdonald School](#)

350 Brant Ave
Brantford, ON
N3T 3J9 Phone:
(519) 759-0730

- Provides education for blind, visually impaired and deaf/blind students.
- Curriculum consistent with Ontario Curriculum.
- Full range of courses (elementary and secondary).
- Comprehensive life skills programs.
- Students transported weekly.
- Pre-school visiting program.

Resource Support

- Provides consultation and special learning materials (i.e., braille, largeprint).

SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF

Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf (Belleville - serves Eastern Ontario)

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

- There is one (1) student in the board qualified to be a resident student at this school.

Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf (Milton - serves Central and Northern Ontario)

255 Ontario Street South, Milton, Ontario L9T 2M5, Phone: (905) 878-2851

- There are six (6) students in the board qualified to be a resident student at this school.

Robarts School for the Deaf (London - serves Western Ontario)

1090 Highbury Avenue, London, Ontario N5Y 4V9, Phone: (519) 453-4400

Centres Jules-Leger (Ottawa - serves Francophone students)

281 Lanark Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1Z 6R8, Phone: (613) 761-9300

Section 3 PROVINCIAL AND DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS IN ONTARIO

- Elementary and secondary school programs.
- Focus on language acquisition, learning and social development through American Sign Language (A.S.L.)
- Students transported weekly.
- Curriculum-Ontario Curriculum.
- Pre-school visiting program.

DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS IN ONTARIO

The Ministry of Education and Training provides the services of three English language provincial demonstration schools for Ontario children with severe learning disabilities. Application for admission to a provincial demonstration school is made on behalf of students by the school board, with parent/guardian consent. The Provincial Committee on Learning Disabilities (PCLD) determines whether a student is eligible for admission. Although the primary responsibility to provide appropriate educational programs for students with learning disabilities remains with school boards, the Ministry recognizes that some students require a residential school setting for a period of time. The demonstration schools were established to provide special residential education programs for students between the ages of five and twenty-one years. The activities associated with the residential components of the programs are designed to enhance the development of each student's academic and social skills. One of the basic objectives of each of these schools is to develop the abilities of the students enrolled to a level that will enable them to return to programs operated by local school boards within two years.

Teachers may obtain additional information from the Resource Services Departments of the Provincial Schools and the groups listed below.

Amethyst Demonstration School

1090 Highbury Avenue, London, ON,

Phone: (519) 453-4400

Trillium Demonstration

School 347 Ontario St
South, Milton, ON L9T 3X9,

Phone: (905) 878-2851

Sagonaska Demonstration School

350 Dundas Street West,
Belleville, ON,

Phone: (613) 967-2830

There are four (4) students in the board qualified to be a resident student in a demonstration school.

Transportation for students attending Ontario's Provincial and Demonstration Schools is coordinated through a partnership between the student's home school board and the Ministry of Education. Transportation is provided for students residing outside the school's jurisdiction, with daily home-to-school and school-to-home service arranged to ensure consistent access to educational programming.

Currently, two students from DSBN are transported to a Provincial and Demonstration School using a specialized mini school bus. The service includes a rider monitor on the vehicle, and one student's transportation plan also requires the support of a nurse. Transportation is delivered through a shared-service arrangement with the Niagara Catholic District School Board to maximize efficiency while meeting the students' individualized needs.

Section 1 EARLY IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

The District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) believes that early identification procedures and intervention strategies are a very important aspect of the overall programming for students. Consultation with parents/guardians begins at or before the child enrolls in the DSBN and will continue throughout the student's school life. Therefore, the DSBN has put in place procedures for early identification, continuous review, and interventions that are in partnership with parents/guardians.

THE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA, EARLY IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

Principles for Early Identification: (Note: The six items reflect and parallel the six principles set out in the Ministry Memorandum 11 and reflect the DSBN's beliefs.)

1. The ability to communicate effectively is important for school success. Reading and writing are strongly influenced by the ability to understand and use language. Language is not just another subject. It is the means by which all other subjects are pursued. Also, research indicates that early childhood is a critical or sensitive period during which emerging language problems can most readily be addressed. Therefore, early identification and support for students whose language skills are delayed or disordered is critical.
2. Parent-School Partnership is key. Consultation and collaboration with the parents/guardians begin during the process of enrolling in the DSBN and continues throughout the student's school life. Parent/guardian questionnaires and discussions at enrollment for all students, as well as formal transition procedures for students entering school with known special education needs, helps to establish an early connection between home and school. Students entering school with known special education needs often enter with the support of the Pre-School Transition Process – see Section 8, Transition Planning pg. 28.
3. Screening is a non-intrusive process, which involves a variety of strategies to ensure that important learning needs of all students entering the DSBN have been systematically considered. Areas for screening reflect key aspects of emotional, social, intellectual, and/or physical development. Screening maintains the comfort of the child, respects the importance of teaching/learning time in the classroom, and facilitates timely interventions. The Functional Screening and Strategies for Kindergarten Success is one tool available to schools to support Early Learning.
4. Continuous assessment from different perspectives, as appropriate, produces a profile of the learner to assist with planning interventions and curriculum adaptations that support student success. Assessment is continuous and the established partnership between regular and special education facilitates meeting the needs of individual students and coordinating the educational practices within regular education and special education programs. (For further information see Section 2 – Educational and Other Assessments, pg. 42)
5. Screening selects students for further curriculum-based assessment, increased frequency of school-parent communication, and consultation/assessment by appropriately qualified and certified/licensed professionals. These students receive on-going monitoring, assessment, and intervention to meet their changing needs. Screening is never the basis for long-term prediction or comprehensive planning.
6. The classroom teacher is the key school staff member in the selection and screening of students for early assessment, intervention, and monitoring. The teacher is supported by a number of resources in the curriculum and special education departments, including a comprehensive plan for system assessment.

Section 1 EARLY IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Process

Early Identification is a process for screening all students and selecting those students who may be at-risk of not experiencing success in school, including some students who may require further special education supports in the future. The process targets key developmental issues to be observed in order to quickly select those students who require timely and relevant curriculum-based assessment in order to establish intervention strategies. A variety of assessment tools are used in every classroom, please refer to Section 2 – Educational and Other Assessments, pg. 42 for further information.

Step one: Use assessment tools to determine students who may be at risk. These assessment procedures indicate skill strengths and needs which are developing at a critical period of growth or are key to establishing school success.

Step two: The teacher continues the regular curriculum-based assessment and teaching practices. These are supplemented with parent-teacher communication, planned strategic observation of the student, and discussions with school resource staff. (e.g., In-School Team, Instructional Coaches, and Administration.) PRIME (Mathematics Assessment Tool), and BAS (Benchmark Assessment of Reading), Heggerty are some of the classroom assessment tools used to support programming decisions.

Step three: An Informal intervention plan is implemented at school, supported by the home, with on-going monitoring and revision, as needed.

Step four: Teacher communication with the parent/guardian and the In-School Team facilitates on-going program revision to meet changing needs and establishes a basis for timely access to specialized resource staff, as well as certified/licensed professionals when needed. An Individual Education Plan may be suggested to support the learning needs of non-identified learners, to support early intervention and strategies.

Step five: Variations of steps two through five are on-going until the student achieves success, or the student enters the special education processes of formal assessment, identification, and programming.

EARLY IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS IN NEED OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AT SCHOOL ENTRY

The District School Board of Niagara recognizes the importance of the first contact parents/guardians have with the school system. Therefore, Administration is expected to meet the DSBN's obligation not only to enroll all children who have the right to attend; but to welcome those who may have special education needs. Once the student has been registered, the school and parents/guardians will work with Special Education Support Services resource staff to collect and review information related to the child's needs and determine a plan for school entry. This is often done through the Preschool Transition Process explained further in Section 8, pg. 28.

Strong partnerships exist with agencies serving pre-school children with special education needs. Discussions held long before the child comes to school help identify strengths and needs that can be planned for during transition.

Section 1 EARLY IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

IN-SCHOOL TEAM (IST)

The District School Board of Niagara expects that an In-School Team (IST for Elementary) or In-School Student Success Team (ISSST for Secondary) will be established for each school within the DSNB, in accordance with its Policy: Framework for the Provision of Special Education Services and Administrative Procedure for In-School Team.

The In-School Team is regarded as the formalized, ongoing problem-solving forum. The IST develops and reviews plans designed to enable students who are experiencing difficulty in their learning. When learning problems are identified, the IST recommends engagement with other board resources and/or community partners/agencies, and recommends assessment referrals. When identified concerns may result in a student being considered for an IPRC referral, the school team will notify the parents. As well, parents will be notified when their child is being considered for a special education program and related services if the child is not referred to an IPRC.

The following expectations are to be met when establishing an In-School Team:

MEMBERSHIP

Core membership on the team should include:

- Administrator
- LRT/SERT
- Classroom teacher
- Guidance Counsellor (secondary)
- Student Success Teacher (secondary)

To add support to the problem-solving process, additional participants may include:

- Additional Classroom Teachers
- Educational Assistant
- Elementary Divisional Leader
- Secondary Program Leaders
- Special Education Support Staff
- Social Worker and/or Youth Counselor
- Student (if appropriate)

INPUT

Input may be invited in written form or through discussions/meetings/case conferences from:

- Student (if appropriate)
- Parents/guardians
- Agency representative

TIME

In-School Team meetings must be:

- regularly scheduled (recommended weekly). Additional meetings may be called on short notice, if necessary, to meet emerging needs or special circumstances;
- scheduled at a time that will facilitate the attendance of all members involved;
- time limited and student specific.

Section 2 EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS

School Board personnel administering specialized assessment work within the standards and ethical practice guidelines established by their respective Colleges. They are governed by the *Education Act* and the *Regulated Health Professions Act* and must comply with the *Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA)*.

Assessments provide a framework for educational programming purposes and may involve any combination of the following:

- formalized standardized tests;
- informal measures such as observation;
- curriculum/classroom-based assessment;
- review of the Ontario Student Record (OSR);
- interviews with teachers, parents/guardians, or other professionals.

Protection of Privacy of Information

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are informed that information obtained from assessments is maintained in accordance with the requirements of the College of Psychologists, the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario, CASLPO or the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario plus the *Municipal Freedom of Information and the Protection of Privacy Act*. A separate consent form, *Consent to Disclose Information Form* must be signed by the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) to share information with outside agencies.

CLASSROOM-BASED ASSESSMENT

Classroom-based assessment informs and directs instruction by providing educators with timely and meaningful evidence of student learning, growth, and achievement. Ongoing assessment practices support the development of an accurate profile of each student's strengths, needs, and next steps, enabling educators to plan responsive instruction and interventions that promote success for all learners.

Classroom-based literacy and numeracy assessment data are maintained for each elementary student and are used to monitor progress, identify strengths and learning needs, and inform instructional decision-making. A variety of evidence-based assessment approaches may be used, including screening, diagnostic, formative, and progress-monitoring assessments. Assessment evidence supports differentiated instruction, guides the implementation of targeted interventions and supports, and helps educators monitor the effectiveness of instructional strategies over time. Through ongoing assessment and collaborative review of student progress, educators are better able to promote equitable outcomes and support the achievement and well-being of every learner.

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT

Alternative Assessment tools such as the Brigance and the Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS) are commercially produced assessment resources that both schools and central staff may use for determining student strengths, needs and the next steps needed to ensure program goals are measurable and student achievement is improving.

SPEECH-LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

Speech-Language assessments assist teachers in understanding the oral language and social communication needs of students, and the interrelationships between listening, speaking, reading and writing. School teams and central special education staff work together to complete a speech-language referral form. If there are any questions concerning a student's ability to: follow directions, participate in classroom conversations, understand and retell stories, socialize with peers, organize ideas sequentially, speak on topic, use appropriate vocabulary, word order and grammar, speak clearly and fluently, and learn sound skills necessary to read and write.

The assessment may:

- provide a Speech-Language Pathologist's opinion about the student's communicative ability;
- determine the existence and severity of a communication difficulty as related to language learning, literacy development, behaviour and general ability to participate in the classroom program;
- support teachers in developing appropriate language and social communication strategies for Individual Education Plan (IEPs);
- assist in determining appropriate placement and/or referral to an outside agency;
- provide support for additional assessment.

Results are communicated to the parent/guardian by members of the school team, as well as a speech language pathologist.

The average wait time for speech-language assessments during the 2025-26 academic school year was two (3) to three (4) months.

SPEECH ASSESSMENTS

When a student [J.K.– Gr. 12] demonstrates difficulties specific to the area of speech (i.e., concerns evident with regard to articulation, voice and/or fluency in the presence of age-appropriate oral language skills), an in-depth assessment may not be necessary. A speech assessment with a Speech-Language Pathologist may be requested by school staff in consultation with parents.

- Although written consent is not required, the LRT/SERT must obtain verbal consent and complete the Informed Consent for Speech and/or Language Services with a Parent/Guardian. The original form is filed in the OSR, and a copy sent home.
- Following assessment, parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will receive a Speech Evaluation Report. Copies will be placed in the OSR and Speech-Language File. Strategies for home and school programming may be provided.
- Students with articulation, voice and/or fluency concerns who meet criteria for direct speech therapy may be referred to School Based Rehabilitation Services provided by the Niagara Children's Centre.
- Application for service is completed at the school, signed by the parent/guardian and school principal. They are then forwarded to Special Education Support Services and subsequently to the Niagara Children's Centre.

Niagara Children's Centre is the provider of direct therapy to students and as per their established criteria determine which students will receive therapy.

Results are communicated to the parent/guardian by members of the school team, as well as a speech language pathologist.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Psychological assessments conducted by registered psychologists provide information about a student's cognitive, academic, social, emotional and behavioural functioning in order to facilitate learning. Various intellectual tests, and other tests of cognitive and psychological processing, and tests of social, emotional or behavioural functioning are utilized in conjunction with a review of the Ontario Student Record (OSR), observations, and interviews with the student and individuals involved with the pupil's education. This type of assessment applies a psychological framework regarding a student's development and learning in order to assist with program planning. School teams and central special education staff work together to complete a psychological assessment referral.

The psychological assessment may:

- determine the existence and severity of the learning and/or behavioural difficulty of a student;
- support teachers in developing appropriate learning and behavioural strategies for Individual Education Plans (IEPs);
- assist Identification, Placement and Review Committees (IPRC) with identification and programming supports to assist with decisions for students.

Section 2 EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS

A copy of all Psychological and Speech/Language Assessments will be kept in the students Ontario Student Record. Students and parents have access to the Ontario Student record for the purposes of examination. Parents and students over the age of 18 can request that documents be removed from the Ontario Student Record as needed. Copies of Psychological and Speech/language assessment reports are also kept in clinical files as per the PHIPA. These files are kept on file for a period of time after students graduate as per PHIPA guidelines.

The average wait time for psychological assessments during the 2025-26 academic school year was three (3) to four (4) months.

Section 3 COORDINATION OF SERVICES WITH OTHER MINISTRIES OR AGENCIES

The District School Board of Niagara has strong working relationships with a variety of community partners representing agencies and ministries beyond the education sector. These relationships support students by assisting school staff members, the staff of Special Education Support Services, and parents/guardians plan for smooth transitions for students entering the school system, returning to the school system, or for students within the school system and beyond that require additional supports and resources.

LINKS WITH SERVICE AGENCIES/MINISTRIES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

The District School Board of Niagara has a variety of community partners. The DSBN, when applicable, receives and reviews assessments accompanying students from the programs listed below. The Special Education department enjoys active relationships with the following agencies and ministries:

SPEECH SERVICES THROUGH THE NIAGARA CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Children who are 4 years of age and under and experiencing speech and language difficulties may be referred by their parents/guardians, physicians, or other professionals directly to Speech Services through the Niagara Children's Centre (NCC). The DSBN and Speech Services through NCC work diligently to enhance the transition to school. The Assistant Student Achievement Leader meets with community agencies throughout the year to ensure that we are planning for student success.

NIAGARA CHILDREN'S CENTRE (NCC) - SCHOOL AGED SERVICES AND CLINICS

The Niagara Children's Centre provides treatment, therapy, and communication programs to school aged children so that they can accomplish functional and meaningful outcomes to enhance quality of life, achieve individual potential and participate fully in life at home, school and in the community.

School aged interventions are not intended to be continuous. Children who have lifelong need for management of physical disabilities are given episodic care when they experience physical change and/or equipment alterations. Equipment supports include customized seating systems and mobility devices. Orthopedic management is provided through a range of service, including medical consultations, casting, splinting and gait analysis. Home programming is an integral part of this service.

Children with acquired conditions and changing conditions are seen for assessment, brief intervention, and transition to community partners. Physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech language pathology, social work and a developmental pediatrics team work together with the family and child.

Children who cannot talk or whose speech is very difficult to understand may receive augmentative and alternative communication assessment and intervention. Children with physical disabilities who cannot write using pen and paper are provided with specialized equipment for written communication.

Individualized therapy assessment and intervention is provided by clinicians, within group settings for children who attend the NCC School.

NIAGARA CHILDREN'S CENTRE - SCHOOL AUTHORITY

The Niagara Children's Centre School provides individualized education programming in a group setting to children 4-21 years of age with multiple learning exceptionalities.

Specialist teachers, therapists and other professionals utilize a family-centered approach to building student success in literacy, numeracy, augmentative and alternative communication for learning.

NCC School is not designed to be a permanent educational environment for students. The successful transition of students to community school environments with replicable teaching strategies for participation in learning is of utmost importance. Integration of students into community school environments is achieved by collaborating and working alongside the educational staff of the District School Board of Niagara.

Section 3 COORDINATION OF SERVICES WITH OTHER MINISTRIES OR AGENCIES

CONTACT NIAGARA

Contact Niagara was created in 2000 in order to provide parents/guardians with a single point of access to a wide variety of services within the Niagara Region. Currently, Contact Niagara provides information and connects people to services for children and people of all ages who have a developmental concern. Contact Niagara is funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). Resource coordinators at Contact Niagara help individuals to understand the services available and guide them through an interview process to identify and connect them with services opportunities.

The DSNB partners with other Ministry funded community organizations to provide Care and Treatment Education Program (CTEP) classrooms for students who require this support. These CTEP classrooms are listed below:

BETHESDA SERVICES

Bethesda Services provides support for children, youth, and adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. They offer a broad range of funded services and supports under the Ontario Autism Program. They provide family-centred, comprehensive developmental assessments for children/youth with a developmental disability or if an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis is suspected. They also provide behavioural consultations, educational opportunities, and clinical and recreational group services. All of these services can be initiated for children under 18 through Contact Niagara. The DSNB, in partnership with Bethesda Services, provides support for additional clinical and recreational group services being offered during the summer.

The DSNB partners with Bethesda to provide an Care and Treatment Education Program (CTEP) **EmpowerED classroom** at the Lifetime Learning Centre for students who have these needs.

COMMUNITY LIVING AGENCIES AND NIAGARA SUPPORT SERVICES

These agencies provide a variety of services for individuals of all ages with developmental disabilities. Child Care and Nursery School programs for pre-school aged children (2.5 to 6 years of age) are provided for children with special needs in an inclusive setting. The Association for Community Living and Niagara Support Services provide parent-directed services that support the child with special needs and his or her family. The DSNB has developed a framework to transition students supported by these agencies from various pre-school settings to schools within DSNB. Niagara Support Services offers a classroom for students with complex special learning needs, in grades 4-8 with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, to further develop self-regulation and daily living skills.

PATHSTONE MENTAL HEALTH

Pathstone Mental Health is the lead agency for children's mental health services in the Niagara Region for children and youth from 0 – 18 years and their families. The work of all stakeholders at Pathstone is guided by their mission statement: "We strengthen the quality of life for children, youth and families who are dealing with mental health challenges".

Pathstone Mental Health, which is fully accredited through the Canadian Council of Accreditation, offers a continuum of mental health treatment services that includes Brief Services, Early Years Services, Walk-In Clinics, Outpatient Counselling, Outreach Services, School-based Services, Day Treatment (CTEP) classrooms, Residential Treatment, High Risk Services, Youth Justice Programs and Crisis Services.

Section 3 COORDINATION OF SERVICES WITH OTHER MINISTRIES OR AGENCIES

In particular, Pathstone Mental Health works in collaboration with the DSBN and the School-based team. The DSBN makes direct referrals for clinical supports for children and youth requiring intensive treatment services.

Pathstone Mental Health has fourteen (14) Day Treatment (CTEP) classrooms. Within these classrooms, the teacher is provided by the DSBN and the child and youth worker in the classroom is provided by

Pathstone Mental Health. All students in these classrooms and their families are also provided treatment by the social worker/therapist assigned to their specific classroom and may also be referred to one of the agency's consulting psychiatrist/psychologists. **Pathstone Day Treatment Classrooms** are located at:

- Merrittville Site (4 elementary classrooms)
- Princess Elizabeth (1 elementary classroom)
- St. Catharines Collegiate Secondary School (1 elementary classroom)
- Eastdale Secondary School (1 secondary classroom)
- Lifetime Learning Centre (3 secondary classrooms)
- Port Colborne High School (1 secondary classroom)
- Thorold Secondary School (1 secondary classroom)
- Westlane Secondary School (1 secondary classroom)

YOUTH JUSTICE

John Howard Society (JHS) – Community based Youth Justice

The J.H.S. provides a CTEP **Shifting Gears Classroom** for students in grades 7 – 12 and a CTEP **Mindful Minds Classroom** for students in grades 9 – 12 at the Lifetime Learning Centre.

DETENTION AND CORRECTION FACILITIES

The DSBN provides teaching staff for students in Education and Community Partnership Programs classrooms in the following detention and correction facilities.

- Niagara Detention Centre
- Peninsula Youth Centre

The Student Achievement Leader of CTEP/ECPP Programs is responsible for sharing student information accessing these programs and ensuring successful admission or transfer of students from one program to another.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are informed that student information shared is maintained in accordance with the requirements the *Municipal Freedom of Information and the Protection of Privacy Act*.

CHILD AND PARENT RESOURCE INSTITUTE (CPRI)

In developing a Service Plan for an individual /family, a Service Provider may feel that residential services through CPRI would best meet the needs of the student and would be the most appropriate resource for a particular student. In such a case, the service provider will call Contact Niagara and request a referral to CPRI for residential assessment. The DSBN, with parental/guardian consent, provides documentation (school reports, psychological assessment reports, etc.) to the service provider who is making the referral for residential placement.

Section 4 SPECIALIZED HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In school support is offered to students with exceptional physical/medical needs through funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

The District School Board of Niagara is committed to a strong partnership with The Niagara Children's Centre (NCC), who is responsible for School Based Rehab Services. They assist in ensuring students receive all the necessary supports they require to participate fully in the learning environment.

Some students require physiotherapy, occupational therapy and/or speech therapy in order to access the school and the curriculum. Through consultation with and referral to the Niagara Children's Centre, these services are provided to students who require them. These health care professionals assess environmental, and equipment needs and make recommendations to the SESS team. In some cases, training is provided to ensure that procedures are carried out correctly. Some students with medical needs under the care of the DSBN require feeding, suctioning, and diabetes supports. Through consultation with and referral to the Ontario Health atHome, (OHH), these services are provided to students who require them during the school day. Nurses provided through the OHH also provide training for less complex procedures that are provided by DSBN staff.

To address the needs of students requiring medication during the school day, the District School Board of Niagara has developed Administrative Procedure (3-32) regarding the provision of medication.

Section 4 SPECIALIZED HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

TYPE of Specialized Health Support Service	Agency or Position of Person WHO PERFORMS THE SERVICE (NCC, Board Staff, Parent, Student)	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA for Students to Receive the Service	Position of the Person WHO DETERMINES ELIGIBILITY to Receive the Service and the Level of Support	Criteria for Determining WHEN THE SERVICE IS NO LONGER REQUIRED	Procedures for resolving disputes about the eligibility and level of support
NURSING Including but not limited to: - Manual expression of the bladder - Stoma care - Postural drainage	- OHH staff performs the service if indicated in PPM 81 - OHH contracted provider may train school staff to carry out procedure as per PPM 81	- Must attend school within Niagara Region - Must have an Ontario Health Card Number - Service required to enable school attendance	- OHH Case Manager determines how, when, and where the service will be provided (in consultation with school personnel and parents)	- Student no longer needs special help, or the program can be carried out by school personnel - Student is not benefitting from the planned care	The OHH appeal process
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY	- School Based Rehab, Niagara Children's Centre assigns service for intensive clinical treatment - School Based Rehab, NCC consults with board personnel and trains them to carry out general maintenance	- Condition must be such that he/she can be treated adequately at school with services available through SHSS - Student's needs cannot be met on an out-patient basis without significant disruption to the student's education	-School Based Rehab, Niagara Children's Centre Case Manager determines how, when, and where the service will be provided (in consultation with school personnel and parents)	- Student no longer needs special help, or the program can be carried out by school personnel - Student is not benefitting from the planned care	School Based Rehab, Niagara Children's Centre appeal process
PHYSIOTHERAPY	- School Based Rehab, Niagara Children's Centre assigns service for intensive clinical treatment - School Based Rehab, NCC consults with board personnel and trains them to carry out general maintenance	- Must be referred by a representative of school - Service required to enable school attendance	- School Based Rehab, Niagara Children's Centre Case Manager determines how, when, and where the service will be provided (in consultation with school personnel and parents)	- Student no longer needs special help, or the program can be carried out by school personnel - Student is not benefitting from the planned care	School Based Rehab, Niagara Children's Centre appeal process
NUTRITION	- OHH Home Care staff	- Ontario Health Card - Service required to enable school attendance - Nutritional concern is related to a medical condition	-OHH Case Manager determines how, when, and where the service will be provided (in consultation with school personnel and parents)	- Student specific goals achieved or no longer appropriate	OHH appeal process

Section 4 SPECIALIZED HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

TYPE of Specialized Health Support Service	Agency or Position of Person WHO PERFORMS THE SERVICE (NCC, Board, Staff, Parent, Student)	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA for Students to Receive the Service	Position of the Person WHO DETERMINES ELIGIBILITY to Receive the Service and the Level of Support	Criteria for Determining WHEN THE SERVICE IS NO LONGER REQUIRED	Procedures for resolving disputes about the eligibility and level of support
SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY Preschool S/L Services NCC	- School Based Rehab, Niagara Children's Centre Speech-Language Pathologist provide therapy for children with articulation phonology voice/fluency disorders structural or oral motor concerns	- Speech disorders include: - oral motor - structural - phonological difficulty - voice/fluency disorders	- Board Speech-Language Pathologist assesses the student and makes a request for service from School Based Rehab, Niagara Children's Centre - School Based Rehab, Niagara Children's Centre Speech Language Pathologist determines how, when and where the service will be provided	- Student no longer needs specialized help. - Student is not benefitting from the planned care	School Based Rehab, Niagara Children's Centre appeal process
SPEECH CORRECTION AND REMEDIATION	- Teachers, LRT's, Parents	Mild Articulation Delay - referral through IST to DSBN Speech-Language Pathologists for screening and consultations	-School Board Speech-Language Pathologist	- Student no longer needs special help	Case Conference involving school personnel & parents
PROVISION OF PRESCRIBED MEDICATIONS ORAL AND TOPICAL	-School staff provide prescribed medication and administer rescue medications consistent with Board policy - the student as authorized - the parent as authorized	- Medical orders - Medical Condition	- Prescribed by physician or other health care professional and requested by the parent (see Admin. Procedure 3-32)	- Student no longer needs special help or is no longer benefitting from the planned care	Case Conference
INJECTION	- OHH Health Professional - the student as authorized - the parent as authorized	- Prescription - Medical condition	- Physician	- Student no longer needs special help or is no longer benefitting from the planned care	Case Conference and OHH appeal process
CATHETERIZATION (clean and intermittent)	- Educational assistant (trained by nursing agency assigned by OHH) - Sterile Intermittent (by nursing agency assigned by OHH)	- Medical orders - Medical Condition	- Physician, OHH Case Manager determines how, when, and where treatment/services will be provided (in consultation with parents and school personnel)	- when appropriate student will be taught to perform procedures	Case Conference and OHH appeal process

Section 4 SPECIALIZED HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

TYPE of Specialized Health Support Service	Agency or Position of Person WHO PERFORMS THE SERVICE (NCC, Board Staff, Parent, Student)	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA for Students to Receive the Service	Position of the Person WHO DETERMINES ELIGIBILITY to Receive the Service and the Level of Support	Criteria for Determining WHEN THE SERVICE IS NO LONGER REQUIRED	Procedures for resolving disputes about the eligibility and level of support
SUCTIONING	Shallow Surface - Educational Assistant Deep Suctioning Nursing agency assigned by OHH	- Medical orders Medical Condition	- Physician and Home Care Coordinator decide how, when, and where treatment/services will be provided (in consultation with parents and school personnel)	- Student no longer needs special help	Case Conference OHH appeal process
LIFTING AND POSITIONING	- School Personnel (Educational Assistant) - School Based Rehab, NCC, occupational therapist or physiotherapist train board personnel to safely provide assistance	- all students in need according to Policy/Program Memo # 81	- School Based Rehab, Niagara Children's Centre Case Manager determines how, when, and where treatment/services will be provided (in consultation with parents and school personnel) - Case Occupational Therapist	- Student no longer requires special care or is no longer benefitting from the planned care	Case Conference at school level with appropriate personnel
ASSISTANCE WITH MOBILITY	- School Personnel (Educational Assistant) perform this service - School Based Rehab, Niagara Children's Centre Physiotherapists train Board personnel to provide assistance with mobility	- all students in need according to Policy/Program Memo # 81	- Case Physiotherapist	- Student no longer requires special care or is no longer benefitting from the planned care.	Case Conference at school level with appropriate personnel
FEEDING	Tube Feeding - OHH assigned nursing agency Oral Feeding - Educational Assistant	- all students in need according to Policy/Program Memo # 81	- Physician - OHH Case Manager	- Student no longer requires special care or is no longer benefitting from the planned care.	Case Conference at school level with appropriate personnel
TOILETING	- Educational Assistants, OHH is not involved in toileting unless teaching catheterization to EA or therapists addressing equipment and transfers	- all students in need according to Policy/Program Memo # 81	- Physician - OHH Case Manager	- Student no longer requires special care or is no longer benefitting from the planned care.	- Case Conference at school level with appropriate personnel

Section 4 SPECIALIZED HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

TYPE of Specialized Health Support Service	Agency or Position of Person WHO PERFORMS THE SERVICE (NCC, Board Staff, Parent, Student)	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA for Students to Receive the Service	Position of the Person WHO DETERMINES ELIGIBILITY to Receive the Service and the Level of Support	Criteria for Determining WHEN THE SERVICE IS NO LONGER REQUIRED	Procedures for resolving disputes about the eligibility and level of support
OTHER All services in Children's Residential Care/Treatment Facilities	Aides/Health Professional employed by MCSS	- all students in need according to Policy/Program Memo # 81	- MCSS	- Student no longer requires special care or is no longer benefitting from the planned care.	

Note: Should a need develop for a service which has not already been designated, the matter should be referred by the School Board to the Ministry of Education for its consideration in consultation with the Ministry of Health.

Section 4 SPECIALIZED HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS



Application for School Health Support Services (SHSS)

Contact the Ontario Health atHome at 1-800-810-0000

Patient Name _____

HCN _____ VC _____ DOB _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____

**** Mandatory: A valid Health Card Number (HCN) and up to date Version Code (VC) are required by Ontario Health atHome in accordance with the Long-Term Care Act, 1994 to determine a student's eligibility for Ontario Health atHome Services ****

Medical Diagnosis _____

Language Spoken in Home (if other than English) _____

Contact Information

1. Parent/Guardian (Please print name) _____ Legal Guardian ☐ Yes ☐ No

Living with ☐ Yes ☐ No Relationship _____

Home # _____ Work # _____ Cell # _____

2. Parent/Guardian (Please print name) _____ Legal Guardian ☐ Yes ☐ No

Living with ☐ Yes ☐ No Relationship _____

Home # _____ Work # _____ Cell # _____

Family Physician (Please print name) _____ Phone _____

Other Medical/ Professional Personnel _____ Phone _____

Please note that if Parent/Guardian information is not completed on this form, the application will be considered incomplete

School Information

☐ Public ☐ Catholic Specify Board _____

School _____ Address _____ City _____

Resource Teacher _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Services Requested ☐ Nursing ☐ Nutrition

Mandatory – supporting documentation e.g. Medical Orders must accompany referral

Section 4 SPECIALIZED HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

Patient Name _____ HCN _____

Release of Information and Consent to Assessment

I hereby agree to give my consent to the school to release/share information, including Third Party records, relevant to the care and status of my child to the Ontario Health atHome as deemed necessary for assessment of School Health Support Services. I consent to the following:

Ontario Health atHome will:

- enter the referral information into its database
- share referral information with their contracted Service Providers
- exchange and share information with school and the school will exchange and share information with Ontario Health atHome

Parent/Guardian or Student (if 16 years +) (Please print) _____

Parent/Guardian or Student Signature (if 16 years +) _____

Date (dd/mm/yyyy) _____ Principal/Designate Signature _____

Please Note: The name and signature of the parent/guardian or student should match information given in section B. If the information does not match, the application will be considered incomplete. The principal/designate signature is also required for the application to be considered complete.

As an Ontario Health atHome parent or guardian acting on behalf of an Ontario Health atHome client, you have the right to refuse to provide personal information for the purposes outlined above. Refusal to provide this information may impact Ontario Health atHome's ability to provide care and services.

NOTE: Ontario Health atHome will not release your information for any other purpose without your consent, unless required by law.

Fax this completed form with supporting documentation to:

Ontario Health atHome Intake: 1-866-655-6402 or
905-639-8704

Mail the completed form to:

Ontario Health atHome Intake
440 Elizabeth Street, 4th Floor
Burlington, ON, L7R 2M1

Section 4 SPECIALIZED HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS



Application for School Based Rehabilitation Services (SBRS OT, PT, Speech)

A. Student Information (please print)	
Surname:	First Name:
Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy):	Gender: ☐ M ☐ F
Home Address:	City: Postal Code:
Medical Diagnosis (if applicable):	
Language spoken at home (if other than English):	
B. Contact Information (please print)	
1. Parent/Guardian (please print name):	1b Legal Guardian: ☐ Yes ☐ No Relationship: Living with: ☐ Yes ☐ No Primary #: Secondary #:
2. Parent/Guardian (please print name):	2b Legal Guardian: ☐ Yes ☐ No Relationship: Living with: ☐ Yes ☐ No Primary #: Secondary #:
3. Family Physician (please print name):	Phone:
4. Other Medical/Professional Personnel:	Phone:
C. School Information (please print)	
☐ DSBN ☐ NC SB	School:
Address:	
School Contact:	Phone: Fax:
D. Services Requested	
☐ Occupational Therapy	☐ Safety/Accessibility
☐ Physiotherapy	☐ Equipment
☐ Speech Therapy	☐ Re-referral
Please provide supporting documentation for all referrals	(Medical orders or information forms) must accompany referral when available
E. Reason for Referral	

Section 4 SPECIALIZED HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

-2-

Name of Student:		DOB:	
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F. Release of Information & Consent to Assessment

I do hereby give consent to the school to release/share information, including Third Party records, relevant to the care and status of my child to Niagara Children's Centre as deemed necessary for assessment of School Based Rehabilitation Services. I consent to the following:

- ☐ Niagara Children's Centre will enter the referral information into it's electronic health record;
- ☐ Niagara Children's Centre will share referral information with their contracted Service Providers;
- ☐ Niagara Children's Centre will exchange and share information with school/school will exchange and share information with Niagara Children's Centre.

Parent/Guardian or Student (if 16 years or older) Printed Name: _____

Parent/Guardian or Student Signature (if 16 years or older): _____

Date (dd/mm/yyyy): _____

Principal/Designate Signature: _____

*Please note that the name and signature of the parent/guardian or student should match information given in section B or the application will be considered incomplete. The principal/designate signature is also required for the application to be considered.

Referral Form to be completed & submitted as per designated School Board procedures

Section 5 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

GOAL

The District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) is a learning organization committed to continuous improvement and excellence in student achievement and well-being. To support this commitment, the Board provides ongoing professional learning opportunities that are trauma-sensitive, culturally responsive, and designed to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

Staff development priorities are informed through ongoing consultation with Special Education Service staff, school teams, and system leaders. Feedback gathered through consultative meetings, professional learning evaluations, and participant surveys helps identify emerging needs and guide future training opportunities. The DSBN also supports educator capacity building by offering the **Special Education Additional Qualification (AQ) Part 1** course to teaching staff at no cost.

To meet the varied learning needs of staff across the system, professional learning is delivered through a combination of:

- **School-based support**, including job-embedded learning, coaching, and collaborative work alongside staff and students in classrooms;
- **Board-developed workshops and programs**, such as Learning Resource Teacher (LRT) in-services, Educational Assistant (EA) mentoring, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness training, and other specialized learning opportunities; and
- **Ministry and third-party conferences and training opportunities**, including programs offered by organizations such as the Geneva Centre, the Association for Special Education Technology, and the London Region Special Education Regional Coordinator and Consultant Conference.

The Special Education Support Services Department provides targeted training for specific staff groups in areas such as **Behaviour Management Systems (BMS)**, **First Aid**, and **Trauma Sensitive Training**, supporting staff who work with students with special education needs. Specialized training in **Assistive Technology** is also provided to students and staff to promote the effective integration of these tools into classroom programming and support student achievement and independence.

Professional learning opportunities provided through Special Education Support Services align with the Ministry of Education's **Learning for All** framework and support inclusive practices across the system. Curriculum and instructional initiatives are designed to ensure that consideration of students' diverse learning profiles is embedded within all professional development opportunities.

Staff remain aware of the board's Special Education Plan and professional development opportunities through area meetings, staff meetings and email communication.

The board's budget allocation dedicated to special education staff development \$459,096.

The **Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)** receives regular updates and staff presentations related to professional learning initiatives. These updates provide opportunities for discussion, feedback, and collaboration regarding current and future staff development priorities.

Section 6 ACCESSIBILITY (AODA)

Accessibility (AODA)

The District School Board of Niagara has a multi-year capital expenditure plan for improving accessibility to its buildings, grounds, and administrative offices, including resources dedicated to providing barrier-free access in the coming years. The DSBN's Plan includes increasing accessibility to as many school buildings as possible and provides specific facilities to accommodate students with special needs.

In consideration of the number and age of the DSBN's facilities, this plan improves accessibility each year in designated facilities across the District to service the needs of the students, staff, parents/guardians and the general public in the District School Board of Niagara. In preparing this plan, first, a database of the Board's facilities with respect to physical conditions relative to accessibility was developed and then analyzed by a working group of DSBN Special Education Services and Plant Department staff. This information was then reviewed, and input was received from school Administrators and Superintendents of Schools for each Area. From this, a group of facilities were identified as accessible and a list of candidate facilities for accessibility improvements, in consideration of physical feasibility, geographic location and education program delivery was developed.

Each year the plan is reviewed and adjusted to meet the needs of the system with the goal of making all DSBN facilities physically accessible to comply with Disabilities Act 2005.

In addition to the Accessibility Plan, school boards were also required to respond to the Customer Service Standard of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The DSBN developed a policy (C-3) in compliance with the AODA and also trained all staff. As additional Standards become Regulations in the Province, the DSBN will develop appropriate measures as required.

Further accessibility information for Ontario Public Service sectors can be viewed at <https://www.ontario.ca/government/accessibility>, as well www.opsba.org/index.php?q=advocacyandaction/accessible_schools_customer_service_guide.

The DSBN's Accessibility Plan, and Policy C-3: Service Accessibility Standards for Ontarians with Disabilities is posted on the DSBN website at www.dsbni.org/about/accessibility . Contact information for accessible format requests: Communications 905-641-1550.

Section 7 PARENT GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

DSBN Parent/Guardian's Guide to Special Education can be found here: <https://www.dsbny.org/docs/default-source/special-education/special-ed-parentguide-2025-26-revised.pdf>



Learning and Growing Together

A PARENT/GUARDIAN'S GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION 2026-27

Section 8 SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSULTATION PROCESS

Special Education Consultation Process

Collaboration, relationships and communication are essential to effective special education programs and services and an efficient use of resources. The DSBN has representatives on many community committees and has various community representatives on established committees of the board. These forums provide information regarding the needs of the community and contribute to the board's development and delivery of special education services.

Redefining Excellence: DSBN's Multi-year Strategic Plan 2023-2028

In an effort to hear every voice, the DSBN invited the voices, opinions and feedback of students, staff members and members of our surrounding educational community. In 2023 a multi-year strategic plan that is progressive and responsive to the needs of students and staff was created and is reflective of our special education goals. It affirms our five strategic priorities: Learning, Belonging, Thriving, Walking Together, and Spaces. The DSBN respects and upholds the importance of equity, inclusion, dignity and human rights in all learning environments. We aim to provide differentiated strategies and programming to accommodate each learner in a way that promotes their inclusion and full participation in learning.

Involvement of SEAC in the Annual Review of the Special Education Plan

Regulation 464/97 requires that each board establishes a Special Education Plan and Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). In accordance with this regulation the DSBN annually reviews the special education plan in detail with the SEAC and considers all recommendations. The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meets monthly to discuss current issues related to special education and discusses effective practices and supports for students. The committee is provided with the opportunity to collaborate on special education initiatives and participate in the board annual special education budget process. SEAC meeting agendas and minutes can be found here <https://www.dsbnet.org/about/board-committee-meetings/overview>.

Each July a revised Special Education Plan is submitted to the Ministry of Education and provided on the DSBN website. The Special Education Advisory Committee reviews the Special Education Plan. The following is a result of the feedback received:

Feedback Received	Result/Action
The SEAC committee received a copy of the Special Education Plan at the beginning of the school year to review and provide feedback.	The Special Education Plan was reviewed and SEAC provided feedback that was focused on the Parent Guide and Transition Planning. On March 24, 2026, the Board received a SEAC report noting the committee's review and feedback activities for the Special Education Parent Guide.
Updates were made to reflect changes to Support Staff, Programs and Services and to the Special Education Parent Guide.	Supporting pages for the Special Education Plan and Special Education Parent Guide have been updated.

Section 9 THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)

Under Ontario's Education Act, every exceptional pupil is entitled to special education programs and services, which meet their needs. In the District School Board of Niagara, the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) plays a vital role in ensuring that exceptional pupils receive appropriate educational services. (Education Act Section 8. (3) Section 57. (1))

Meeting Times/Locations

- The regular meetings of SEAC are usually held on the second Thursday of every month during the school year commencing at 5:30 p.m.
- The 2026-27 SEAC meetings at the DSBN Education Centre will be held on:
 - Wednesday, September 23, 2026
 - Wednesday, October 28, 2026
 - Wednesday, November 25, 2026
 - Wednesday, December 16, 2026
 - Wednesday, January 27, 2027
 - Wednesday, February 24, 2027
 - Wednesday, March 24, 2027
 - Wednesday, April 28, 2027
 - Wednesday, May 26, 2027
 - Wednesday, June 23, 2027
- All SEAC meetings are open to the public.
- A majority of the members of a SEAC is a quorum, and "a vote of a majority of the members present at a meeting is necessary to bind the committee."
- The committee will hold 10 meetings throughout the year, as per their mandate from the Ministry of Education.
- The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is provided with the opportunity to:
 - collaborate on department initiatives related to Special Education;
 - participate in the Board's annual review of the Special Education Plan;
 - participate in the Board's annual budget process related to Special Education;
 - be heard before the Board;
 - have access to information, documents, and facilities necessary for functioning.

PROCESS FOR SELECTING MEMBERS

The process for selecting members is guided by the Education Act (O. Reg. 464/97).

Membership

- The committee is made up of representatives of local associations of parents/guardians and advocates for children with exceptional needs. Local associations operate within the geographical region of the District School Board of Niagara and are affiliated with an incorporated organization that operates throughout Ontario to further the interests and well-being of one or more groups of exceptional children or adults.
- Associations that meet the criteria are invited to choose a representative and alternate to participate in committee meetings. If the member is unable to attend it is expected that the alternate will attend. Attendance is closely monitored. Any association missing more than three consecutive meetings will be expected to forfeit their seat on SEAC. Where there is a duplication of local associations, as is the case with five Community Livings across the Niagara Region, the associations have been asked to select one representative who takes responsibility for communicating with the other groups and carrying forward concerns from them.
- A member cannot be an employee of the board, must be qualified to vote for trustees, and be a resident of Niagara.
- An eligible association is defined as "an association or organization of parents that operates locally within the area of jurisdiction of a board and that is affiliated with an association or organization that

is not an association or organization of professional educators but that is incorporated and operates throughout Ontario to further the interests and well-being of one or more groups of exceptional children or adults.”

- Eligible associations and interested community agencies may nominate a representative to SEAC at the start of each SEAC term (which coincides with the election of School Board Trustees, every four [4] years).

The Chair and Vice-Chair of SEAC are nominated and elected by the representatives. The local associations who are members of the District School Board of Niagara SEAC represent:

REPRESENTATIVE NAME	COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
Flavia Orvitz	Autism Ontario – Niagara Chapter
Brianne Freiwat	Bethesda Services
TBA	Contact Niagara
TBA	Down Syndrome Niagara
Linda Morrice	Pathstone Mental Health
Victoria Everett	Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara
Katie McKay	Niagara FASD Coalition
Barb Wilson	Inclusion Action in Ontario
Kathy Bell	Niagara Children’s Centre
Patty Ferrie	Inclusion West Niagara (Formerly Community Living Grimsby, Lincoln and West Lincoln)
Cynthia Nyaundi	NTEC-NSS
Tessa Alexander	VOICE for Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The District School Board of Niagara Parents’ Guide to Special Education contains an insert with a list of the associations that are on SEAC. The DSNB website also lists the members and their affiliations.

If you have any questions, please send an email to Jennifer McGugan at Jennifer.McGugan@dsbn.org

Section 9 THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)

Roles and Responsibilities

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) members are consulted on matters related to service delivery, range of service, department resources, and are asked to advocate on behalf of the exceptionalities represented. The committee is provided with professional secretarial and office support. Two trustees from the Board are regular members of the committee. The Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, the Student Achievement Leaders of Special Education Support Services, Senior Manager of Special Education Support Services, as well as an elementary and secondary Principal provide resource support to the committee. Other consultative and resource staff attend as required. SEAC advises the Board by way of a motion, letter or through the trustee representatives. All minutes of SEAC are routinely forwarded to all members of the Board through the Committee reports at Board meetings. During the school year, SEAC may discuss and provide input on a variety of items /issues including:

- Autism/ABA
- Preschool Transition
- Individual Education Plans
- Special Education Budget
- Accessibility Plan
- Special Education - Technology
- Differentiated Instruction
- Framework and Delivery Model of Supports
- Equity Policy and Framework
- Equity and Inclusive Education

SEAC members are encouraged to share information about the DSNB's programs and services with their organizations and at the same time to bring input from their organizations to the SEAC meetings. SEAC's involvement in the budget process is facilitated by:

- invitations for DSNB staff to attend SEAC meetings, upon the request of SEAC members and/or the suggestion of the Superintendent responsible for Special Education Support Services to give updates about funding and budget;
- issues as they affect the District School Board of Niagara (e.g., provincial grants, one-time assessment grants, staffing needs, etc.);
- sharing of pertinent information/documents (e.g., copies of items presented to and discussed at the Board Finance Committee meetings - possible priorities for increased or decreased spending, funding revenues, etc.);
- overall and particularly as they apply to Special Education, the budget for the upcoming year as approved by the Board.

Parents/guardians and other members of the public may make their views known to SEAC by corresponding to the Chair of SEAC or through the office of the Superintendent responsible for Special Education Support Services.

In the 2025-26 school year, SEAC fulfilled its roles and responsibilities by providing input on a wide variety of special education initiatives, the annual review of the Special Education Plan and Parent Guide and the 2026-27 Special Education Budget. SEAC received a number of staff presentations including:

- Budget
- Specialized Programs
- Deaf and hard of hearing supports
- Summer Programming
- Transition Planning
- Removing Barriers for Students with Disabilities Grant Activities