



**Guide for Parents/Guardians
to
The Identification, Placement,
and Review Committee
(IPRC)**

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1. About this Guide:

Parents/guardians are valued partners and parent participation is an important part of planning for education. As parents/guardians, you know your child/youth best. You know your child/youth's strengths, abilities, needs, and challenges, and, as a result, you have an important role in the education of your child/youth. Your continued involvement and support in the education of your child/youth will make a positive and meaningful impact. It is important that you participate in decisions that affect your child/youth's education.

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to the success of all learners. Because we understand that students develop and learn in different ways, we are dedicated to the provision of special education programs and services designed to support the individual strengths and needs of students with special learning needs. The Education Act requires that school boards provide special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils. The purpose of this guide for parents/guardians is to provide you with information about the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), and to set out for you the procedures involved in identifying a pupil as "exceptional", deciding the pupil's placement, or appealing such decisions if you do not agree with the IPRC. This guide outlines your rights as a parent and describes how your involvement will help to make good educational decisions for your child/youth with special needs.

This Guide for Parents/Guardians to Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) will be provided to parents/guardians at least once annually, and upon request.

After reading this guide, if you require more information, please contact your local school.

2. What is an IPRC?

Regulation 181/98 requires that all school boards convene Identification, Placement, and Review Committees (IPRCs). An IPRC is a formal committee that meets and decides if a student should be identified as an exceptional pupil and, if so, the placement that will best meet the student's needs.

3. Who comprises the committee?

An Identification, Placement, and Review Committee is comprised of at least three school board personnel, one of whom must be a principal or supervisory officer of the board.

4. What is the role of the IPRC?

An IPRC will:

- invite you and your child/youth (if the student is 16 years of age or older) to attend the IPRC meeting;
- review relevant information about the student;
- describe the student's strengths and needs;
- determine whether the student should be identified as exceptional;
- identify the area(s) of the student's exceptionality or exceptionalities, according to the categories and definitions of exceptionality provided by the Ministry of Education;
- determine an appropriate placement for the student;
- provide reasons for the placement if deciding for a placement in a special education class;
- discuss proposals for special education programs and services if requested by you, or the student age 16 or over; and
- review the identification and placement at least once in each school year, unless you give written notice dispensing with the review.

5. Who is identified as an exceptional pupil?

The Education Act defines an exceptional pupil as a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical and/or multiple exceptionalities are such that the student is considered to require a placement in a special education program. Students are identified according to these categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education.

Category	Exceptionality
Behaviour	Behaviour
Physical	Blind and Low Vision; Physical Disability
Communication	Autism; Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Learning Disability; Language Impairment; Speech Impairment
Intellectual	Developmental Disability; Giftedness; Mild Intellectual Disability
Multiple	Multiple Exceptionalities

Further details regarding the definitions of the exceptionality categories can be found within Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's ***“Special Education Plan”***.

6. What is a special education placement?

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board offers a range of special education placements for exceptional pupils. The placements include: regular class with indirect support, regular class with resource assistance, regular class with withdrawal assistance, special education class with partial integration, and special education class full time. Programming within each class setting is individualized in accordance with the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Placement	Description
Regular class with indirect support	The student is placed in a regular class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialized consultative services.
Regular class with resource assistance	The student is placed in the regular class for most or all of the day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified special education teacher.
Regular class with withdrawal assistance	The student is placed in the regular class and receives instruction outside of the classroom for less than 50 per cent of the school day, from a qualified special education teacher.
Special education class with partial integration	The student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class where the student-teacher ratio conforms to standards for at least 50 per cent of the school day but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.
Special education class full time	The student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class, where the student-teacher ratio conforms to standards for the entire school day.

HWDSB endeavours to meet the needs of all students in the most enabling environment, in accordance with parental preference. The special learning needs of students, wherever possible, can and should be addressed within the home school.

Other options exist to meet the student's needs, and parents/guardians and school board staff should explore these. In special circumstances, it may be appropriate to consider application for placement in provincial schools such as a Provincial School for students who are Deaf, blind, or deafblind, or a Demonstration School for students who have severe learning disabilities; or placement in a facility that provides the necessary care or treatment appropriate to the student's condition.

7. What is a special education program?

A special education program is defined in the Education Act as an educational program that:

- is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation; and
- includes a plan (the Individual Education Plan [IEP]) containing specific objectives and an outline of educational services that meets the needs of the exceptional pupil.

8. What are special education services?

Special education services are defined in the Education Act as the facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.

HWDSB provides special education services either directly (e.g., psychological services, speech/language services, autism and neurodevelopmental services, etc.) or through partnerships with community agencies (e.g., occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech language therapy, etc.).

9. What is an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?

The IEP must be developed for your child/youth with special learning needs, in consultation with you.

An IEP is:

- a summary of the student's strengths and needs, and of the expectations for a student's learning during a school year that differ from the expectations defined in the appropriate grade level of the Ontario curriculum;
- a written plan of action prepared for a student who requires modifications of the regular Ontario curriculum, and/or accommodations to the regular Ontario curriculum, or programming that is alternative to the regular Ontario curriculum;

- a tool to help teachers monitor and communicate the student's growth;
- a plan developed, implemented, and monitored by school staff, in consultation with you;
- a flexible, working document that can be adjusted as necessary;
- an accountability tool for the student, you, and everyone who has responsibilities under the plan for helping your child/youth meet individual goals and expectations;
- an ongoing record that ensures continuity in programming;
- a document to be used in conjunction with the provincial report card.

An IEP must include:

- a description of the student's strengths and needs and specific educational expectations;
- an outline of the special education program and services that will be received;
- a statement about the methods by which your child/youth's progress will be reviewed; and
- a transition plan that includes the specific goals, actions required, person(s) responsible for actions, and timelines for each educational transition where your child/youth requires support.

The IEP must be completed within 30 days after your child/youth has been placed in the special education program, and the principal must ensure that you receive a copy of it.

10. How is an IPRC meeting requested?

According to **Ontario Regulation 181/98, subsection 14(1)**, once a child/youth has been enrolled in school, you, as the parent/guardian, have the right to request that the principal refer your child/youth to an IPRC.

The principal of the student's school:

- must acknowledge your request to convene an IPRC and refer the student to an IPRC upon receiving a written request from you;
- may, with written notice to you, refer the student to an IPRC when the principal and the student's teacher(s) believe that the student may benefit from a special education program.

Within 15 days of receiving a request for an IPRC meeting from you, or giving you notice of an IPRC meeting, the principal must provide you with a copy of this guide and a written statement of approximately when the IPRC will meet.

11. May parents/guardians attend the IPRC meeting?

Regulation 181/98, subsection 5(1) entitles parents/guardians and pupils 16 years of age or older:

- to be present at and participate in all committee discussions about your child/youth; and
- to be present when the committee's identification and placement decision is made.

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board invites and encourages parents/guardians, and students age 16 or over, to attend IPRC meetings.

12. Who else may attend an IPRC meeting?

In addition to the three (3) school board personnel who constitute the committee, other people may attend the IPRC meeting. Possible attendees include:

- the principal of the student's school (if not already a member of the IPRC);
- resource people such as the student's teacher(s), special education staff, school board support staff, or other professionals who may be needed to provide further information or clarification;
- your representative – that is, a person who may support you or speak on behalf of you or your child/youth; and
- an interpreter (including a sign-language interpreter), if required. (*You may request the services of an interpreter through the principal of your child/youth's school.)

13. Who may request that others attend?

Either you or the principal of the student's school may make a request for the attendance of others at the IPRC meeting. A student who is 16 years of age or older may make the same request.

14. What information will parents/guardians receive about the IPRC meeting?

At least 10 days in advance of the meeting, the chair of the IPRC will provide you with written notification of the meeting and an invitation to attend the meeting as an important partner in considering your child/youth's placement. This letter will notify you of the date, time and place of the meeting, and will ask you to indicate whether you will attend.

Before the IPRC meeting occurs, you will receive a written copy of any information about your child/youth that the chair of the IPRC has received. This may include the results of assessments or a summary of information.

15. What if parents/guardians are unable to make the scheduled meeting?

If you are unable to make the scheduled meeting, you may:

- contact the school principal to arrange an alternative date or time; or
- let the school principal know you will not be attending. As soon as possible after the meeting, the principal will forward to you, for your consideration and signature, the IPRC's written statement of decision noting the decision of identification and placement and any recommendations regarding special education programs and services.

16. What happens at an IPRC meeting?

- The chair introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting.
- The IPRC will review all available information about your child/youth.

The members will:

- consider an educational assessment of your child/youth;
- consider, subject to the provisions of the Health Care Consent Act, 1996, a health or psychological assessment of your child/youth conducted by a qualified practitioner if they feel that such an assessment is required to make a correct identification or placement decision;
- interview the student, with your consent if your child is less than 16 years of age, if they feel it would be useful to do so; and
- consider any information that you submit about your child/youth or that the student submits if the student is 16 years of age or older.
- The committee may discuss any proposal that has been made about a special education program or special education services for the student. Committee members will discuss any such proposal at your request, or at the request of the student if the student is 16 years of age or older.
- You are encouraged to ask questions and join in the discussion.
- Following the discussion, after all the information has been presented and considered, the committee will make its decision regarding identification and placement.

17. What will the IPRC consider in making its placement decision?

In determining the student's most appropriate special education program and placement, the IPRC must consider first whether placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services will:

- meet your child/youth's needs; and
- be consistent with your preferences.

If, after considering all the information presented to it, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a regular class will meet your child/youth's needs, the committee will decide in favour of placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services.

If the committee decides that your child/youth should be placed in a special education class, it must state the reasons for that decision in its written statement of decision.

18. What will the IPRC's written statement of decision include?

The IPRC's written statement of decision will state:

- whether the IPRC has identified your child/youth as exceptional and,
- where the IPRC has identified your child/youth as exceptional:
 - the categories and definitions of any exceptionalities identified, as defined by the Ministry of Education;
 - the IPRC's description of the student's strengths and needs;
 - the IPRC's placement decision; and
- where the IPRC has decided that your child/youth should be placed in a special education class, the reasons for that decision.

19. What happens after the IPRC has made its decision?

- If you **agree with the IPRC decision**, you will be asked to indicate, by signing your name that you agree with the identification and placement decisions made by the IPRC.
- If the IPRC has identified your child as an exceptional pupil and if you **agree with the IPRC identification and placement decisions**, the Board will promptly notify the principal of the school at which the special education program is to be provided of the need to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child.

20. Once a placement decision has been made, can this placement be reviewed?

- A review IPRC meeting will be held within the school year, unless the principal of the school at which the special education program is being provided receives written notice from you, the parent/guardian, dispensing with the annual review.
- You may request a review IPRC meeting any time after your child/youth has been in a special education program for three (3) months.

21. What does a review IPRC consider and decide?

- With your written permission, the IPRC conducting the review will consider the progress the student has made in relation to the IEP. It will consider the same type of information that was originally considered by the IPRC, as well as any new information.
- The IPRC will review the placement and identification decisions and determine whether they should be continued or whether a different decision should now be made.

22. What can parents/guardians do if they disagree with the IPRC decision?

- If you do not agree with either the identification or placement decision made by the IPRC, you may:
 - within 15 days of receipt of the decision, request that the IPRC hold a second meeting to discuss your concerns; or
 - within 30 days of receipt of the decision, file a notice of appeal with the Director of Education and Secretary of Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, P.O. Box 2558, Hamilton, Ontario L8N 3L1.
- If you do not agree with the decision after the second meeting, you may file a notice of appeal within 15 days of your receipt of the decision.

If you do not consent to the IPRC decision and you do not appeal it, HWDSB will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

23. How do I appeal an IPRC decision?

If you disagree with the IPRC's identification of your child/youth as exceptional or with the placement decision of the IPRC, you may, within 30 days of receipt of the original decision or within 15 days of receipt of the decision from the second

meeting described above, give written notification of your intention to appeal the decision to the Director of Education and Secretary of Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, P.O. Box 2558, Hamilton, Ontario L8N 3L1.

The notice of appeal must:

- indicate the decision with which you disagree (identification and/or placement); and
- include a statement that sets out your reasons for disagreeing.

24. What happens in the appeal process?

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will establish a Special Education Appeal Board (SEAB) to hear your appeal. The appeal board will be composed of three persons who have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal, one of whom is to be selected by you, the parent/guardian.
- The chair of the appeal board will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but no later than 30 days after the chair has been selected (unless parents/guardians and the Board provide written consent to a later date).
- The appeal board will receive the material reviewed by the IPRC and may interview any persons who may be able to contribute information about the matter under appeal.
- You, the parent/guardian, and your child/youth, if the student is 16 years old or over, are entitled to be present at, and to participate in, all discussions.
- The appeal board must make its recommendation within three (3) days of the meeting's ending. It may:
 - agree with the IPRC and recommend that the decision be implemented; or
 - disagree with the IPRC and make a recommendation to the board about your child/youth's identification or placement or both.
- The appeal board will report its recommendations in writing, to you and to the school board, providing the reasons for its recommendations.
- Within 30 days of receiving the appeal board's written statement, the school board will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations (boards are not required to follow the appeal board recommendation).
- You may accept the decision of the school board or you may appeal to a Special Education Tribunal. You may request a hearing by writing to the secretary of the Special Education Tribunal. Information about making an application to the tribunal will be included with the appeal board's decision.

25. What special education programs and services are provided by the board?

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board provides a variety of special education programs, services, and placements to support the unique requirements of students with special learning needs and to maximize outcomes for these learners within its schools. Programming is individualized in accordance with a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Further information can be found within the HWDSB **Special Education Plan** under **"Tier 2 and 3 Special Education Supports and Placements"**. To learn more about these unique programs and services available to support your child/youth's individual strengths and needs, contact your school team.

26. What organizations are available to assist parents/guardians?

Many parent/guardian organizations are available to provide information and support to parents/guardians of children and youth with exceptional needs.

- Association for Bright Children (ABC)
- Autism Society of Ontario (H-W Chapter)
- Canadian Hearing Society
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) Foundation Hamilton and Niagara
- The Children's Aid Society (CAS) of Hamilton
- CHOICES – Supporting People with Developmental Disabilities
- Community Living Hamilton
- Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton
- Epilepsy Ontario
- Easter Seals Ontario
- FASD ONE (Ontario Network of Expertise)
- Hamilton Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Parent & Caregiver Support Group
- Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community
- Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO)
- Lynwood Charlton Centre
- McMaster Children's Hospital Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation Portfolio

- Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy
- P.A.L.S. – Parent Advocacy Learning Support Group
- Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association of Ontario
- Tourette Syndrome Foundation of Canada
- VIEWS for the Visually Impaired
- VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children

These organizations may be represented on Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) which advises the HWDSB in matters of policy which affect children and youth with exceptional needs.

27. Where are Ministry provincial and demonstration schools?

The Ministry of Education operates provincial and demonstration schools throughout Ontario for deaf, blind, deaf-blind, and severely learning-disabled students, as well as those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Residential programs are offered at the schools Monday to Friday, for students who live too far from school to travel daily.

English-language Demonstration Schools for students with severe learning disabilities:

Amethyst School

1515 Cheapside Street
 London, Ontario N5V 3N9
 Tel: (519) 453-4408
www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/amethyst/index.html

Sagonaska School

350 Dundas Street West
 Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
 Tel: 613-967-2830
www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/sagonaska/index.html

Trillium School

347 Ontario Street South
 Milton, ON L9T 3X9
 Tel: 905-878-8428
www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/trillium/index.html

Provincial Schools for the Deaf:

Ernest C. Drury School

255 Ontario Street South
Milton, ON L9T 2M5 Tel: 905-878-2851
TTY: 905-878-7195
www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/ecd/index.html

Robarts School

1515 Cheapside Street
London, ON N5V 3N9
Tel: 519-453-4400
TTY: 519-453-4400
www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/robarts/index.html

Sir James Whitney School

350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
Tel: 613-967-2823 or 1-800-501-6240
TTY: 613-967-2823
www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/sjw/index.html

Provincial School for the blind and deaf/blind:

W. Ross Macdonald School

350 Brant Avenue
Brantford, ON N3T 3J9
Tel: 519-759-0730 or 1-866-618-9092
www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/wross/index.html

French-language Provincial School for the Deaf and Demonstration School for students with severe learning disabilities:

Centre Jules-Léger

281 Lanark Avenue
Ottawa, ON K1Z 6R8
Tel: 613-761-9300
TTY: 613-761-9302
www.psbnet.ca/eng/schools/cjl.html

28. Where can parents/guardians obtain additional information?

Additional information can be obtained from:

- Hamilton Wentworth District School Board's **"Special Education Plan"**;
- the school principal or learning resource teacher;
- info@hwdsb.on.ca
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
P.O. Box 2558, Hamilton, Ontario L8N 3L1
Telephone: 905.527.5092

IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT, AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC) Timeline

IPRC Meeting Requested	Action
Within 15 days of request	Principal sends parent/guardian: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acknowledgement of request or notice of referral • copy of the HWDSB Guide for Parents/Guardians to IPRC • approximate date for IPRC meeting
At least 10 days before meeting	IPRC chair sends parent/guardian (and student if 16 or over): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notification of IPRC meeting • details of meeting (date, time, place)
Before the meeting and as soon as possible after receipt of information on student	IPRC chair sends parent/guardian (and student if 16 or over) information about student received by IPRC

IPRC Meeting	Action
	IPRC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • documents student's strengths and needs • makes decision about identification and placement • identifies category and definition of student's exceptionality • may recommend program and services
	As soon as possible after decision is made, IPRC Statement of Decision is sent to the relevant parties. If special education class is the IPRC's placement decision, reasons for placing student in special education class are provided.

After IPRC Decision	Action
Within 15 days of statement of decision	Parent may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agree with decision and sign the IPRC Statement of Decision form • make no response • request further discussion, or • disagree with decision and file appeal with Special Education Appeal Board (SEAB)

<i>If parent agrees or makes no response:</i>	Action
Within 30 school days of placement being implemented	School completes IEP Parent gets copy of IEP

<i>If parent wishes further discussion:</i>	Action
Within 15 days of receipt of decision	Parent requests second meeting

<i>If parent disagrees:</i>	Action
Within 30 days of receipt of initial IPRC decision	Parent files notice of appeal with secretary of board

Second IPRC Meeting	Action
	As soon as possible after second IPRC meeting, notice of results sent to relevant parties, along with reasons for changes if there is a revised decision

After Second IPRC Meeting	Action
	Parent may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sign IPRC Statement of Decision form, or • make no response (board then implements placement decision, and develops IEP within 30 days)

<i>If parent disagrees:</i>	Action
Within 15 days of request of decision of second meeting	Parent files notice of appeal with secretary of board



