



**Special
Education**

A parent's guide to...IPRC

A parent's guide to identification, placement and review committees

The Peel District School Board is committed to student success. We recognize that students develop and learn at different rates and so we help students succeed with a program tailored to meet individual learning needs.

Sometimes the regular classroom program doesn't meet all of these needs in a way best suited to the child. That's why we offer a wide range of special education programs and services designed to provide the best possible learning opportunities for individual students of varying abilities.

One way we try to make sure all students get the special education assistance they need is through *identification, placement and review committees*. These committees—known as IPRCs—do three main things:

- *identify* students who need special education
- *place* them in the program that will meet their needs
- *review* how students are doing in their special education placements

IPRCs follow a formal process—governed by provincial law (Regulation 181/98)—to protect the rights of parents and children. This regulation requires school boards to set up IPRCs and outlines the related rights and options of parents and children. Your input is valued and essential to make the best possible decisions for your child's education.

If you are reading this brochure, it probably means an IPRC is being considered or planned for your child. This parent guide explains how IPRCs identify children who need special education programs, outlines your rights as a parent/guardian and describes how your involvement will help to make good educational decisions for your child. The brochure also contains answers to questions that parents often ask about IPRCs. Your child's teacher and principal can also help, and there are other resources listed on the back of this brochure.

Before the IPRC

Who refers students to the IPRC?

The *school principal* refers a child to an IPRC. You may also ask the principal of your child's school to refer your child. The request must be in writing, and the principal will give you a written response within 15 school days.



You will receive a letter with the date and location of the IPRC. IPRCs may be held at the child's school. You will receive the letter at least 10 school days before the IPRC. *If you can't attend the IPRC on the scheduled date, please contact your school principal to arrange a different date or time.*

Before the IPRC, school and board staff will gather information about your child's learning. This information will be given to you, and to the members of the IPRC, before the meeting. On request, you also have access to your child's school record.

You may also provide information to the committee. If you choose, you can give your *school principal* any written information you want to provide in advance of the IPRC. The principal of your child's school will also provide you with copies of all reports, if you do not already have copies. It is a good idea to review these reports and discuss them with the *school principal* before the meeting.

Who is on the IPRC?

An IPRC must have at least three staff members. Usually these members are your *school principal*, resource teachers and/or teachers from your school. Sometimes another person—like a psychology staff member or speech-language pathologist—acts as a resource to the committee. This person might not make a presentation, but just be available to answer questions. Your letter of invitation will list the people who will be at your child's IPRC and their titles.

What is my role as a parent in the IPRC?

You are an essential part of the IPRC and an equal participant in helping to make a decision for your child. We encourage you to become as involved and informed as possible. You may find it helpful to bring someone to the IPRC with you. This may be a friend, a relative, a member of a parent association—anyone of your choosing. Make sure you tell the *school principal* the name(s) of your invited guest(s) in advance.

If you don't feel comfortable speaking to the committee in English, speak with your *school principal* about requesting an interpreter at the IPRC.

Is my child invited to attend the IPRC?

If your child is 16 years or older, he or she may attend the IPRC meeting. Given the sensitive nature of some of the information presented, you may want to talk in advance with your *school principal* about how your child will be involved in the meeting. You should also talk with your child about what he/she should expect.

What information will be given to IPRC members?

Committee members receive information from a variety of sources, including:

- teacher's assessment of your child's needs and academic achievement

- related health information
- comments from parents
- results of any formal assessments including psychological and speech-language assessments.

Any written information you provide in advance will be discussed at the meeting.

What happens if I am unable to attend the IPRC?

You should attend the IPRC. We understand, however, that sometimes schedules do not permit you to attend the IPRC meeting. You will be given a copy of the information that will be given to the members of the IPRC. If you are unable to attend the IPRC meeting, any information or input that you have provided will be considered as part of the IPRC decision-making process. The principal of your child's school will contact you after the meeting to let you know the committee's decisions and recommendations.

What can I do to prepare for the IPRC?

You may want to get additional information before the IPRC. For example:

- Ask your *school principal* for a copy of the criteria that the Peel board uses to identify students for special education programs.
- Find out from *your school principal* what possible options the IPRC might consider for your child. Sometimes, a visit to one of these classes or programs may be arranged to provide you with additional information.
- A *Getting to know special education programs services* parent fact sheet is available at your school or on the board web site at www.peel.edu.on.ca/parents/facts/special.htm

During the IPRC

Your letter of invitation will tell you who will chair the IPRC. The chair will start the meeting by welcoming you and introducing the committee members to you. You will then have the opportunity to introduce yourself and guests.

The IPRC chair will outline the purpose of the meeting. The committee will review your child's strengths and educational needs with you and discuss whether a special education placement is required. You will be encouraged to join in the discussion, provide input and ask questions.

If the committee decides that a special education placement is required, it will first consider whether a placement in a regular class with special education support would be appropriate. This support might include withdrawal from the regular classroom for



part of the school day. If a regular class would not be suitable, the committee will consider a contained special education class placement.

Will the IPRC discuss anything else?

You can ask the committee to discuss specific instructional methods and services that your child may need. If you request it, the committee may make recommendations about methods and services, but is not required by legislation to do so and can't make any decisions about these areas.

How long is the IPRC meeting?

IPRC meetings vary in length from 15 minutes to over an hour. Typically, the meeting is no longer than 20 minutes.

What will the committee decide?

The committee will review your child's strengths and needs and make one of the following decisions:

a) Your child is *exceptional* and a special education placement will be recommended.

or

b) Your child is not *exceptional* and a special education placement is not recommended.

The committee makes its decision while you are there in the meeting. You don't have to respond to the decision at that time.

Sometimes, the committee needs more information and may choose to defer its decision. When the committee has the information it needs and has consulted with you again, it will make a decision. You will receive a copy of any written material the committee obtains during this process and will be notified of the committee's decision.

What are the types of exceptionalities?

An IPRC may identify students with one or more of the following *exceptionalities*:

- exceptional behaviour
- exceptional communication
- exceptional intellectual
- exceptional physical

After the IPRC

You will receive a letter stating the committee's decision about identification and placement for your child. The letter will include the statement developed by the IPRC

about your child's strengths and needs. If the IPRC is recommending a contained class for your child, the letter will also outline the reasons for this decision.

If the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional and is recommending a special education placement, you will be asked to sign a form consenting to the recommended placement. Please return it to your child's school.

Do I have to accept the placement offered?

You don't have to accept the placement, but please discuss your concerns with your *school principal* before making a final decision. Your *school principal* can arrange a visit to see the placement before you make a decision.

If the class recommended is in another school, how will my child get there?

Transportation will be provided within the Peel board guidelines. Please discuss any transportation concerns with the principal of your child's present school. Transportation is arranged within two weeks of your signed consent form being received by the school.

How will the teacher of the special education class and the principal of the new school know that my child has been offered placement in the special education class?

The IPRC will give the information to the new school. The principal of your child's present school will give you information about busing and will make sure the new school knows when your child will begin attending that school.

When can my child attend the new class?

Arrangements can be made as soon as you have signed the consent form and returned it to your child's school.

May I ask the IPRC to reconsider its recommendations?

You may ask to meet with the IPRC again. You should do so in writing within 15 school days of the original IPRC. The purpose of this follow-up meeting is to review the statement of decision in light of your concerns—or your child's concerns, if he or she is 16 years or older.

The meeting will be held as soon as possible after the request has been received. At this meeting, you will be able to explain your concerns to the committee. The committee will decide whether to change its decision or not while you are present. In addition, after the meeting, you will be sent a letter stating whether any changes were made to the committee's decision and the reasons for these changes.



Appeals

What do I do if I disagree with the committee's decision?

Board and school staff will make every attempt to resolve your concerns. You may request a follow-up meeting with the IPRC. If you remain dissatisfied, you may appeal the decision of the IPRC. Send your intent to appeal, in writing within 30 school days of the IPRC meeting to the director of education of the Peel District School Board. If you have had a follow-up meeting with the IPRC as outlined above, your letter must be sent within 15 school days of this second meeting.

In your letter, you must state which of the IPRC decisions you are appealing and why you disagree with the committee. The student remains in the current placement until the appeal is resolved.

Who are the members of the appeal board?

A special education appeal board consists of three members, none of whom have had any prior involvement with the matter under appeal:

- one member selected by the Peel District School Board
- one member selected by the parents
- a chair selected jointly by the other two members or the appropriate district manager of the Ministry of Education and Training, if the two members are unable to agree on a chair

The first two members listed must be selected within 15 school days of the board receiving the notice of appeal. The chair must be selected within 15 school days of the appointment of the other two members.

What does the appeal board do?

The chair of the appeal board will arrange a meeting of the appeal board within 30 school days of being selected as the chair. At this meeting, the appeal board will review the IPRC proceedings, including the statement of decision and all reports, assessments and other documents considered by the IPRC.

Will I be invited to this meeting?

You and your child (if 16 and over) will be invited to the appeal board hearing.

What decisions does an appeal board make?

Within three school days of the appeal board hearing the appeal board will either

- a) agree with the IPRC and recommend that its decisions be implemented

or

b) disagree with the IPRC and make a recommendation to the Peel board about your child's identification, placement or both

Will I receive a written decision?

Yes, the appeal board will send you a written statement of its decision and the resolution of the recommendations.

How are the appeal board's recommendations implemented?

The appeal board will send a written statement of its recommendations to the director of education for the Peel board. Within 30 school days of receiving this statement, the school board must consider the recommendations, decide what action to take and send you a letter with details of this action plan. This letter will also include information about what you can do if you are still dissatisfied with the plan including information about the special education tribunal.

IPRC Reviews

Once my child is in a special education placement, how will I know that my child's needs are being met?

You will be informed regularly of your child's progress in a variety of ways, including:

- the process of writing and implementing an individual education plan (IEP) with your input will begin within 30 school days of your child starting in the placement
- report cards (which will include a copy of the IEP) sent home from the school
- parent/teacher interviews



Will there be any follow-up IPRCs?

You may request a review IPRC at any time after your child has been in the placement for three months.

Your child's special education needs will be reviewed at least once a year by the school, and you will be consulted at that time. If you are in agreement, the formal annual review IPRC will not be held. The annual review IPRC will be held if a change in placement or location for your child is proposed or if you would like the IPRC to be held.

Learn more about special education programs

Special education programs in the Peel board range from support programs for students in regular classroom settings to self contained classes. Integration opportunities are provided in most placements. Find out more information about special education, including a special education fact sheet, from:

- your child's school
- the Peel board Special Education Program Services department 905- 890-1099, ext. 2337/1-800-668-1146, ext. 2337
- the board's web site at www.peelschools.org/parents/facts/special.htm
- the board's FaxBack service (call 905-890-1010, press 1—document 28053)

Your local library and the associations on Special Education Advisory Committee also have helpful resources.

Provincial and demonstration schools in Ontario

There are a number of provincial and demonstration schools in Ontario. These schools provide programs for exceptional students with severe disabilities and students who require residential placement.

Amethyst School (for learning disabled)

1090 Highbury Avenue

London, ON N5Y 4V9

Tel: 519-453-4408

Centre Jules-Leger (for learning disabled-French)

281 rue Lanark

Ottawa, ON K1Z 6R8

Tel: 613-761-9300

Ernest C. Drury School (for the deaf)

255 Ontario Street S.

Milton, ON L9T 2M5

Tel: 905-878-2851

Robarts School (for the deaf)

1090 Highbury Avenue

P.O. Box 7360, Station E

London, ON N5Y 4V9

Tel: 519-453-4400

Sagonaska School (for learning disabled)
350 Dundas Street W.
Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
Tel: 613-967-2830

Sir James Whitney School (for the deaf)
350 Dundas Street W.
Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
Tel: 613-967-2823

Trillium School (for learning disabled)
347 Ontario Street S.
Milton, ON L9T 3X9
Tel: 905-878-8428

W. Ross Macdonald School (for the blind and deaf-blind)
350 Brant Avenue
Brantford, ON N3T 3J9
Tel: 519-759-0730

Special Education Advisory Committee

Boards are required to establish a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). These committees include three trustees and representatives from local parent associations. These representatives serve as advocates for children and parents, and the associations have useful parent resources. To find meeting dates and the name and phone number of your local trustee or any of the trustee members of SEAC, please phone 905-890-1099, ext. 2029/1-800-668-1146, ext. 2029, or visit www.peelschools.org

The following associations have representation on the Peel board SEAC:

Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter 905-782-0055
Autism Society Ontario-Peel Chapter 905-450-2299
Brampton Caledon Community Living 905-453-8841
Community Living Mississauga 905-542-2694
Easter Seal Society, 416-421-8377
Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada, 905-453-9366
Learning Disabilities Association Mississauga 905-272-4100
Learning Disabilities Association of North Peel 905-791-4100
Parents for Children's Mental Health, 416-921-2109
Peel Parents of Hearing Impaired Children 905-812-7644
Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario 1-888-274-2226
VIEWS for Blind and Visually Impaired Children, 905-637-0911

About this parent guide - This brochure reflects the changes required by Ontario regulation 181/98. Produced by Special Education Program Services and Communication Services in co-operation with the Special Education Advisory Committee. Cost to produce is 13 cents per unit.

Questions? Call 905-890-1099, ext. 2345/1-800-668-1146, ext. 2345.

This brochure is available in Braille, large print or audio cassette format on request.