



## **SPECIAL CLASS/PROGRAM LOCATIONS**

**Date Approved: February 15, 2001**

**Projected Review Date: February, 2003**

**Policy Statement:** It is the policy of The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board that the special learning needs of all students, wherever possible, be addressed within the home school. When determining the locations for all elementary and secondary school special classes, a number of approved criteria must be analyzed and considered as part of the decision-making process.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Superintendent of Instructional Services  
Superintendent of Education  
Superintendent of Plant Services

### **OPERATING PROCEDURES:**

1. "When making a placement decision on a referral, the I.P.R.C. committee shall, before considering the option of placement in a special class, consider whether placement in a regular class, with appropriate special education services (a) could meet the pupil's needs; and (b) is consistent with parental preferences." Regulation 181/98 Section 17(1)
2. "If, after considering all of the information obtained by it or submitted to it ...that it considers relevant, the committee is satisfied that placement in a regular class would meet the pupil's needs and is consistent with parental preferences, the committee shall decide in favour of placement in a regular class. Regulation 181/98; Section 17(2)
3. "That the special learning needs of all students, wherever possible, be addressed within the home school." (HWDSB) Guiding Principle (May 25, 2000)

When determining the locations for all elementary and secondary school special classes, the following issues must be considered:

### **1.0 EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

- 1.1 There must be a case-by-case consideration made for each student to determine if it is in the student's best interest to remain in the current special class.
- 1.2 Highly specialized/low incidence programs, wherever possible, should be placed in one grouping of schools that facilitates the transition from primary to junior to intermediate to senior. (e.g. Primary and Junior Autistic Classes; Junior and Intermediate Developmental Classes.) This provides a sense of consistency and consolidation of the program for the students and recognition by school staff of their needs, learning styles and special considerations that must be in place.
- 1.3 The number of special classes in schools with limited enrolments should be limited to maximize integration opportunities without taxing the same class/teacher. There must be a choice of classes, at appropriate grade levels, into which each student can be integrated.

- 1.4 The allocation of special classes and/or special support personnel at the primary level should reflect our Board's support of early intervention.
- 1.5 The types of special classes and support programs must reflect system needs.
- 1.6 For consistency and stability of educational programs, Special Education Programs should remain in schools where they have been located and only relocated through criteria developed by the Superintendent of Instructional Services, and with the approval of the assigned Superintendent of Education.
- 1.7 When a school is unable to adapt programs to meet the needs of a student, the Board will offer a continuum of special class placements.

## **2.0 TRANSPORTATION**

- 2.1 Students will be placed in the nearest special class to their home and one that best meets their needs, as per guidelines provided in the Transportation Policy.

## **3.0 ACCOMMODATION**

- 3.1 For specialized exceptionalities requiring physical modifications to the school or classroom environment, special classes should remain stable for many years (refer to Educational Needs, item #1.6)
- 3.2 Within a cluster of schools, a pathway from Primary to Junior to Intermediate to Secondary should be established so that students will be able to change schools with their classmates throughout their school career.
- 3.3 In order to inform the system, the HWDSB support for a Pathway school concept will be discussed with parents, SEAC, community agencies, and community partnerships of the support of the HWDSB for a Pathways school concept. This can be accomplished through cluster principal meetings, system administrator meetings, Principal Advisory Team meetings, individual school staff meetings, and manager meetings.
- 3.4 Special classes may only be placed in portables with the prior consent of the assigned Superintendent of Education.
- 3.5 The number of special classes assigned to a school should be minimized when one of them is a Behavioural Class.
- 3.6 The maximum number of exceptional students in a special class should be kept within determined HWDSB maximum limits.
- 3.7 "An effort should be made to provide barrier-free schools for all staff, students, parents and community members, regardless of their physical needs." When expertise, specialized equipment, or a safe, secure environment is not available, as determined by the parents and the school principal, parents will be given a choice regarding an alternate site, a "Pathways school." (HWDSB Policy 4.03)
- 3.8 In the building of new schools and major renovations, accommodations will take into account special education program needs. There are prerequisite discussions to ensure that the design of the building addresses these needs as conveyed through the Superintendent of Instructional Services.

**Reference: Regulation 181/98 Section 17 (1-2)**