

Administrative Procedure 363 – Appendix A

Alberta Education Ministerial Order (#015/2004) requires school boards to identify and deliver effective programming for students with special education needs in grades 1–12.

This document outlines the requirements for school boards regarding the delivery of education programming and services to students with special education needs in grades 1–12.

These requirements are organized into the following four areas:

- Access — students with special education needs are entitled to have access in a school year to an education program in accordance with the School Act. Students with special education needs receive adapted or modified programming that enables and improves learning.
- Appropriateness — educational programming and services are designed around the assessed needs of the student and are provided by qualified staff who are knowledgeable and skilled.
- Accountability — the obligation to answer for the execution of one's assigned responsibilities.
- Appeals — timely, fair and open processes protect the rights of students and parents and address differences of opinion about the education of students with special education needs.

Ministerial Order (#015/2004) prescribes Standards for Individualized Program Planning, Implementation and Evaluation.

School boards must:

- a) ensure that IPPs are developed, implemented, monitored and evaluated for all students identified as having special education needs;
- b) identify principals as accountable for the delivery and implementation of school-based special education programming and services;
- c) provide teachers of students with special education needs with relevant resources and access to related professional development opportunities;
- d) ensure principals identify teachers whose responsibility it is to coordinate, develop, implement, monitor and evaluate student IPPs;
- e) ensure the school has a process and learning team to provide consultation, planning and problem-solving relating to programming for students with special education needs;
- f) ensure teachers:
 - Involve parents and, when appropriate, students and other professionals in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of students' IPPs;

- Document, in the IPP, the formal review of students' progress, at regularly scheduled reporting periods;
 - Throughout the year, provide feedback during informal reviews to parents and, when appropriate, students;
 - Make changes to the IPP, as required;
 - Obtain written informed parental consent on IPPs to indicate agreement with the IPP;
 - In cases when parents refuse consent, document the reasons for refusal and/or actions undertaken by the school to obtain consent and/or resolve concerns;
 - Ensure IPPs are placed in student records and access to the IPP complies with the *Student Record Regulation and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation*;
- g) Ensure teacher assistants work under the direction of a certificated teacher to realize students' goals, as outlined in their IPPs.

Developing an Individual Program Plan (IPP)

For purposes of discussion, the planning process is divided into five phases:

- Identification/assessment
- Planning
- Program Support/implementation
- Evaluation
- Reporting

Together, they constitute a process which is continuous and flexible, rather than a series of five separate and discontinuous phases.

Wherever possible, the process should be incorporated into the regular routines of planning, evaluation and reporting that occur for all students.

There should be a progressive flow from one phase to another, so that, according to need, supports can be obtained in a timely way from within the school, the division, the community and/or from regional or provincial services.

The process works best when:

- there is collaboration and ongoing consultation among teachers, administrative and support personnel, parents, students and representatives of district/community/regional agencies.
- parents/guardians and students have the opportunity to be active participants in the process, to initiate discussions regarding the learning needs or request school-based access to support. They should feel welcome and encouraged to contribute throughout the process, and are important partners in the development of the Individual Program Plan (IPP). As a rule, students should be included in all phases of the process unless they are unable or unwilling to participate.

- staff members have the support of in-service and other resources available to them. For example, a teacher should have access to specialist support, help with informal assessment procedures or suggestions for pre-referral intervention strategies.
- individual schools establish procedures to support collaborative consultation and planning. Staff should be identified within each school to be available for consultation and to be part of a school-based Learning Team. This team should be established with clear procedures to provide support, consultation, planning, case management, and, when appropriate, to facilitate inter-ministerial or community approaches.

Procedures should be in place to:

- ensure information is promptly shared;
- plan for and facilitate transitions;
- ensure consistency in reporting and documenting plans;
- promote communication and collaborative decision-making between the school and home;
- communicate planning decisions to parents, students and appropriate staff;
- resolve differences effectively.

Elk Island Catholic Schools support the process. This support is reflected in:

- recognition of the time and space required for planning/consultation;
- procedures which ensure prompt transfer and sharing of information while protecting privacy;
- establishment of qualification standards for personnel; and
- continuing in-service opportunities to support staff development to promote effective consultative models (i.e. Collaborative Response Model [CRM], Division Learning Team), school-based Learning Teams and inter-ministerial collaboration (Regional Collaborative Service Delivery [RCSD] Model).

Question and Answers (Q&A) about the IPP

What is an IPP?

An IPP is a documented plan developed for a student with special needs that describes individualized goals, adaptations, modifications, the services to be provided, and includes measures for tracking achievement.

It serves as a tool for collaborative planning among the school, the parents, the student (where appropriate) and, as necessary, school district personnel, other ministries and/or community agencies.

Typically an IPP includes individualized goals with measurable objectives, adaptations and/or modifications where appropriate, the strategies to meet these goals, and measures for tracking student achievement in relation to the goals. It also documents the special education services being provided as these relate to the student's identified needs.

Some students require small adaptations and minimum levels of support; other students with more complex needs may require detailed planning for educational modifications, adaptive technologies, or health care plans. The IPP will reflect the complexity of the student's need and, accordingly, can be brief or more detailed and lengthy.

What is an IPP for?

The development of an IPP serves a number of purposes:

- It formalizes planning decisions and processes, linking assessment with programming.
- It provides teachers, parents, and students with a record of the educational program for an individual student with special needs, and serves as the basis for reporting the student's progress.
- It serves as a tool for tracking individual student learning in terms of agreed- upon goals and objectives.
- It documents the relationships between any support services being provided and the student's educational program.
- It provides parents and students with a mechanism for input into the individualized planning process.

IPP documentation provides evidence that:

- the parent and/or student were offered the opportunity to be consulted about the preparation of the IPP;
- the student is receiving learning activities in accordance with IEP; and
- the IPP is reviewed at least twice each school year.
(Procedures will established around reporting periods and changes made to IPPS in regard to review dates and signatures)

The IPP is required for all coded students, as per the Alberta Education coding criteria. Students requiring an Action Plan or Learning Plan, which usually outlines accommodations, should be served through the reporting process (i.e. report cards) not an IPP.

What must an IEP contain?

The IPP document does not describe every aspect of the student's program. It makes reference to those aspects of the education program that are adapted or have been modified, and identifies the support services to be provided. IPP learning outcomes are often described as goals and objectives. An IPP must have the ten essential conditions outlined in the Alberta Education Special Education Standards.

The IPP may be brief, or it may be more detailed and complex, depending on the complexity of the student's needs. For example, the IPP for a student who needs examinations with adaptations and support with note-taking can be relatively simple. In contrast, a student with multiple disabilities who requires the involvement of a variety

of professionals, adaptive technologies and major curricular modifications will require a much more extensive IPP.

Who must have an IPP?

All students with special needs must have an IEP. An exception can be made if:

- the student with special needs requires no adaptation or only minor adaptations to educational materials, or instructional or assessment methods;
- the expected learning outcomes established by the applicable educational program guide have not been modified for the student with special needs; and
- For the students requiring an Action Plan or Learning Plan. This should be addressed via the students reporting process.

Definitions

In this Administrative Practice:

“Adapted programming” means programming that retains the learning outcomes of the Program of Studies and where adjustments to the instructional process are provided to address the special education needs of the student.

“Assessment” means the ongoing process of collecting information about students using a number of formal and informal methods across a variety of domains relevant to performance (behavioral, communicational, intellectual, learning or physical characteristics) to develop and implement appropriate programming to support student learning.

“Consultation” means a process that gives parents of students with special education needs and, where applicable, students the opportunity to assist in making decisions about all aspects of programming and placement. Consultation includes conferencing and meeting with school staff.

“Diagnostic information” means the results of formal and informal assessments that identify students’ areas of strengths and weaknesses and which are used to determine individualized programming for students.

“Early identification” means the process used to identify students with special education needs at the earliest possible time, prior to or subsequent to their entry into school.

“Inclusive setting/inclusion” means specially designed instruction and support for students with special education needs in regular classrooms and neighbourhood schools.

“Individualized Program Plan (IPP)” means a concise plan of action designed to address students’ special education needs, and is based on diagnostic information which provides the basis for intervention strategies, and includes the following essential information:

- Assessment data

- Current level of performance and achievement
- Identification of strengths and areas of need
- Measurable goals and objectives
- Procedures for evaluating student progress
- Identification of coordinated support services (including health-related), if required
- Relevant medical information
- Required classroom accommodations (e.g., any changes to instructional strategies, assessment procedures, materials, resources, facilities or equipment)
- Transition plans
- Year-end summary

“Informed consent” means that the individual:

- Has been provided with all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought;
- Understands and agrees to the carrying out of the activity for which his or her consent is sought; and
- Understands that the granting of consent is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time.

“Learning team” means a team that consults and shares information relevant to the individual student’s education and plans special education programming and services as required. The team may consist of the classroom teacher, parents, students (where appropriate), other school and jurisdiction staff aware of the students’ needs, and others as required.

“Level of performance” means assessed skill development in academic and other areas such as adaptive functioning, behavior, cognition, communication and physical development.

“Neighbourhood or local school” means the school students would normally attend with siblings and neighbours.

“Parents” means the biological parents or adoptive parents, or the individual who has legal custody or guardianship of students.

“Placement” means the setting in which the special education programming or service is delivered to students.

“Referral” means arranging for students to receive specialized assessment and/or intervention.

“Specialized assessment” means individualized measurement across a variety of domains for the purpose of developing and providing individualized programming for students.

Specialized assessment includes assessment of intellectual abilities, academic performance, emotional and behavioral development and physical development relevant to students' educational performance.

“Students with special education needs” means students described in section 47(1) of the School Act as being in need of special education programming because of their behavioral, communicational, intellectual, learning or physical characteristics or a combination of those characteristics.

“Transition planning” means a consultative process that involves students, parents, other professionals, receiving school staff, and community agencies, as appropriate, to enable students to prepare for and successfully make changes (school entry, between grades/levels of schooling and upon school completion).