UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN

2024-2025

Peter Sovran

Director of Education

This document is available in alternative formats upon request.

Upper Grand District School Board

Contents

Introduction to Special Education Plan

Members of the Upper Grand District School Board are committed to working with our students, parents/caregivers/guardians, staff and community members to enable our learners to not only improve in their ongoing achievement, but also to support them to meet their full potential. This Special Education Plan is a document that outlines the structures, supports and programs our Board has in place that are designed to support the diverse needs of our students. It also provides a guide to our beliefs, services and goals for how we plan on supporting our students' moving into this school year.

The Special Education Plan is written for both the communities we serve and the Ministry of Education. Yearly, the plan is reviewed, amended and submitted to the Ministry of Education according to [Regulation 306](#). During this process, we reflect and consider the growth that we have experienced as a Board, the feedback we have been given and work collaboratively achieved with various Board and community partners.

The following are some of the ways we gather information to inform this yearly plan:

- Board collected data (e.g., System level data, Education Quality & Accountability Office (EQAO) results, climate surveys, parent/caregiver feedback forms, etc.)

- Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) staff feedback (e.g., Professional learning opportunities, implementation successes/challenges, program reviews, etc.)

- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) recommendations

- Board direction including the strategic plan, UGDSB Multi-Year Plan, Strategies for Mentally Healthy Schools, Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy as well as the Safe Equitable and Inclusive School Strategy.

- Ministry directives (e.g., Ontario Autism Program, Learning For All, etc.)

- Community partner input (e.g., ErinOakkids, Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington (CMHAWW), Dufferin Child and Family Services (DCAFS), etc.)

Our goal with this plan is to ensure that it represents our Board direction and commitment to support our students with special education needs.

UGDSB Multi-Year Plan

The Special Education Plan reflects Board and Ministry policies and initiatives to ensure that it is consistent with the overall Board vision as outlined in the UGDSB Multi-Year Plan (MYP). The UGDSB Multi-Year Plan (MYP) communicates the board's purpose, vision, key strategic pillars and key enablers:

Strategic Pillars:
- Inspire a Lifelong Love of Learning
- Champion Health and Wellbeing
- Ensure Equity of Access and Outcomes
- Lead through Sustainability

Strategic Enablers:
- Foster Engaging and Supportive Learning Environments
- Strengthen and Grow Community Relationships
- Continuous Learn, Evaluate and Improve

The Special Education Plan provides a fulsome outline of the Student Support Services programs, processes and supports in place for schools, students and parents/caregivers/guardians in the UGDSB.

Model for Special Education

- We believe all students can learn.

- We value each student's unique ability, individuality, learning style and pace of learning.

- We believe that the growth, the development and the learning of each student is enhanced in the most enabling environment.

- We believe that the inclusion of exceptional students in the school community provides a valuable learning experience for all children.

- We deliver programs which incorporate realistic goals and objectives through individualized teaching and assessment methods.

- We respect the rights of parents/caregivers/guardians to make informed decisions in the best interests of their children.

- We respect, value and encourage collaborative partnerships with
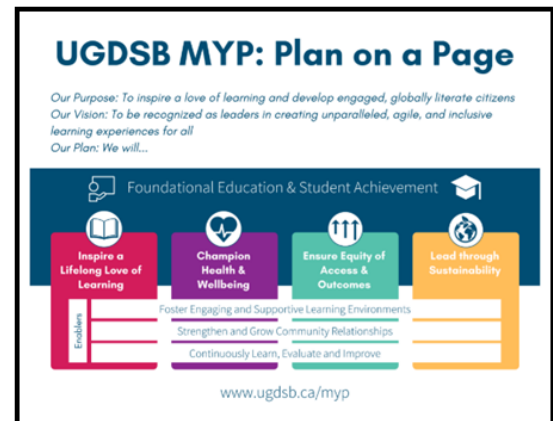
parents/caregivers/guardians, community agencies and professionals.

- We provide a diversity of placements and resources which reflect effective programs and strategies for exceptional pupils.

- We recognize the wealth of learning opportunities in the community which assist students with transitions, to offer work experiences and to allow their pursuit of special abilities or talents.

- We value early intervention for all students experiencing difficulties in school and/or needing enrichment.

Accessibility (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) (AODA)

The Upper Grand District School Board is committed to providing an environment in all of its facilities that builds independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for students, parents/caregivers/guardians, staff and the public. The Board continues to be committed to providing persons with disabilities the same opportunity of access to its services in the same location and in a similar way as these services are available to all others served in our geographic region.

The Five-year Accessibility Plan (2023-2028) is developed in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). It incorporates the intentions of the Board to meet its obligations under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA). The Plan describes the measures that the Board will take over the five year period from 2023-2028 to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who work, learn and participate in the school Board community and environment including students, staff, parents/caregivers/guardians, volunteers and visitors to the Board and its schools. The plan is guided by the Board's Accessibility Standards Policy.

Objectives

The Five-Year Accessibility Plan 2023-2028:

- describes the process by which the Board will identify, remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities

- reviews recent efforts of the Board to remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities

- describes the measures the Board will take in the period 2023-2028 to identify, remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities

- makes a commitment to provide an annual status report on the Board's

implementation of the multi-year accessibility plan

- makes a commitment to review and update the multi-year accessibility plan at least once every 5 years, and

- describes how the Board will make this accessibility plan available to the public

Commitment to Accessibility

The Five-Year Plan (2023-2028) is established, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and with the Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and Accessibility Steering Committee. It is presented to the board trustees for approval. The Upper Grand District School Board is committed to:

- maintaining an Accessibility Steering Committee and implementing the ongoing recommendations and plans of the committee

- continuing the process of consulting with SEAC and with persons with disabilities

- ensuring, wherever practical, that Board policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the principles of accessibility and inclusive/universal design

- improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/caregivers/guardians, volunteers and members of the community

Caregiver Guide to Special Education

There are two parent/caregiver guides to support parents/caregivers/guardians in navigating special education services and processes in the board:

- *The Caregiver Guide to Special Education*: Parents/caregivers/guardians are full partners in the process of determining whether or not to proceed to an Identification, Placement and Review Committee meeting (IPRC). A *Caregiver Guide to Special Education* has been produced by the Board and is available to parents/caregivers/guardians through all schools in the Board as well as the Special Education department of Student Support Services. In this guide you will find support for parents/caregivers/guardians as a way of answering their questions about Special Education Services before an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meeting is held for their child.

- The *Caregiver Guide to the Individual Education Plan*: This document outlines what an individual education plan is and the steps taken to support the development of this document as a collaborative process between home and school.

The Board's Consultation Process

The Upper Grand District School Board Special Education programs and services are shared with SEAC and the broader parent/caregiver community through various methods.

The Special Education Plan is available on the Board website and through a link on the websites of individual schools.

The Upper Grand District School Board SEAC is consulted on a regular basis about the programs and services available to students with special education needs. Survey results from parents/caregivers/guardians who have children with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) provide feedback about special education supports and services.

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

What is SEAC?

The Upper Grand District School Board has established a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) in accordance with the Education Act. SEAC is made up of local representatives of Provincial Associations, two school Trustees and interested local community representatives.

SEAC members receive orientation and training to become informed on important topics in Special Education. These topics include: Sections of the Education Act relating to Special Education, Regulations and Ministry memoranda, Board policies regarding Special Education, The Board Special Education Plan, Roles and Responsibilities of SEAC, and the Funding of Special Education.

Personal matters regarding individual students are addressed through the school or board staff as appropriate. SEAC is not the forum for dealing with individual student situations.

SEAC Roles and Responsibilities

- SEAC is a committee mandated through Reg. 464/97 as a standing committee of each school board.

- SEAC may make recommendations to the Trustees (in writing or in person) in respect of any matter affecting the establishment, development and delivery of special education programs and services in respect of exceptional pupils of the board.

- SEAC also plays a significant role in the review of the annual Special Education Plan and in the annual budget process that relates to special education.

SEAC receives monthly reports from its members concerning ongoing association activities and concerns.

Procedures for Selecting Members

- Members are appointed by Trustees for a four year term. Membership is formed every four years, usually coinciding with the terms of the Board of Trustees.

- Members must be over 18, Canadian Citizens, reside in the school board's jurisdiction, and not school board employees (other than Trustees and Superintendent).

- Membership includes:

  - Two Trustees

  - One representative from each Local Association (up to 12 – each association may have one alternative)

  - One representative to represent First Nations

  - Additional Members/Members-at-Large (up to three)

  - Board personnel (non-voting)

    - ✓ Superintendent or Designate

    - ✓ Other staff as deemed appropriate

    - ✓ Secretarial support (preparation of agenda, minutes, reports)

SEAC Education Advisory Committee Members
Associations & Representatives

- Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington – Denise Helm

- Dufferin Child and Family Services (DCAFS) – Andrea Wyshniowsky

- Easter Seals – Dianna Landry; Alternate – Jennifer Tremaine

- FASD Ontario – Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders – Maren Vsetula

- Inclusion Action in Ontario (IAO) – Melody Dekorte

- Kerry's Place Autism Services – Mandi McCreary

- Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County – John McNamara

- Member at Large – Melissa Williamson

- OPVIC/VIEWS (Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children) – Shelley Marks

- Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society – Amber Barens

Administration/Board Representatives
- Wendy Donaldson – Superintendent of Education, Student Support Services
- Peggy Blair – Superintendent of Education, Student Support Services
- Jennifer Meeker – Principal of Special Education
- April King – Principal of Special Education 12-K
- Rochelle Murray-Cako – Elementary Administration
- Brent Block – Secondary Administration
- Special Education Consultants

Trustee Representatives
- Alethia O'Hare-Stephenson
- Laurie Whyte

SEAC Procedures
- It is the practice of SEAC to include presentations from Associations as part of their regular meetings.
- The local association representatives may bring items of concern for discussion on behalf of their constituents.
- Speakers wishing to address SEAC pertaining to the impact of Board policies on student with special needs, may contact the Chair of SEAC, or the Secretary, one week prior to a regular SEAC meeting requesting to be placed on the agenda.
- The subject of the address needs to be submitted at the time of contact so that SEAC members may be prepared. A timeline of ten minutes is provided to have concerns heard and another ten minutes will be available for questions by the Committee.
- A response to the speaker's concerns will be made at the same meeting, wherever possible. It should be understood, however, that some further inquiries may have to be made and, therefore, a response may only be possible at a later date.

Guidelines for Presentations to SEAC
- There are three kinds of presentations:
- SEAC association representative presentations, which are educational or informational in nature.
- Community or parent/caregiver speakers who may have an issue specifically pertaining to Special Education.

- School board staff presentations to apprise SEAC members of past, current or projected board policy and activity which directly or indirectly concerns students with special needs.

SEAC Meeting Times and Dates

The SEAC meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Upper Grand District School Board office at 500 Victoria Road North, in the Boardroom.

Meetings are open to the public. Members of the public should contact Student Support Services at 519-941-6191 ext. 254 to confirm the time, date and location of the meetings.

Special Education Department Goals to Support Students with Special Needs

Goal # 1: Student Support Services staff will continue to work with school staff to integrate the use of the Student Centred Instructional Tool (SCIT) as a strength based problem solving model to inform proactive and responsive instructional practices to support individual student success.

Goal # 2: Student Support Services staff will continue to support the fidelity and effectiveness of interventions used by Special Education Teachers as well as teachers in Specialized Class Placements to implement evidence-based literacy and numeracy best practices.

Goal # 3: Student Support Services staff will continue to prioritize supporting the development of both proactive and responsive classroom-based interventions with school based staff for students and special education staff K-12 to develop their understanding and implementation of high leverage strategies to support students with complex needs.

Goal # 4: The Consultant Support Team will work collaboratively with school teams to monitor literacy and numeracy outcomes for students with modified IEPs.

The Special Education Intervention Model

Student Support
Services
Staff and Teams

Consultant Support
Team

In-School Team
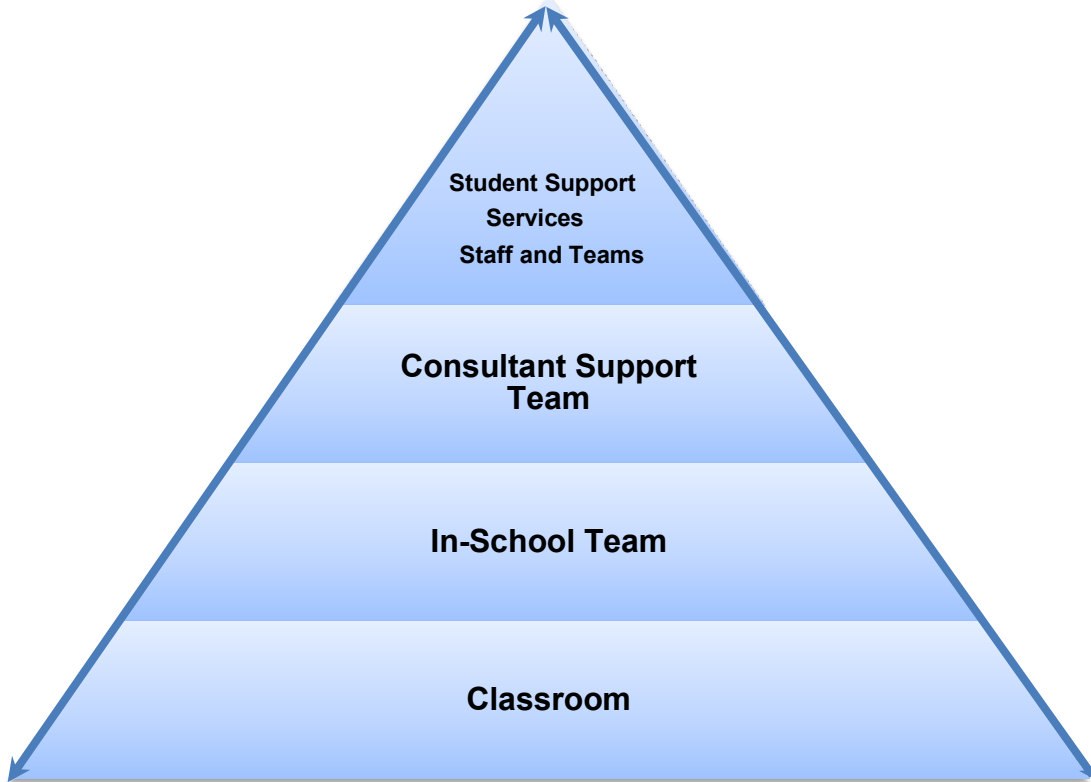
Classroom

The pyramid of intervention above is intended to show that for the vast majority of students, programming is able to be successfully managed within the classroom environment supported by teachers in consultation with parents/caregivers/guardians. A smaller group of students may be brought forward to the In-School Support Team (IST) which could include teaching staff, the Child and Youth Counsellor and school administration for more discussion, program planning and possible support at the school level. At times this may also involve the school Social Worker with appropriate consent. A much smaller group of students may need the additional support of the Consultant Support Team (CST) where program planning and recommendations are made. For an even smaller number of students, additional multi-disciplinary lenses to support appropriate next steps may be assessed. It is best practice that school staff work with parents/caregivers/guardians and students throughout these various stages of intervention to support and promote student learning and well-being. If concerns arise for parents/caregivers/guardians throughout these steps, it is recommended that they communicate their concerns to the classroom teacher and school administration as needed.

Classroom Environment Interventions

- student concerns identified by teacher and/or parent/caregiver

- the teacher gathers evidence in a variety of forms (observations, conversations and products) across the four areas of the Student Centred Instructional Tool (SCIT) to better understand and inform the responsive instructional changes to support the student and their achievement

- parent/caregiver/teacher meetings occur to discuss concerns, share information and discuss potential interventions

- strategies planned and implemented in the classroom setting

- concerns are resolved and no further action needed OR additional supports are needed and a referral is placed to the In-School Team by school staff

- parents/caregivers/guardians are made aware that concerns continue and that these concerns will be brought to the larger school team

In-School Team (IST)

- involves members of the school staff which include: Principal or Vice-Principal, Special Education teacher, Classroom teacher, and may include Child and Youth Counsellor, Guidance Counsellor and/or Social Worker, Student Success teacher (secondary), Educational Assistant, English as a Second Language (ESL) Resource Teacher. When a social worker or other mental health professional is requested to attend at the IST level, verbal consent is required prior to the meeting.

- considers possible next steps, e.g., vision or hearing examinations, medical consultation, pediatric consultation, CYC supported classroom strategies, counselling, referral to Consultant Support Team (CST), specific data collection

- concerns resolved and student continues to be monitored by the In-School Team OR referral to Consultant Support Team (CST)

- involves the identification of classroom and student-based supports to enhance wellness promotion and social emotional learning for all

- involves problem-solving at a school level, noting strategies and outcomes, *before* coming to CST with specific problem-solving goals by utilizing the Student Centred Instructional Tool (SCIT)

- school staff (usually the classroom teacher) would communicate with parents/caregivers/guardians regarding the suggestions that came out of IST and discuss next steps

- school staff must obtain consent from parents/caregivers/guardians to bring student concerns to the CST

Consultant Support Team (CST)

- Consultant Based Teams (CSTs) are made up of IST members, Student Support Services Consultants (Special Education, Speech and Language Services and Psychology), and may include other Board staff, caregivers, and outside agencies.

- Two primary responsibilities of CSTs are to support:
    - Decision-making and problem solving at the school level with complex academic and behavioural issues
    - Supporting additional consultation and problem solving as well as identifying potential resources or additional supports

- CSTs teams engage in discussion, planning and problem-solving with a focus on:
    - reviewing data (SCIT, WJ, IST notes, literacy and screenings) to support academic interventions and decision-making, including tiered interventions and determining need for special education supports; monitor student progress
    - problem solving for significant behavioural and academic challenges
    - discussions and approvals for additional support (e.g. psychological assessments, SEA claims and referrals to IPRC, etc.)

Case Conference

A case conference is a meeting that focuses on one student for a more in-depth discussion. Case conferences are held as needed in both elementary and secondary schools. Case conferences are held to share information, to develop plans and/or to respond to concerns. Parents/caregivers/guardians, school staff, board staff and community service providers may attend case conferences.

For example, a case conference may be held for a student with complex needs who is beginning junior kindergarten or for a secondary student to develop a plan to support a recent diagnosis of a mental health disorder. These meetings may also be held to share assessment findings from board or community agency assessments and/or professionals in private practice (Psychologist, Medical Specialists, etc.)

Often students are supported by community service providers in addition to school board staff and programs. The *Collaborative Conferencing Guide* describes the process for holding case conferences when two or more service providers are involved in supporting students. The guide includes forms and procedures that help to lead participants in the development of

a coordinated plan to support the student. UGDSB staff as well as service providers from agencies in Dufferin and Wellington, have received training in the use of the *Collaborative Conferencing Guide*. The guide, including the accompanying forms, can be found on SharePoint.

<u>**Roles and Responsibilities of Staff in Special Education**</u>

The School Principal

- carries out duties as outlined in the [Education Act](#), regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda [(PPM)](#), and board policies

- ensures that appropriately qualified staff are assigned to teach special education classes

- communicates Ministry of Education and school board policies and procedures about special education to staff, students and parents/caregivers/guardians

- ensures that the identification and placement of exceptional pupils, through an Identification, Placement and Review Committee [(IPRC)](#), is done according to the procedures outlined in the Education Act, regulations and board policies

- consults with school board staff to determine the most appropriate program for students with special education needs

- ensures the development, implementation, and review of a student's Individual Education Plan [(IEP)](#), including a transition plan, according to provincial requirements

- ensures that student safety considerations are discussed, and Board plans developed, in consultation with school staff (e.g., teachers, Child and Youth Counsellors, Educational Assistants, etc.)

- Oversees the allocation of staff to support students' learning and well-being (e.g., Child Youth Counsellor (CYC), Social Worker (SW), Educational Assistant (EA), etc.)

- encourages staff to become acquainted with parents/caregivers/guardians of their students

- works with school staff and families to support student well-being and academic growth

- ensures that parents/caregivers/guardians are consulted in the development of their child's IEP and that they are provided with a copy of the IEP

- ensures that programs are delivered in classrooms as set out in the IEP

- consults with school board staff to determine the need for specialized equipment and monitors the appropriate use to the equipment

- ensures that appropriate assessments are requested and that, if necessary, appropriate consents are obtained

- ensures evidence-based practices are being used to inform responsive interventions to support student success

- ensures the Student Centred Instructional Tool (SCIT) is used as the process of gathering information to inform changes in instructional practice focused on supporting students with special education needs

- participates in Consultant Support Team (CST) and other multidisciplinary teams within the board

- support and/or facilitate a dispute resolution process where needed by using the ideas and strategies discussed in the Ministry document Shared Solutions

The Classroom 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

- become acquainted with parents/caregivers/guardians of the students in their class

- develops the IEP in consultation with school Special Education Teachers, parents/caregivers/guardians and students (where appropriate)

- provides the program for the student with special education needs in the regular class, including recommendations from professional assessments

- communicates the student's progress to parents/caregivers/guardians

- utilizes evidence-based practices to inform responsive interventions focused on support student success

- uses the Student Centred Instructional Tool (SCIT) as the process of gathering information to inform changes in instructional practice focused on supporting students with special education needs

- is aware of the role of differentiated instruction across the classroom, applies the concepts of universal design and responsive teaching as outlined in Learning for All

- works with other school board staff to review and update the student's IEP

- participates in IST and CST teams as appropriate

The Special Education Teacher (SERT)

- 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

- holds qualifications in accordance with regulations under the Education Act, to teach special education

- works with classroom teachers to develop and implement up-to-date knowledge of special education practices

- consults on the development of IEPs with teaching staff, parents/caregivers/guardians and students (where appropriate)

- monitors students' progress with reference to the IEP and supports classroom teaching staff to modify the program as necessary

- utilizes evidence-based practices to inform responsive interventions focused on support student success

- uses the Student Centred Instructional Tool (SCIT) as the process of gathering information to inform changes in instructional practice focused on supporting students with special education needs

- provide instructional support for students, in collaboration with the classroom teacher, based on the goals and required supports outlined in individual students' IEPs including recommendations from professional assessments, and CST consultants

- supports the classroom teacher where appropriate in communicating students' progress to parents/caregivers/guardians

- prepares for and participates in IST and CST teams as appropriate

- assists in providing educational assessments for exceptional pupils

- the Special Education Head (Secondary) is responsible for the above while also providing leadership and guidance to other staff members in the Special Education Department

Classroom of Teachers of Specialized Classes

- carries out duties outlined in the Education Act, regulations and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda

- follows board policies and procedures regarding special education

- holds qualification, in accordance with regulations under the Education Act, to teach

special education

- works with the special education board staff to maintain up-to-date knowledge of special education practices

- develops and reviews the IEP with parents/caregivers/guardians (and students where appropriate) for students in their class with special education needs

- utilizes evidence-based practices to inform responsive interventions focused on support student success

- uses the Student Centred Instructional Tool (SCIT) as the process of gathering information to inform changes in instructional practice focused on supporting students with special education needs

- delivers board prescribed literacy and numeracy programs

- provides and monitors the program for students with special education needs in their class placement

- communicates the student's progress to students and parents/caregivers/guardians

- participates in IST and CST teams as appropriate

The Parents/Caregivers/Guardians

Where able, the parent/caregiver/guardian will:

- familiarize themselves with [board policies and procedures](#) in areas that affect their child

- participate in IPRCs, parent/caregiver/guardians teacher conferences, and other relevant school activities focused on supporting collaboration and alignment with student specific supports (e.g., case conferences, information sharing, etc.)

- participate in the planning of their child's Individual Education Plan (IEP)

- become acquainted with the school staff who work with the student

- work with the school principal and teachers and other educational professionals to support their child's needs and successes

- support their child at home

- are responsible for their child's attendance at school

The Student

To the best of their ability the student will:

- comply with the requirements as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda

- comply with board policies and procedures

- consult and make themselves aware of their IEP (where appropriate)

- participates in Identification, Placement, and Review Committees (IPRCs), parent/caregiver-teacher conferences, and other activities (as appropriate)

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

- SEAC is a committee mandated through Reg. 464/97 as a standing committee of each school board

- SEAC may make recommendations to the Trustees (in writing or in person) in respect of any matter affecting the establishment, development and delivery of special education programs and services in respect of exceptional pupils of the board

- SEAC also plays a significant role in the review of the annual Special Education Plan, and in that part of the annual budget process that relates to special education

- For more information see pages 11-14

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 school boards to provide appropriate special education programs and services for their students with special education needs

- establishes the funding for special education through the structure of the funding model

- requires school boards to report on their expenditures for special education

- sets province-wide standards for curriculum and for reporting achievement

- requires school boards to maintain special education plans, review them annually, and submit amendments to the Ministry

- requires school boards to establish Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs)

- establishes the Ontario Special Education (English and French) Tribunals to hear disputes between parents/caregivers/guardians and school boards regarding the identification and placement of exceptional pupils

- establishes a Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education ([MACSE](#)) to advise the Minister of Education on matters related to special education programs and services

- established a Provincial Parent Association Advisory Committee on Special Education Advisory Committees

- operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind, or who have severe learning disabilities

The District School Board or School Authority

- 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 deliver programs and services for the students with special education needs in the board

- reports on the expenditures for special education

- develops and maintains a special education plan to meet the current strengths and needs of the students with special education needs in 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/caregiver guide to provide parents/caregivers/guardians with information about special education programs, services, and procedures

- establishes one or more IPRCs to identify students with special education needs and determine appropriate placements for them

- establishes a Special Education Advisory Committee

- provides professional development to staff on special education

Communicating with School Staff

When a parent/caregiver has questions or concerns, it is important to speak first to the classroom teacher who is familiar with the daily activities of the student. The special education resource teacher or school principal may address questions or concerns beyond the classroom level or if problems continue. If questions or concerns continue after consulting with the school staff and administration, the Principal of Special Education, Superintendent of Education and Superintendent of Education – Student Support Services, are available to provide system leadership for special education and additional support for school staff and parents/caregivers/guardians.

<u>Student Support Services Staff</u>

The following pages outline descriptions of the programming provided by UGDSB Student Support Services staff. Our offices are located at the Grant Evans Education Centre in Orangeville, Ontario. If you would like to contact our department at any time, please call 519-941-6191 and follow the prompts to be directed to a staff member or department.

Special Education Department

Who are we?

Members of the Special Education Department include the Special Education Consultants, Itinerant Special Education Consultants, Itinerant Teachers (Teachers of Blind and Low Vision, Teachers of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Itinerant Technology Coach), Behaviour Analysts (BA) and Transitional Educational Assistants. The itinerant staff travel between schools to work with students. Transitional Educational Assistants work at schools to support special transition situations, (e.g., students returning from a treatment program or transitioning from a new school or board or needing support with transitions throughout the school day). The Behaviour Analysts provide and coordinate training on Applied Behaviour Analysis instructional methods and resources at the board and school level to increase capacity to use ABA methods with the school system as stated in PPM 140.

How do Special Education Consultants help staff and students?

They:

- Make recommendations about programming, strategies and resources for students with all types of special needs who require accommodations, modifications or alternative curriculum

- Work with staff to submit claims for specialized equipment (e.g. equipment covered by Special Equipment Amount - SEA funding) and submit requests for Special Incident Portion funding (SIP)

- Provide professional development in Special Education

- Participate in Consultant Support Team meetings

- Provide leadership related to all exceptionalities as outlined in the Identification and Placement Review Committee (IPRC) process

- Support schools in various ways to help students with special needs learn and to make special education run efficiently in the school, examples include:

  - teach and coach staff

  - support student transition plans

  - initiate SEA equipment claims

  - develop program suggestions for teachers including integrating technology into student programs

  - prepare materials for Central Level Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Meetings (see "UGDSB Central Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Process")

  - organize and chair Central Level Class Placement IPRC Meetings (see "UGDSB Central IPRC Process")

  - provide resources to teachers and educational assistants

  - liaise with child and youth counsellor, social work & counselling staff, speech language pathologists, occupational and physiotherapists as well as psychological consultants

  - provide ongoing support with Individual Education Plans

  - create transportation plans for students with special needs

How do Itinerant Special Education Consultants help staff and students?
They:

- Address the classroom connections that are impacting a student's dysregulation

- Work with the teacher to implement Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction best practices with specific students in mind

- Inform the instructional plan as part of the Student Centred Instructional Tool

- Model, coach and support to build teacher, SERT capacity

- Implement system changes to Special Education supports including the Student Centred Instructional Tool

- Develop and provide Professional Development in Special Education at a system level

Who are the students Itinerant Teachers work with?

Itinerant Teachers work with students who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing and students who are blind or have low vision. The Itinerant Technology Coach works to support classroom teachers to develop their practices of utilizing technology to support those students with identified learning disabilities as well as other students in the classroom.

Communication, Language and Speech Services (CLS Services)

Who are we?

We are Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) and Communicative Disorders Assistants (CDA) who provide service in school-based teams. The Speech-Language Pathologists are highly trained in communication development and disorders at the Master's level, and are registered with the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario to practice in Ontario. Communicative Disorder Assistants have a Bachelor's degree or diploma and an Ontario college graduate certificate from a Communicative Disorders Assistant program. CDAs provide direct services to students under the clinical supervision of the Speech-Language Pathologist who assesses the students, develops the programs and evaluates their progress.

Who are the students we work with?

Speech-Language Pathologists help school staff develop the best learning environment to support children with a variety of communication needs. Since our services are school-based, we focus on supporting the communication skills of students so that they are able to participate in all aspects of their education. Communication skills include listening, speaking, reading, writing and no-verbal communication. While we place an emphasis on primary students and early intervention, we serve students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 (or school exit) with needs in:

- Understanding spoken language or written text or picture communication symbols
- Communicating by speech, written text or speech generated device
- Hearing or listening
- Using language and nonverbal communication to engage socially

Our services are accessed through the Consultant Support Team (CST) at the student's school. The classroom teacher brings concerns to the In-School Team (IST) where the decision is made to refer to the CST. The informed consent of parents/guardians must be obtained by the Speech-Language Pathologist before service is provided to referred students.

In senior kindergarten, the Kindergarten Communication Skills Evaluation is available to students who are selected by their teacher. Following parental consent, names are provided directly to the school's Speech-Language Pathologist. Possible outcomes of the evaluation

include classroom suggestions, additional assessment, referrals to other services and/or direct language intervention for those students who qualify.

How do we provide this service?
We offer the following levels of service to students with communication needs:

Consultation
This involves problem solving with the school team, the resource teacher, and/or the classroom teacher to provide suggestions for differentiating instruction for individuals or groups of students with similar communication and language-based learning needs.

Assessment
A communication assessment is tailored to the needs of the student. It starts with a conversation with parents/caregivers/guardians as well as teachers about the student's communication history and needs. It may include classroom observation, informal tasks and/or formal testing. Results and recommendations are shared with families and school staff.

Direct intervention (for students in Kindergarten to Grade 2)
If the Speech-Language Pathologist determines that a student has a moderate or severe language disorder and would benefit from intervention, the student receives small group or individual sessions provided by Communicative Disorders Assistant. The Speech-Language Pathologist will complete an assessment, develop program goals, and meet regularly with the CDA to evaluate progress, update goals, and determine if the student needs continued support.

A student of any age who uses augmentative and alternative communication may receive a period of in-class support from the CDA. Communication strategies are modeled and classroom staff receive coaching on implementation.

Referral Services
The Children's Treatment Centres offer services at school for students with moderate to severe articulation, voice, fluency (stuttering), and feeding and swallowing difficulties.

The Board's Speech-Language Pathologist must assess the students to determine if they meet the criteria for these services before initiating the referral.

Families may also be given information on accessing other services in the community to support their child. This could include referrals to an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Specialist, Audiologist, or other specialized services or professionals.

Participation on Multidisciplinary Teams

Staff members of Communication, Language and Speech Services participate in teams and collaborations which are described in the Regional Teams section contained in this document (page 37-39):

- Kindergarten-Grade 3 Intervention Team (KIT)

- Behaviour Analyst and Speech-Language Pathologist

Professional Development

The Speech-Language Pathologists provide a wide variety of school and system level in-services to address the needs of students with communication disorders or the needs of teachers interested in learning more about enhancing oral language in their classrooms. They work collaboratively with curriculum and special education leaders to develop in-services and resources to support students' language, learning and literacy development.

Psychological and Mental Health Services

Who are we?

Members of the Psychological and Mental Health Services are all registered with the College of Psychologists of Ontario (or are currently completing this requirement and are under Supervised Practice) and are trained either at the Doctoral or Masters level. As a member of the College of Psychology, the staff is licensed to diagnose in the areas of Intellectual Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Anxiety Disorders, Child and Adolescent Depression, and other psychological disorders.

Who do the Psychological Consultants work with?

Psychological Consultants work closely with the school team, parents/caregivers/guardians, and community partners (i.e., Children's Mental Health Services, Physicians) to help students who are struggling with learning, behavioural, social, and/or mental health concerns at school. The Psychological Consultant provides Consultation Psychological Assessments, as well as crisis support and Violence Threat Risk Assessments. A Psychological Assessment involves a comprehensive standardized battery of tests exploring intellectual (cognitive) abilities, memory functioning, specific processing skills, academic skills, mental health issues, social-emotional issues, and behavioural functioning. The specific battery of tests completed, are chosen based on the referral and concerns raised by parent/caregiver/guardian/student.

Assessment services are provided for students from Kindergarten to Grade 10. Consultation and intervention services are provided for students in Kindergarten to Grade 12.

The following types of referral questions are addressed in the assessments and consultations provided by the Psychological Consultants:

- Specific Learning Disabilities (in Reading, Writing and Mathematics)
- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Intellectual Disabilities
- Mental Health Disorders (i.e., Anxiety, Depression, Trauma)

How can a student receive our services?
At the Consultant Support Team (CST) meeting, the team will discuss the student's strengths and needs and decide upon the most appropriate intervention, which might entail a Psychological Assessment, consultation, or brief intervention. While a parent/caregiver/guardian can contact the Consultant for their school at any time, service provision cannot be initiated without consensus at the CST. Typically, parents/caregiver/guardians may begin the process by sharing their concerns about their child with their child's teacher who may then bring the concerns forth to the IST and then possibly the CST meeting.

Types of Services Provided
Indirect Consultation
Discussion at CST may result in suggestions from the Consultant for academic programming, strategies to address behavioural or mental health concerns, or possible referrals to community agencies. Oral consent provided by the parent/caregiver/parent to the principal is all that is required at this level of service.

Direct Consultation
At this level of service, written consent from the parent/caregiver is required. This might involve observing the student, meeting with the parents/caregivers/guardians and teachers and providing direct suggestions. The Psychological Consultant might also be involved in developing or refining the SCIT, Behaviour/Mental Health Support Plan or the Safety Plan.

Brief Intervention Counselling
If it is the consensus of the CST, then the Consultant can provide one to three sessions of brief individual counselling to the student. This level of service requires written permission from the parent/caregiver/parent/student (if 12 years of age or older). The goal is to support the school team in obtaining a clearer understanding of the student's mental health needs, help program accordingly at school, and facilitate referrals to mental health services when appropriate.

Psychological Assessment

Following a recommendation by the CST, parents/caregivers/guardians are approached for their consent to complete the Psychological Assessment. Parents/caregivers/guardians meet with the Consultant prior to the assessment commencing. To ensure parents/caregivers/guardians understand the purpose of the assessment, informed consent is obtained and limits of confidentiality are reviewed. When the assessment is completed, results are discussed and a written report provided to parents/caregivers/guardians. With parental/caregiver/guardian consent, results are shared with the school team and the psychological assessment report is stored digitally in the Student Support Services database.

Other Services Provided by the Psychology Department
Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT-7)

Psychological and Mental Health Services is involved in the coordination and distribution of testing materials and in the training of teachers in the administration of this group test. This test is administered by the classroom teacher or special education resource teacher. Group administered cognitive ability testing is provided to all Grade 3 students if their parents/caregiver/parent have given written permission. The purpose of this screening measure of cognitive ability is to determine which students might benefit from Gifted Programming. It can also be used to identify some students who may need additional supports. Following the test, a letter explaining the test results is sent home to parents/caregiver/guardians. As well, a copy of the test results is kept in the student's Ontario School Record.

Mental Health Secondary Support (MHSS)

Psychological consultants with highly developed knowledge of adolescent mental health, works directly in high schools on a regular basis providing mental health consultation, group counselling and brief direct interventions. In coordination with secondary school social workers, MHSS consultants support the school team in obtaining a clearer understanding of the student's mental health needs, help program accordingly at school, and facilitate referrals to mental health services when appropriate.

Participation on Multidisciplinary Teams

Members of Psychological and Mental Health Services participate in the following teams/programs:

- Violent Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA)

- Crisis Response Team (CRT)

Professional Development

Members of the Psychological Services provide a variety of in-services on mental health, learning, socio-emotional, developmental and behavioural issues directly to schools as well as for group in-service settings (e.g., Professional Development for Teachers, Administrators, Educational Assistants, Child and Youth Counsellors, Parents/Caregivers/Guardians /Families). Some topics include: the Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Achievement; Supporting Anxious Children; Self-Harm; Trauma; Attachment Disorders; Emotional Regulation; Supporting Students with FASD; Supporting Students on the Autism Spectrum; Memory and Learning; and Learning Disabilities.

Social Work and Attendance Department

Who are we?

All members of the Social Work and Attendance Department are Social Workers trained at the Masters level and registered with the Ontario College of Social Worker and Social Service Workers. Secondary Social Workers are based out of one or two secondary schools. Elementary Social Workers support a group of elementary schools.

Who are the students the Social Work and Attendance staff work with?

The Social Workers in the Social Work and Attendance Department work closely with the school team, caregivers, and community partners (e.g., Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) when students are struggling with mental health concerns at school. The Social Worker provides consultation to teachers and administrators and counselling to students in order to help them succeed in elementary and secondary school. Students may present with the following problems:

- School attendance issues/lack of school engagement

- Mental Health issues, such as anxiety, depression, trauma, suicidal ideations, self-harm

- Behavioural challenges

- Substance use/abuse

- Social/emotional difficulties

- Conflict with family/peers

How can a student receive our services?

Referrals can be made directly to the Social Worker by an Administrator. Often referrals are made following a meeting with the In-School Team or the Consultant Support Team. At the secondary school level, a student can self-refer for social work services. If a student is under 12, a caregiver must sign consent for social work services. If a student is 12 or older only the student needs to sign the consent for social work. If a student is in crisis, the Social Worker

may provide support as well as contact family and other service providers, if needed. The Social Worker also has the responsibility to follow up referrals for attendance made by the school. Privacy and confidentiality are maintained in accordance with the guidelines set by PHIPA.

Types of Services Provided
Individual Counselling
The goal of individual counselling is to help students cope and develop strategies with the social, emotional, and academic demands of school, as well as address mental health issues and encourage students to seek appropriate mental health services in the community. Counselling sessions are confidential with the exception being the limits of confidentiality, which are explained to the student and/or parents/caregivers/guardians, prior to beginning counselling. These exceptions include factors such as if the concerns involve harm to others, themselves or information involving child abuse of any child under the age of 16 years old. Informed consent is obtained as soon as the Social Worker begins to work with a student.

Group Therapy
The goal of psychotherapeutic groups is to engage students collaboratively to learn and build coping skills related to the shared mental health concerns which may be present amongst referred students. Groups are designed to foster a sense of belonging, connection and relatability and benefit students through a shared therapeutic experience. Groups are conducted both in-person and virtually and generally comprise 6-12 students. Informed consent is required to participate in therapeutic groups.

Consultation and Support
Social Workers provide consultation to teachers and administrators regarding student mental health needs and effective ways to address those needs in a school setting. The Social Worker may also work with caregivers, to address their concerns and provide them with appropriate ways to support the student. The Social Worker facilitates referrals to community partners and provides ongoing liaison.

Attendance
As this is a mandated service, caregiver and/or student consent for the involvement of the Attendance Counsellor is not required. When a teacher or administrator is concerned about the prolonged absence of a student, a referral is made to the Attendance Counsellor, as lengthy absences jeopardize the academic success of the student. The Social Work and Attendance department recognizes that attendance issues are a symptom, and therefore seek to address underlying concerns, such as learning difficulties, emotional or mental health concerns, addiction, family system issues, and health problems. Collaboration with additional community services is sought when appropriate. A standard letter informs caregivers when

the child/adolescent has been away for an extended period of consecutive days from school. The purpose of this letter is to re-engage the student, rather than having to pursue Ministry mandated sanctions. As indicated in the Education Act, youth are required to remain in school until they are 18 or have graduated.

Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL)

The Supervised Alternative Learning program was developed as an alternative way of earning credits for students while still remaining a student of the Board. Any family/student is eligible to apply for a SAL meeting with the board for consideration to be approved to participate in the program. Alternatively, the Attendance Counsellor in consultation with the school team may identify a student who would be a successful candidate of this program and may contact the student's family. Once initial contact has been made there will be necessary paperwork to complete to present the youth to the SAL Committee, at which time alternative learning environments, such as a supervised work setting, are considered and approved by the SAL Committee in which a Community Member, Trustee and a Superintendent may be involved.

Participation in Multidisciplinary Teams

Members of Social Work and Attendance participate in the following teams/programs which are described in the Regional Teams section contained in this document (page 37-39):

- Violent Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA)
- Crisis Response Team (CRT)
- Specialized Support Team (SST)
- Mental Health Secondary Support (MHSS)

Professional Development

As school-based resources, the Social Workers are frequently asked to provide in-service to teachers at their schools on a variety of mental health issues. They are also involved in a system-based training in topics such as adolescent depression, school avoidance and refusal and suicide prevention, to name a few.

Child and Youth Counsellors (CYC)

Who are we?

All members of the Child and Youth Counselling Department are Child and Youth Counsellors (CYC) trained in either a two or three-year Community College Program and have full professional membership in the Ontario Association of Child and Youth Counsellors (OACYC). CYC's work in all elementary schools and some high schools. Allocation is based on the size and needs of the schools.

Who are the students the Child and Youth Counsellors work with?

The CYCs work closely with the school team (including the Psychological Consultant and Social Worker assigned to their school) and parents/caregivers/guardians when students are struggling with social, emotional, and behavioural concerns that are impacting them at school. The role of the CYC is to support students to be successful in their school experience and learning. CYCs are a part of the school-based team and work within a relational context to build social and emotional skills to support mentally healthy spaces and classrooms. The CYC is responsible for providing board-wide programs addressing issues, such as bullying, emotional regulation, and fostering safe relationships, and including abuse prevention programs. CYCs are champions of the Board's Wellness Works project which supports mentally healthy classrooms.

CYCs do not require consent to engage in consultations, observations, drop in social groups (e.g. recess groups, games club, etc.) or classroom based presentations. Classroom presentations may include topics such as, social skills, emotional regulation, healthy relationships, decision making, coping with stress, bullying prevention, etc.

CYCs can also provide more targeted support, with consent, to inform behaviour/mental health plans and planning for a student's unique school experience and success. They can also provide supportive, skills-based, goal oriented, short term counselling support to students relating to social-emotional needs and for the purpose of school and classroom success. CYCs may also work with their administrator to identify themes and deliver targeted structured short-term skill based groups to identified students (with consent).

CYCs are supervised by the school Administrator for all non-consent based and site-based work and are provided with clinical management, training and support from the Manager of Mental Health and Addictions.

How can a student receive CYC services?

CYC referrals for consent-based supports are primarily received through an IST meeting and, less often, a CST meeting. CYCs are a part of the discussions at these meetings to help identify where their support may be beneficial for the unique student needs presented. On occasion an administrator may make a referral directly to the CYC due to extenuating circumstances (e.g. a sudden loss in a family and the parent/caregiver reaches out requesting support). Students can also self-refer although they must be 12 years of age or older to consent and self-refer. If a student is in crisis, the CYC may provide one-time support as well as contact family and other services. While a signed consent is required for all ongoing 1:1 CYC support provided to a student, when there is a crisis, the CYC can provide support for that one occasion only, without receiving parental/caregiver consent.

Types of Services Provided

Informing the SCIT

A key role of the CYC is to work closely with the classroom teacher to look at the factors that may be impacting the student's classroom success. The CYC may provide observational data, resources and supports to help develop and enhance student support. CYCs often are a key collaborator on Behaviour/Mental Health Plans and Safety Plans. They also help support SCIT monitoring and reflection through the collection and analysis of data relating to strategies.

Supporting Mentally Healthy and Trauma Informed Classroom Spaces

CYC may also work directly with the classroom teacher to support development and implementation of various strategies, tools and learning opportunities to support mentally healthy, trauma informed classrooms. They may support teachers with the implementation of classroom strategies and may also work with teachers and specific students to engage in collaborative problem-solving, co-development of goals and strategies, etc. CYCs often provide a variety of resources to classrooms to support this work including visuals, strategy cards, class-wide emotional regulation systems, etc. When the school teams feels that more detailed information is needed, the CYC would be a key player in coming alongside the Consultant Support Team members and/or the school social worker.

Individual and Group Counselling

The CYC provides short term, goal based individual and group counselling to students exhibiting a wide range of problems (e.g., disruptive in the classroom; difficulty following rules; too anxious to engage in some school activities; social difficulties) impacting their school success. The goal is to help the student be able to function more effectively in the classroom. Often the CYC will support bridging strategy development and tools learned in the 1:1 sessions into the larger classroom session to support success. CYCs may also co-facilitate groups with board social workers or psychologists.

Counselling sessions are confidential with the exception being the 'Limits of Confidentiality', which are explained to the student and/or parents/caregivers/guardians, prior to beginning counselling. Informed consent is obtained, including Privacy statement, as soon as the CYC begins to work with a student. CYCs meet their administrator regularly to share caseloads, progress monitoring and next steps. They also consult with and are provided training from the clinical management from Manager of Mental Health and Addictions to support their work in this important area.

Collaborative Proactive Solutions (CPS) and Consultation

As members of the school team, the CYC is often called upon to talk with teachers and administrators regarding behaviours being observed and how to support next steps. CYCs are trained in trauma informed practices and focus on behaviour as communication and the

need for students to be regulated in order to learn. Often the CYC may work with the teacher and student using the Collaborative Proactive Solutions (CPS) model to identify key concerns and help the student begin to develop realistic solutions with their teacher. This also supports the continued building of connection between students and their teaching teams. While the CYC may contact parents to discuss their child's progress, they do not provide family therapy. However, in consultation with the school team, the CYC could encourage the parent(s)/caregiver(s) to seek community-based services.

Professional Development

The Child and Youth Counsellors are provided with support, learning and professional development opportunities from the Manager of Mental Health and Addictions.

CYCs support learning and professional development of school teams/staff through presentations and training such as Collaborative Proactive Solutions, Zones of Regulation, Trauma Informed Strategies, etc. CYCs often support multi-disciplinary learning opportunities with other mental health and education staff.

Manager, Mental Health and Addictions

The position of the Manager, Mental Health and Addictions (previously Mental Health Lead) at the Upper Grand District School Board began in September of 2012 as part of Open Minds, Healthy Minds – Ontario`s Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. The Manager works with student support services managers, senior administration, board staff, parents/caregivers/guardians and students to develop and implement the Board's Strategy for Student Mental Health and Well-Being. The strategy is a comprehensive, data informed map of all mental health related supports and interventions from classroom to treatment/intervention. This position provides leadership for the board mental health teams and works collaboratively with Safe, Equitable, Inclusive School, Healthy Schools Committees, Student Success, Program and Indigenous Education to promote wellness for all students. Some key responsibilities of the Manager, Mental Health and Addictions include:

- Leadership in the development, implementation and monitoring of the Board's Strategy for Student Mental Health and Well-being

- Promote mental well-being and mental health literacy initiatives in the board

- Select and support evidence-based approaches to mental health promotion and prevention

- Provide mental health promotion and prevention training

- Provide leadership in mental well-being and mental health/addiction related initiatives and supports within the board and community

- Collaborate with board and community partners to promote clear and integrated

access to services

- Work collaboratively with community partners across the Board's region to support student and family success and well-being

- Provide resources and learning opportunities for parent(s)/caregiver(s) in support of children and youth mental health and well-being

- Leadership in crisis response and violent threat risk assessment

- Clinical management of Child and Youth Counsellors in relation to consent based services

The Manager, Mental Health and Addictions represents the Board on a variety of community-based planning tables and committees, such as:

- Ensuring System Success (ESS), Co-chair

- Growing Great Generations (GGG)

- Guelph/Wellington/Dufferin Mental Health Collaborative

- Guelph/Wellington Drug Strategy

- Dufferin Drug Strategy

- Headwaters OHT and Working Groups

- Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Domestic Assault

- Violence Threat Risk Assessment Regional Committee, Co-chair

- Guelph, Wellington and Dufferin Situation/Connection Table

- Wellington and Dufferin Human Trafficking Committees

- Regional Children's Services Collaborative (hospital, children's mental health and schools)

Regional Teams

Many staff from the Student Support Services Department staff are members of specialized inter-disciplinary teams. Every geographical region has a regional team consisting of a Social Worker and Behaviour Analyst to support, alongside IST and CST, the needs of that region both through a coordination role with agencies as well as through direct student support.

The Regional Team includes:

Complex Mental Health Social Worker – Regional Team
- Work as a member of a multi-disciplinary regional team to support students and school staff by consulting on strategies and interventions being used at the school level

- Communicate with and provide support to families experiencing multiple stressors and/or facing systemic barriers to engagement, for the purposes of enhancing home-school connection, assessing student strengths and needs and facilitating access to community resources for students identified as having complex mental health needs and/or diagnosis

- Complete referrals to and liaison with various community agencies involved with student care, including obtaining and maintaining up-to-date knowledge of community services and maintaining effective working relationships with these services

- As required, provide trauma-informed and evidence-based individual/group interventions to students; work with students 1:1 or in classroom settings

- Engage with students, families, and staff, to develop trusting and supportive relationships; provide reflective, relevant, and identity-affirming care and support to students and families from diverse communities

- Complete clinical assessment/observation, data collection, intervention, case management and monitoring of caseload; regular review of data to evaluate effectiveness of supports provided

- Participate in In School Teams (IST) and Consultant Supported Team (CST) meetings as required

- Lead or participate in Violent Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) & Crisis Intervention Response responsibilities across the system; Provide Crisis Support for students as necessary

- Participate and engage in system committees and professional development as required

Behaviour Analysts (BA)
Behaviour Analysts provide consultation, mentoring and coaching based on the evidence-based practice of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), with a focus on practical recommendations to support classroom educators in their practice. Behaviour Analysts (BA) focus their training and support of school staff in the following areas:

- Understanding behaviour and functions of behaviour;

- Assessment and data collection to inform ABA instructional methods in the classroom;

- Development, implementation and monitoring of plans that incorporate ABA methods in a variety of educational settings;

- An emphasis for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other neurodevelopmental disorders, along with a wide range of students who benefit

BAs support students with direct *caseload referrals* (typically 12 weeks of monitoring and plan development), or *consultation* (1-2 visits coordinated with special education consultants and school teams) all resulting in clear, evidence-based recommendations for school staff. They also play an important role in supporting high-risk student transitions of students moving from ABA-based clinical settings into UGDSB schools. They liaise with community partners from a range of agencies to ensure consistent planning and behavioural supports across settings.

K-3 Intervention Team (KIT)
In addition to the Complex Social Worker and Behaviour Analyst regional roles, the K-3 Intervention team provides targeted support for students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 who are struggling at school for reasons related to social emotional, self-regulation, behavioural and/or developmental difficulties. There has been a significant increase in struggles for this age group post pandemic and the KIT teams aims to equip early years students with the skills and strategies to support their future years while simultaneously supporting staff and family/caregiver capacity. The KIT team will work alongside staff and students to support the creation of a safe, inclusive environment that supports the needs of our early learners through a trauma informed framework. The team provides individual student support, classroom support, consultation, resource development, liaising with CST members, community connections, and professional learning opportunities. The K-3 Intervention Team is supervised by the Manager of Mental Health and Addictions and includes an itinerant special education consultant, a CYC and a SLP with mental health support and consultation from school based social work and/or the Complex Mental Health Regional Social Worker.

The KIT team:

- Engages in a multidisciplinary, observational and information gathering process to understand unique needs through multiple lenses

- Informs the SCIT process with an emphasis on collaboration in development and enhancement of behaviour mental health plans and safety plans

- Provides a focus on language and communication as it relates to mental health and behaviour in early learners

- Provides supports for emotional regulation through behaviour management strategies, support with physical environment, creation of resources and self monitoring tools

- Supports the development of rewarding relationships with peers and adults through modeling, explicit instruction, and the development of skill building activities

- Educator to educator support, recommendations relating to programming, strategies and resources for students

- Customized, staff training and learning opportunities

Crisis Response Team

The Crisis Response Team is available to provide support and assistance to students and staff during or following a crisis event. The School Administrator or Superintendent may request the team following a death, an accident, or a trauma that is impacting the school community. Under the leadership and coordination of the Manager, Mental Health and Addictions, board clinical staff, Psychology and/or Social Work, along with the school's Child and Youth Counsellor, support the school as quickly as possible through the provision of grief and trauma support, information, educational materials about grief and trauma, and may facilitate involvement with community agencies. The Manager, Mental Health and Addictions provides support and consultation to the senior leadership team in relation to the coordination and planning of the Team's response which includes: staff information sharing, sharing information and supporting students, communication with parents/caregivers/guardians, resource materials, and liaising with community partners for ongoing planning and support. The team is engaged to support student-facing situations and does not provide crisis response to school staff directly although they work closely with Staff Wellness department to coordinate this important work alongside the student facing support.

Further, this team may also coordinate post-vention supports related to suicide specifically. Support after the event can also help teachers and students return to regular routines and can help with prevention.

Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA)

VTRA is coordinated by the Manager, Mental Health and Addictions and is a trauma informed, mental health framework that aims to identify and collaboratively intervene when there are threats to support ongoing safety and coordinated supports. The VTRA protocol supports collaborative planning among schools, community partners, families, children and youth, to reduce violence and to reflect safe, caring and restorative approaches. It fosters timely sharing of information about a child or youth who poses a risk for violence towards others. It is the process of deliberately trying to "connect the dots" that paints the picture that a person is moving on a path towards serious violence before a violent act occurs. The protocol promotes supportive and preventive plans being put in place.

The strength of this partnership between school boards and community partners lies in the multidisciplinary approach which is fundamental to the safety of the community. Members

will strive to share and review relevant information, details of threatening situations or evidence promptly to collaborate effectively and to make use of a broad range of expertise. This collaborative process will respect an individual's right to privacy and the safety of all, to the fullest extent possible.

The VTRA protocol clearly outlines the necessary steps for activation including on-site screening and information gathering. When situations arise the VTRA Lead provides consultation and, in collaboration with school leaders and superintendent, identifies if the situation meets criteria for the protocol can be activated. In situations where the protocol is not able to be activated, the VTRA Lead works with the school leaders and superintendent to identify next steps to reduce risk and support safety for all.

When a child/youth engages in behaviours or makes threatening comments or gestures that may result in serious injury to others in our community, the relevant Violence Threat Risk Assessment Team (Administrator, Social Worker and/or Psychological Consultant from the school board, and Police, plus other community partners as appropriate) will respond as outlined in the Protocol. This Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol is based on Centre for Trauma Informed Practices model of Violence Threat/Risk Assessment (VTRA).

Specialized Programs/Trainings

Behaviour Management System Training (BMS)

This initiative is coordinated by Psychological and Mental Health Services and Special Education. The Behaviour Management System (BMS) was adopted by the Board as the method of intervening when children are experiencing behavioural challenges. BMS provides skills, tools and a framework for supporting student's before physical intervention is required. While physical intervention techniques are taught, they are only utilized if there is imminent risk of safety present. A variety of staff have been trained as trainers in this model, including: Special Education, Psychology, Social Work and Attendance, Child and Youth Counsellors, specialized teams, and Administrators. When a school is having difficulty with a particularly challenging student, a training team can be sent in to assist the staff.

Special Education Staff 2024-2025

The following chart outlines the types of Special Education and Support staff employed by the board. The term "full-time equivalent" refers to the number of full-time jobs in each position. For example, there could be 2 people working half time in a specific role, each part time but together they make up a 1 full-time position.

Teachers of exceptional students

Staff Position	Staff Qualifications	Full Time Equivalent (FTE)
Special Education Resource Teachers (SERT) to support students in home school	Special Education, Part 1	97.3 Elementary 30 Secondary
Teachers for self-contained classes	Special Education, Part 1	39 Elementary 30 Secondary

Other special education teachers

Staff Position	Staff Qualifications	Full Time Equivalent (FTE)
Itinerant Teachers: Deaf & Hard of Hearing	The Deaf, Part 1	2.5
Itinerant Teachers: Blind/Visually Impaired	The Blind, Specialist	1.5
Special Education Consultants	Special Education Specialist	9.0
Itinerant Special Education Consultants	Special Education Specialist	5.0
Itinerant Special Education Math Consultant	Special Education Part 1, Math Specialist	1.0

Other professional resource staff

Staff Position	Staff Qualifications	Full Time Equivalent (FTE)
Principal of Special Education	Principal	2.0
Manager of Psychological and BA Services	Ph. D. (Psychology), Registered with the CPO	1.0
Manager, Social Work and Specialized Teams	Master of Social Work	1.0

Staff Position	Staff Qualifications	Full Time Equivalent (FTE)
Psychological Consultant	Ph. D. or Masters in Psychology, Registered with the CPO or supervised by a member of CPO	8.9
Manager, Mental Health and Addictions (previously Mental Health Lead)	M.A. Psychology or M.S.W., registered in appropriate college	1.0
Complex Mental Health Social Worker – Regional Teams	M.S.W., RSW.	5.0
Secondary Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor	M.S.W., RSW	10.6
Elementary Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor	M.S.W., RSW	8.6
Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor – Indigenous Focus	M.S.W., RSW	1.0
Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor – Youth Options	M.S.W., RSW	1.0
Manager, Communication, Language and Speech Services	Masters Degree or equivalent as recognized by CASLPO	1.0
Speech – Language Pathologists	Masters Degree or equivalent as recognized by CASLPO	10.2
Communication Disorders Assistants	CDA Diploma	7.3
Psychological Consultant – Youth Options	Masters or Ph. D. in Psychology, registered with CPO	0.2

Staff Position	Staff Qualifications	Full Time Equivalent (FTE)
Kindergarten Intervention Team (KIT)	Special Education, Specialist Child & Youth Counsellor, Diploma or degree, Full Professional Membership with OACYC SLP registered	1.0 Itinerant Special Education Consultant 1.0 CYC 0.4 SLP
Child & Youth Counsellor – Youth Options	Child & Youth Counsellor Diploma or degree, Full Professional Membership with OACYC	1.0
Child & Youth Counsellor – Indigenous Focus	Child & Youth Counsellor Diploma or degree, Full Professional Membership with OACYC	1.0
Child & Youth Counsellor – School Based	Child & Youth Counsellor Diploma or degree, Full Professional Membership with OACYC	43.2
Behaviour Analyst	Certified Behaviour Analyst	4.0
Educational Assistants in Special Education	E.A. Diploma preferred	498
Orientation and Mobility Personnel	Contracted as required	
Oral Interpreters (for deaf students)	Contracted as required	

Staff Position	Staff Qualifications	Full Time Equivalent (FTE)
Sign Language Interpreters (for deaf students using ASL)	Certificate of Interpretation	as needed

Criteria for Special Education Educational Assistants Allocation

Student Needs

Students considered for support by Educational Assistants must have characteristics in one or more of the following areas with the goal of developing student independence:

- significant behavioural difficulties where there is a danger to self-and/or others or significant social/emotional problems causing disruption of classroom learning and environment

- requires supervision, and/or assistance or care due to significant medical diagnoses or disabilities

- significant physical limitations, Intellectual Disabilities, or complex needs which require special assistance

Allocation of Special Education School Based Educational Assistant (EA)

Procedures

- Student Need Assessment Forms are reviewed by the school administration and special education staff on an ongoing basis throughout the year to ensure allocations remain current.

- Board special education staff works to project the required EA needs in the system based on the students in schools, those leaving and those arriving in the fall. These numbers are submitted to the People, Leadership and Culture Department for Budget consideration at the end of March for the following school year.

- Superintendents meet with each school administrator in the spring to discuss concerns for allocations into the fall.

- System re-evaluation is completed at the end of the second week of September to ensure allocations for the fall are current based on changes in student populations

Staff Development

Staff Development Priorities

Priorities for professional development are based on Ministry of Education information, feedback from staff members, needs of schools and students, results from surveys and by consultation of SEAC.

Special Education Consultants and staff attend Ministry information sessions and share this information with Board staff. Staff in-services based on Ministry sessions focus on: Transition Planning, Mental Health Initiatives, Applied Behaviour Analysis, Data Collection and Learning for All.

In addition, in-service topics are designed based on feedback of Principals, teachers, educational assistants and Student Support Services staff (e.g., new teacher needs, results of staff surveys, special education software).

In-services are often designed to meet specific school or student needs. In these cases, the in-service is provided for involved staff at the school. Examples of these types of in-services include:

- Integrated use of the Student Centred Instructional Tool (SCIT) at all levels of the organization

- Evidence Based Reading Interventions

- Trauma Informed Practices

- Autism Spectrum Disorder training

- Specific health information based on student need

- Mental Health and Well-Being training

- Behaviour Management Systems

- FASD training

- Topic specific presentations by Speech-Language Pathologists (e.g., using Augmentative Communication with non-verbal students, Phonological Awareness, Oral Language)

- Topic specific presentations by Psychological Consultants, Social Workers and/or Specialized teams (e.g., Supporting Students with Anxiety, Understanding Trauma, Understanding Attachment)

- Itinerant Teachers provide in-service sessions at school or for selected teachers board-wide (e.g., Teaching Students with Hearing Loss)

- SRA Reading Program training and Wilson Reading Program focuses on the SRA program and Wilson Reading Program to provide targeted instruction for students struggling with reading and decoding skills

- Special Education Workshop: Workshop for all Special Education teachers offering Professional Development (PD) on topics such as: SEA, Google Read and Write, administering and interpreting academic assessments (Woodcock Johnson (WJ)), Reading Correlation chart, Responsive classroom, Anxiety Management for students, EPPS, SCIT, ABA strategies, pathway planning, etc.

- Special Education Small Group Introductory Workshop: Introduction to managing IEPs, IPRCs, SEA claims, Special Education resources, board programs, how to access help

- EA Professional Development Day: training on digital tools to support student learning goals, supporting students with complex needs, current system priorities

- Access to Community Based Trainings for Special Education Staff: Understanding Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), Anxiety, Positive Reinforcement, Self-regulation in Kindergarten, Deaf and Hard of Hearing strategies and supports, etc.

- Special Education Best Practices for Administration

SEAC Consultation

SEAC members are consulted in a variety of ways to support special education programming in the Board. Board level projects and initiatives are brought to SEAC to enable them to provide perspective and suggestions on next steps for intervention or improvement. As topics are discussed at regularly scheduled meetings, SEAC concerns and suggestions around staff development are noted in the minutes and are considered for future in-services.

Communication with Staff

Board staff is made aware of professional development opportunities provided both by the board and by external sources in the following ways:

- Outlook email system
- Professional Learning: web-based software for professional development
- Upper Grand District School Board website
- Families of Schools meetings
- Information presented at in-services
- Google communities

Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies

It is important that school staff regularly monitor, reflect and assess both student learning outcomes and student well-being so as to enable early identification of concerns. These processes will enable school and Board based teams to consider effective and targeted interventions to support ongoing student success. It is also important that school staff openly communicate with parents/caregivers/guardians to make them aware of the interventions used to support student learning.

Classroom Assessments

What is assessment?

Assessment is the process of gathering information from a variety of sources (conversations, observations and products) that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the curriculum expectations in a subject or course. Classroom based assessments also include the gathering of information that impacts and/or informs their successes and challenges in learning such as, but not limited to:

- developing a robust student profile (strengths, needs, interests, past achievement, etc.)

- learning about what enables a student to feel safe and included as a valued member of the classroom

- determining how the design of the classroom and learning tasks would optimize student learning

- actively considering classroom content to both engage student learning and ensure at their instructional level while building student safety and inclusion

- determining what assessment practices will most effectively capture student learning while engaging students in the process of learning

How are assessments used in classroom?

- Teachers use assessment to gather evidence of individual student learning through observations, conversations and the review of student work

- Teachers use assessment to provide feedback to students to guide their learning and next steps

- Students uses assessment feedback to monitor their own learning, to determine next steps, and set individual learning goals

- Teachers use current assessment to inform instruction (e.g., plans, strategies, interventions, supports, etc.)

- Teachers also use assessment to create IEP goals, implement intervention strategies and for the development of behavior and safety plans

What are some <u>examples</u> of assessment methods?
- Using multiple sources of evidence increases the reliability and validity of the evaluation of student learning
  - *Observations*-direct observation of student learning during classroom lessons and opportunities to practice skills and strategies in the classroom context
  - *Conversations*-both formal and informal interviews with students about their learning
  - *Products*: written work, oral reports, quizzes, student surveys, role plays, tests, projects, video, demonstrations, essays, observation of student performance (e.g., running records, conferences/conversations)
- Kindergarten Developmental Record: collection of assessment tasks and teacher observations assesses the foundational skills in language and math
- Board approved Literacy and Numeracy Assessments

What are the additional standardized assessment methods used in schools?
- Provincial Assessment EQAO testing at Grades 3, 6, 9 and 10
- Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Achievement (Form C)
- Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test, Version 7; Form K, Level A - used as a screening of cognitive skills in Grade 3

<u>Educational and Other Assessments</u>

When there are concerns about a student's achievement, further assessment may be required. These assessments are conducted when recommended by the Consultant Supported Team (CST) and consent has been given by parents/caregivers or guardians. The results of these assessments are used to inform ways to adapt school programming and supports in collaboration and consultation with school staff, parents/caregivers/guardians and students (where appropriate). Examples of assessments include a Speech and Language Assessment or a Psychological Assessment, carried out by board employed consultants. Assessments and supports could also be recommended to come from Community Agencies (e.g., Occupational Therapist (OT) assessments and supports) or private providers.

What is "informed consent"?

Informed consent means that parents/caregivers/guardians and students, when appropriate, are fully aware of the type of assessment that will be completed, who will be doing the assessment and how the results will be used. The Psychological Consultant or Speech-Language Pathologist will ensure that this information is provided to the parents/caregivers/guardians and student (when appropriate) before they conduct an assessment.

What types of specialized assessments are used for students with special needs?

- Special Education Teachers in developmental disabilities classrooms use resources that are meaningful to measure the achievement of their students, such as A Functional Assessment and Curriculum (AFAC)

- If additional formal assessment is being considered by Student Support Services Consultants, the Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Achievement (Form C) may be used to get a better understanding of the student's skills and to help determine if a Psychological Assessment is recommended

What is included in the information package for Identification Placement and Review Committee?

The package contains existing reports in the Ontario Student Record (OSR), academic assessment data, diagnostic assessments completed by qualified professionals, the Individual Education Plan (IEP), Report Card, student profile (from Compass for Success), current behaviour/safety plans, successful learning strategies, interests and teacher observations. This collection of information is used to gain a broad understanding of the student and will be used to determine the best class placement.

Identification, Placement, and Review Committee Process (IPRC)

IPRC Process

System IPRC meetings occur throughout the school year for the initial identification and placement of exceptional students. IPRC meetings also occur when either the identification and/or placement of the student changes. These meetings are organized centrally by the Special Education Department.

Prior to the IPRC, information is communicated to parents/caregivers/guardians and they are encouraged, in writing, to attend the meeting. The *Caregiver Guide to Special Education* informing parents/caregivers/guardians about the IPRC process is available at all schools in the Board, as well as through the Student Support Services Department.

Each January, students' names are referred to a Special Class Placement Committee if a special education class is being considered for a student for the following year. Prior to these

referrals, staff will take the following steps:

- assess student needs

- discuss with the parents/caregivers/guardians the possible placement options

- prepare relevant data, including formal/informal assessments

- present the referral to the CST

The System Placement Committee discusses each referral to make sure the student meets the appropriate criteria and checks for available spaces for the following September. Only the most appropriate students are recommended for placement in these system classes, as there are limited placements available and the class numbers are capped according to Ministry guidelines. Students will have their needs met either in a regular classroom or in a special education class placement as reflected in their IEP. Yearly IPRC review meetings will be scheduled to ensure that the student's needs continue to be met. On rare occasions, students are placed in special education classes at other times of the school year. These exceptions may be for students new to the board. This may occur by referring these situations to the Special Education Consultant.

IPRC Reviews

The identification and placement of every identified student is to be reviewed annually and all IEP's are to be reviewed once each reporting period. Parents/caregivers/guardians are integral members of the IPRC process and are invited to the annual IPRC review meetings.

However, parents/caregivers/guardians may choose not to attend (e.g. if the placement or diagnosis remain the same). After the IPRC meeting, written copies of the IPRC minutes are sent to the principal of the school by the Special Education Department. The principal sends copies of the IPRC minutes to the parents/caregivers/guardians for their signature. A copy of the minutes is provided for the parents/caregivers/guardians records. Parents/caregivers/guardians are informed of their right to dispute the IPRC's recommendations for identification and placement as outlined in the *Caregiver Guide to Special Education*. If parents/caregivers/guardians have no dispute with the recommendations, the IPRC's decision is implemented. Disputes regarding IPRC recommendations are normally resolved at the school level although in some cases, they may involve the mediation of members of the Student Support Services Department or Superintendent of Education – Student Support Services.

Mediation and Appeal Process

The Upper Grand District School Board follows the appeal process as outlined in the Regulations. If necessary, the Board would seek the assistance of a mediator in an effort to resolve disputes and would welcome the involvement of parent/caregiver

advocates or other professionals to the process. (See Dispute Resolution page 72-74)

Conflict Resolution and Shared Solutions

The Ministry published and distributed the guide: Shared Solutions - A Guide to Preventing and Resolving Conflicts Regarding Programs and Services for Students with Special Education Needs in 2007. This resource guide is intended to help parents/caregivers/guardians, educators, and students with special education needs, work together to prevent conflicts, resolve issues quickly, and allow students to develop their full potential and succeed in school. The Upper Grand District School Board endorses the approaches, techniques and strategies for conflict prevention and resolution.

System Level IPRCs

Composition

- Chairperson (Special Education Consultant)
- Principal/Vice-Principal
- one other member (e.g., Principal or Vice-Principal, Special Education Resource Teacher)
- Parent/caregiver/guardian and/or student

Goal of System Level IPRCs

- initial identification by the Upper Grand District School Board of a student's exceptionality and any subsequent change in identified exceptionality
- placement of the student (e.g., regular class with support, special education class)
- identification of students previously identified within the Board but who have returned after a lengthy absence

School Level IPRC Reviews

Team Composition

- School Principal/Vice-Principal (Chair)
- Special Education Resource Teacher
- One other staff member
- Parent/caregiver/guardian and/or student

Goal of School Level IPRC Reviews

- review annually a student's identification and placement to ensure it best meets the needs of the student
- declare a student no longer exceptional with a written request from the

parents/caregivers/guardians or student if 18 years of age or older

- change the placement of a student from a special education class to a regular class when appropriate (e.g., moving from Grade 8 to secondary)

Guidelines for IPRC Identification

The following are the guidelines which are used by the Upper Grand District School Board in determining the appropriateness of identification of students as having exceptional needs in each of the Ministry categories.

Required Documentation for System IPRC

The school team presents the following documentation to the Special Education Department:

Educational Assessment Package

All Educational Assessment packages for IPRC include:

- Student Information for Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) OR Application for Special Education Class Placement form (completed during the current academic school year)
- CST Minutes recommending IPRC or placement
- Individual Education Plan
- Diagnostic assessments relevant to IPRC

Some Educational Assessment packages for class placement may also include:

- Recent Progress Report/Report Card(s)
- Student Profile from Compass for Success
- Student work samples
- Behaviour/Mental Health Plan (where applicable)
- Safety Plan (where applicable)

In addition, the following conditions and documentation are required for specific exceptionalities by the Upper Grand District School Board IPRC:

Identification	Documentation
Behaviour	- documentation of severity and frequency of behaviours which are persistent and ongoing - supportive medical, emotional, or counselling information as applicable - evidence that the behaviours are detrimental to self and/or others - evidence that the behavioural responses are not better explained by another known or identifiable Ministry of Education exceptionality
Blind Low Vision	- medical assessment or current Ophthalmology Report of vision deficit - documentation of curriculum accommodations and/or modifications
Communication Autism Spectrum Disorder	diagnosis by a qualified professional
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	- an Audiologist or Medical Practitioner Assessment or report of hearing deficit - student need for accommodations and/or program modifications

Identification	Documentation
Intellectual Disability	- a Cognitive Assessment on an individually administered intelligence test indicating a Full Scale I.Q. score or General Ability Index that falls at, or below, the 2nd percentile (plus or minus one standard error of measurement) OR - where formalized measures of cognitive ability cannot be administered, there must be a documented history of rehabilitative services, and need for modification in most areas of the curriculum and daily functioning - Adaptive Functioning, as measured on standardized questionnaires, indicating delays in one of more areas, falling at, or below, the 2nd percentile (plus or minus one standard error or measurement)
Giftedness	- group-Administered ability test indicating an Overall or Composite score at, or above, the 98th percentile , OR; - an individually administered intellectual test (using Canadian norms where available), a Full Scale I.Q. score or General Ability Index at, or above, the 98th percentile is required
Language Impairment	- a Speech and Language Assessment reflecting significant difficulties in comprehension and/or the use of verbal communication - student need for accommodations and/or modifications - language difficulties not better explained by another exceptionality

Identification	Documentation
Learning Disability	- evidence of at least the middle of low average ability (16th percentile or higher) on a standardized test of intellectual ability, including: the Full Scale I.Q, General Ability Index, Verbal Ability Index, Nonverbal/Perceptual Reasoning/Visual Spatial Index - evidence of a specific processing deficit (e.g., phonological awareness) that is directly linked to the identified area(s) of academic weakness - a significant discrepancy between achievement and assessed ability not better explained by another exceptionality - academic achievement in some area(s) is a significant weakness - student need for accommodations and/or modifications
Mild Intellectual Disability	- a Cognitive Assessment on an individually administered intelligence test indicating a Full-Scale I.Q. score or General Ability Index that falls between 2nd to 8th percentiles, inclusive - consideration of Adaptive Functioning using standardized measures with delays (2nd to 8th percentile) noted in at least one area - consideration of academic skills with most falling well below grade level requiring most areas of the curriculum to be modified
Multiple	- relevant medical information or documentation related to the areas of need - documented needs in two or more areas of exceptionality with special services required
Physical Disability	- medical diagnosis and information - curriculum modifications or accommodations related to physical limitation or deficiencies

Identification	Documentation
Speech Impairment	• a Speech and Language Assessment reflecting significant impairment in speech intelligibility or fluency requiring accommodations and/or modifications

Special Education Class Placements Provided by the Board

Special Education Class Placements

Students who require special education programs and services receive support through the classroom teacher and the special education resource teacher. There are other special education placements available to students. A special class placement is recommended through the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC).

Special class placement decisions are made in January and reviewed again in May. The Superintendent of Education – Student Support Services oversee the process, which includes Special Education Consultants, Psychologists, Manager, Communication, Language and Speech Services, and principal representatives from the Special Education Resource Committee (SERC).

General Timelines: Special Education Class Placement Procedures

Fall Term
- In-School Team (IST), in consultation with their Consultant Support Team (CST) decide which students should be referred to the Placement Committee for Special Class Placement

- Placement is based on the criteria provided and student needs

- The CST reviews students presently in system placements who should remain in special class placements for the following September

November/December
- Following a discussion with parents/caregivers/guardians, the In-School Team prepares a Special Class Placement Referral packages for individual students

- The Learning Disability, Mild Intellectual Disability, Intellectual Disability, and Gifted student placements are submitted to Student Support Services in December

- Students may be considered for placement at each grade level that the class is offered

January/February
- The Student Support Services Department finalizes student placement decisions and notifies the student's home school

March to June
- Schools notify parents/caregivers/guardians of the IPRC meeting ten days before the meeting date, and forward the "Caregiver Guide to Special Education" pamphlet
- IPRC meetings are conducted to make system placement decisions
- Minutes detailing the IPRC decision regarding exceptionality and placement are forwarded to the parents/caregivers/guardians
- Schools forward a signed copy of each IPRC minute form to the Special Education Department and notify the Special Education Department of any students whose parents/caregivers/guardians decline a system special class placement

Description of Special Education Class Placements

The Upper Grand District School Board offers five categories of special education class placements:
- a regular class with indirect support
- a regular class with resource assistance
- a regular class with withdrawal assistance
- a special education class with partial integration and
- a special education class full-time

Class Placements for Students with Special Needs

Learning Resource Classroom-8 (LRC-8)
- this class placement supports students with a learning disability
- students are integrated into their regular grade class for up to 50% of the day

Requirements for Placement in the LRC-8 Class
- student is in Grades 4 to 6
- student has been diagnosed through a psychological assessment by a qualified professional registered or supervised by a registered member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario and meets the criteria for Identification by IPRC in the area of Communication: Learning Disability
- has weakness in the development of two or more of the following: sight vocabulary, decoding skills, reading fluency and reading comprehension;

- student has received minimum of one year of intensive Special Education Resource Support, and has CST involvement; and

- has significant academic delays in reading, writing (and possibly mathematics) based on current assessment resulting in modifications to curriculum

Purpose of a LRC-8 Class
- to provide targeted skill development in reading, writing and math using evidence-based literacy and numeracy programs

- to improve student use of assistive technology

- to develop self-awareness and self-advocacy skills related to their learning profile

Learning Resource Class-16 (LRC-16)
- this class supports students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities/Language Based Learning Disabilities

- junior class - Grades 4 - 8

- students are integrated into their regular grade class for up to 50% of the day

Requirements for Placement in LRC-16 Class
- student has been assessed through a psychological assessment by a qualified professional registered or supervised by a registered member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario and identified by IPRC with Mild Intellectual Disability

- student has received minimum of one year of intensive Special Education Resource Support

- Educational Assessment shows significant academic delays based on current classroom assessments consistent with a mild intellectual disability or significant language impairment

Purpose of a LRC-16 Class Placement
- to provide targeted skill development in reading, writing and math using evidence-based literacy and numeracy programs

- to improve student use of assistive technology

- to develop self-awareness and self-advocacy skills related to their learning profile

Learning Resource Class-10 (LRC-10)
- Supports students with intellectual disabilities

- programs are available at the primary, junior, intermediate and secondary levels

- primary, junior and intermediate class may be combined

- the amount of integration varies according to student profiles and needs (i.e., interests, strengths and needs)

Requirements for Placement in a LRC-10 Class
- student has been diagnosed with an Intellectual Disability through a psychological assessment by a qualified professional registered or supervised by a registered member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario and student has been identified by IPRC with a Developmental Disability.

- very unique cases where a student requires developmental programming or alternative programming due to significant deficits in adaptive functioning. Placement considerations are reviewed carefully by board and parent/caregiver/guardian

- Educational Assessment shows achievement consistent with a developmental disability

Purpose of a LRC-10 Class Placement
- to provide targeted skill development in social skills, life skills and communication skills, as well as functional reading, writing and mathematics as appropriate

- to improve student use of assistive technology

- to develop self-awareness and self-advocacy skills and independence related to their learning profile

Purpose of a LRC-10 Class Placement at the Secondary Level
- to provide programming to support communication, social, independence and life skills to support transition to adult life at home, school and community

- to provide programming that provides opportunities for involvement in community, volunteer opportunities and work experiences (School, Community, and Work Transition Program) where appropriate

Learning Resource Class-25 (LRC-25)
- Supports students who are identified as gifted

- Grades 4-8

- some classes are multi-grade depending on enrolment

Requirements for Placement in a LRC-25 Class Placement

- student has been identified by IPRC with Intellectual Giftedness
- Overall or Composite Score on the Canadian Cognitive Assessment Test or an Individual psychological assessment indicates intellectual ability at 98th percentile and above
- Educational Assessment showing achievement at grade level or beyond in reading, writing and mathematics (mitigating factors will be considered, i.e. French Immersion, age at testing, first language)
- Has demonstrated a need for special education programming, beyond what is available at the classroom level (e.g. enrichment, IEP accommodations)

Purpose of a LRC-25 Class Placement

- to provide program extensions in breadth and depth based on grade level curriculum
- develop self-awareness and self-advocacy skills related to their learning profile

List of Schools and Special Education Class Placements

Location of classes remains relatively stable, although the student's needs inform changes in class locations.

Special Education Classes for Students with Learning Disabilities (LRC-8)
(Junior Program - Partially Integrated Classes)

- Erin Public School
- Hyland Heights Elementary School
- Mitchell Woods Public School
- Montgomery Village Public School
- Ottawa Crescent Public School
- Princess Margaret Public School
- Priory Park Public School
- Rickson Ridge Public School
- Westwood Public School

Special Education classes for Students Identified with Mild Intellectual Disabilities (LRC-16)
(Junior/Intermediate Program - Partially Integrated Classes)

- Arthur Public School

- Elora Public School

- Taylor Evans Public School

- Hyland Heights Elementary School

- Mitchell Woods Public School

- Parkinson Centennial Public School

- Rockwood Centennial Public School

- Waverley Drive Public School

Special Education Classes for Students with Developmental Disabilities/Intellectual Disabilities (LRC-10)
(Full Time Classes)

- Centennial Collegiate Vocational Institute: Secondary Program

- Centennial Highlands Public School

- Centre Dufferin District High School: Secondary Program

- Centre Wellington District High School: Secondary Program

- College Heights Secondary School: Secondary Program

- Elora Public School

- Guelph Collegiate Vocational School: Secondary Program

- Island Lake Public School

- John F. Ross Collegiate Vocational Institute: Secondary Program

- June Avenue Public School

- Ken Danby Public School

- John Galt Public School

- Minto Clifford Public School

- Montgomery Village Public School

- Norwell District Secondary School: Secondary Program

- Orangeville District Secondary School: Secondary Program

- Ottawa Crescent Public School

- Priory Park Public School

- Rickson Ridge Public School

- Sir Isaac Brock Public School

- Taylor Evans Public School

- Victoria Cross Public School

- Wellington Heights Secondary School: Secondary Program

- Willow Road Public School

Special Education Classes for Students with Giftedness (LRC-25)
(Full Time Classes)
- Spencer Avenue Public School

- Waverley Drive Public School

Other Specialized Classroom Supports

Supports for Students with Learning Disabilities
Students with learning disabilities are usually placed in regular classrooms with targeted support from the Special Education Resource Teacher at the school. Additional support is provided throughout the school board by an Itinerant Technology Coach. This teacher travels between schools and works with targeted students and their teachers in Grades 4 - 6 who have been diagnosed with a learning disability and have assistive technology (SEA equipment). A key focus of the Itinerant Technology Coach is to support students to become independent users of assistive technology in order to further develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

Supports for Students with Autism
Elementary students who have been diagnosed with Autism who are placed in a regular class with resource support receive this support in their home community school. At the secondary level, students with Autism in applied or academic courses attend their local secondary school. Resources and professional development are available to classroom teachers, resource teachers and educational assistants to promote evidence-based practices. These practices, such as Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), support students in elementary and secondary as described in Policy and Program Memorandum 140 and supported by the Special Education Consultants and the Behaviour Analysts. Consultations and support from Speech-Language Pathologists, Psychological Consultants and Social

Work are also available through a request through the IST. Students who are identified with a Mild Intellectual Disability or diagnosed with an Intellectual Disability, who meet criteria, may be placed in Special Education classes, as appropriate.

Supports for Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

A range of supports are available for students in the Upper Grand District School Board who are deaf or hard of hearing. Decisions about the amount of support for hearing needs are centered on the student's individual strengths and needs with input from the student, parents/caregivers/guardians, educators and professionals and are based on ongoing assessment. Students may receive the support of an Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, a Special Education Resource Teacher, and other professionals such as a Speech-Language Pathologist or a Sign Language Interpreter, as appropriate. Special class placement may be available for students who are deaf or hard of hearing whose educational needs meet criteria for placement in a special education class related to their needs. For students who use American Sign Language as their first language, it is an option for them to attend the Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf in Milton, Ontario as a day or residential student, if the placement is appropriate. Transportation is provided by the UGDSB.

Supports for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

A range of supports are available for students in the Upper Grand District School Board who are blind, deaf/blind or visually impaired. Decisions about the amount of support for vision needs are centered on the student's individual strengths and needs with input from the student, parents/caregivers/guardians, educators and professionals and are based on ongoing assessment. Students may receive the support of an Itinerant Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired, a Deaf/Blind Intervener, a Special Education Resource Teacher and other professionals as required. Special class placement maybe also available for students who are blind or have low vision whose educational needs meet criteria for placement in a special education class related to their needs. Further, students who are blind, deaf/blind or visually impaired may attend The W. Ross MacDonald School in Brantford as a day or residential student, if the placement is appropriate. Transportation is provided by the Upper Grand District School Board.

Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities

The following are the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry.

Behaviour

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

d) an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination thereof

Communication

Autism

A severe learning disorder that is characterized by:

a) disturbances in:

- rate of educational development
- ability to relate to the environment
- mobility
- perception, speech, and language

b) lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language

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.

Language Impairment

A learning disorder characterized by impairment in the 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 the following:

- 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

A learning disorder evident in both academic and social situations that involves one or more of the processes necessary for the proper use of spoken language or the symbols of communication, and that is characterized by a condition that:

a) is not primarily the result of:

- impairment of vision
- impairment of hearing
- physical disability
- developmental disability
- primary emotional disturbance
- cultural difference

b) results in a significant discrepancy between academic achievement and assessed intellectual ability, with deficits in one or more of the following:

- receptive language (listening, reading)
- language processing (thinking, conceptualizing, integrating)
- expressive language (talking, spelling, writing)
- mathematical computations

c) may be associated with one or more conditions diagnosed as:

- a perceptual handicap
- a brain injury
- minimal brain dysfunction
- dyslexia
- developmental aphasia

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; an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development

b) 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 ability 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 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 developmental 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 Exceptionalities

A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities, that is of such 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.

Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO)

What is EQAO?

EQAO is an independent agency that creates and administers large-scale assessments to measure Ontario students' achievement in reading, writing and math at key stages of their education. All EQAO assessments are developed by Ontario educators to align with The Ontario Curriculum. The assessments evaluate student success objectively and in relation to a common provincial standard.

What is an accommodation for EQAO?

If a student has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that outlines accommodations that are necessary for, and consistent with, regular classroom practices they will be eligible to receive accommodations for all forms of assessment. EQAO has a variety of accommodations available for students with special education learning needs, however, they do not allow for assessment modifications. Accommodations change the way the assessment is administered or the way in which a student with special education needs responds to its components. These do not alter the content of the assessment nor affect validity or reliability.

Historically, the following were considered special accommodations but will now be permitted for students without an IEP if they are required to support their achievement on the EQAO assessment:

- Additional time

- A quiet setting

- Preferential seating

- Prompts

- Supervised breaks

- Verbatim reading of instructions and/or questions for writing and mathematics

- Use of the built-in accessibility features

The accommodations provided for students with special education learning needs can include the following as consistent with their IEP:

- Sign language or an oral interpreter

- Specific Assistive Technology Formats

- Verbatim scribing of responses

- Alternative versions

Additional information on all accommodations available for each assessment can be found in the Administration Guides for each EQAO assessment on the EQAO website: https://www.eqao.com/

If your child is feeling anxious about the assessment, what can you do at home to support them?

For some students, EQAO can cause some stress. School staff and parents/caregivers/guardians can work together to support students who have concerns about the assessment.

Some suggestions that could be used to support students at home if they are feeling anxious

about the assessment would be:

- Be positive about the assessment and the experience if you are talking about it;

- Get a good night sleep prior to the testing.

- Have a good breakfast and snacks for the day

- Practice calming strategies when the student identifies they are feeling concern to help them develop these skills early on

- If there is something they could bring into the test that makes them feel calm, talk to the school staff about options

- Talk about who they can turn to if they need help before, during or after the assessment; and

- Talk to the classroom teacher if you feel your child may be worried about the assessment to discuss options to support them during this time.

Individual Education Plans (IEP)

What is an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?

An IEP is:

- a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a student

- based on assessments that show the student's strengths and needs that affect their ability to learn

- a description of the key features of the program and/or services

- not a daily plan or outline of everything that will be taught to the student.

The special education program may have accommodations, modifications, and/or alternative curriculum.

Accommodations are teaching strategies and supports that are necessary for some students with special needs to allow them to achieve learning expectations and demonstrate their learning. Accommodations are split into three categories: instructional, environment, and assessment. They do not change the curriculum expectations for the grade.

Modified programs make changes to the Ontario curriculum expectations in order to meet a student's learning needs. The current grade-level curriculum may be changed to have fewer and/or less complex expectations or changed to the expectations of a lower grade level.

Alternative programs involve knowledge and skills that are not part of the regular Ontario curriculum. The annual goal and expectations are created to help develop knowledge and skills that the student needs.

What is the process for developing and reviewing an IEP?

IEPs are developed by schools when assessments indicate that a student needs special education programming and/or services. The Individual Education Plan (IEP) remains in place for as long as the special education programming and/or services are required.

The development of the IEP should be a collaborative process. During the development phase, schools are required to seek feedback through consultation with parents/caregivers/guardians and the student (if possible), so that there is an opportunity to share information with the classroom teacher and/or special education resource teacher to help guide the development of the IEP. To help parents/caregivers/guardians understand this process, and seek greater involvement and collaboration on the IEP, a *Parent's Guide to the Individual Education Plan* was developed for the 2015-2016 school year. This guide was provided to each parent/caregiver/guardian of a student with an IEP at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year, as well as with all new IEPs that have been developed since then.

The IEP team that collaborates to develop the IEP includes parents/caregivers/guardians and/or the student, classroom teachers, a special education resource teacher (SERT), principal and/or vice principal, and may include other staff, such as board staff (e.g., vision, hearing, or technology teachers, speech and language pathologists, psychological consultants, etc.) or educational assistants. To help staff understand how to understand this process, and seek greater involvement and collaboration on the IEP, the UGDSB IEP Writing Guide was developed in 2014-2015.

There are five phases in the development of the IEP:

1. *Gathering information* - the IEP team may gather information by observing the student, completing assessments, and reviewing documentation.

2. *Setting the direction* - typically one teacher is given the primary responsibility for coordinating the development of the IEP, working with the IEP team.

3. *Developing the IEP* - the IEP must be completed within 30 school days of the beginning of the school year or semester, or within 30 days of a student beginning a special education program.

4. *Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Consultation* – letters, surveys, and interviews with parents/caregivers/guardians as well as having them review the draft IEP to learn about their child's strengths, needs and learning goals from their perspective.

5. *Implement the IEP* - The classroom teacher, special education teacher, and support staff, where applicable, implement the program and services outlined in the student's

IEP.

6. ***Review and update the IEP*** - Modified and alternative learning expectations must be reviewed, and updated as necessary, at least once in every reporting period. As a working document, the IEP should reflect any adjustments to learning expectations, teaching strategies, and assessment methods as new assessments provide additional information on the student's strengths and needs.

What must be included in the IEP?

- Students' strengths and needs based on current and relevant assessments.

- Accommodations and/or modifications that are necessary to allow a student to achieve learning expectations and demonstrate their learning.

- An outline of the special education programs and services that will be provided.

- Specific educational expectations, teaching strategies, and assessment methods for modified and alternative programs.

- A transition plan considering the physical, emotional, and learning needs of the student to support major transitions (e.g., grade to grade, school to school) and/or those during the school day (e.g., recess to class, activity to activity). If the student does not need support during transitions beyond what is provided to all schools, the transition plan may state that "no actions are required at this time".

- The need for a specific transition plan is reviewed on an ongoing basis (at least once per term/semester).

- A summary of the collaboration with parents/caregivers/guardians and the student in the development of the IEP.

- Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) methods are incorporated into the IEPs of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

How does an IEP support a student?

An IEP is a working document for sharing information about a student and can be updated at any time to reflect new information. It encourages open communication between home and the school about the student's strengths, needs, and next steps. An IEP also helps current and future teachers understand a student's learning profile, strengths and needs, and any accommodations he or she needs. It may set out educational and program goals that are appropriate and measurable for the student, allowing parents/caregivers/guardians and school staff to monitor a student's growth and learning. An IEP also identifies types and levels of support necessary to help a student be successful.

How is the development of IEPs supported through Student Support Services?

Special Education Consultants provide staff with professional development on the effective development and use of IEPs. Examples of IEPs for students with a variety of special needs from kindergarten to secondary school were developed by the Ministry of Education and have been shared during professional development sessions, as have the expanded guidance and examples for IEP development in the *Special Education in Ontario, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (2017) document. Most recently, an *IEP Development Best Practices* document was developed to incorporate board best practices from the previous *UGDSB IEP Writing Guide* document with the current information from the *Special Education in Ontario* document so that educators can have this information readily at hand as they work on IEPs.

With renewed practices that support parent/caregiver/guardian and student collaboration on the development of the IEP in place, the focus of professional development has shifted in audience and content. Shorter sessions that can be offered after school, at lunch, or during staff meetings has allowed for more educators to access the specific training they need on topics that range in content and complexity so that there are multiple entry points. As well, with a greater focus on virtual sessions there has been more flexibility in how and when educators are able to access professional development on IEP development.

Special Education Consultants continue to monitor and support school staffs as questions about IEPs arise during the school year, and to provide in-school opportunities for professional development. This support can also be helpful in cases where parents/caregivers/guardians and school staff have a different understanding of the IEP as part of the IEP Dispute Resolution process.

What happens when parents/caregivers/guardians disagree about the IEP?
IEP Dispute Resolution

The development of the IEP should be a collaborative process that includes parents/caregivers/guardians and the student (if possible). During the development phase schools are required to seek feedback (consultation) with parents/caregivers/guardians. This is your opportunity to discuss and consult with the classroom teacher and/or special education resource teacher regarding your child's IEP.

Parents/caregivers/guardians know their child best. Their collaboration with the school team is crucial to ensure that their child's needs are fully understood. They can help by discussing their child's history, strengths and needs with the IEP team, along with their goals for learning. Students are most successful when all team members work together towards achievable goals. If parents/caregivers/guardians have questions or concerns about their child's IEP or progress, they are encouraged to speak to the classroom teacher.

If a disagreement between parents/caregivers/guardians and school staff regarding

significant aspects of the IEP occurs, resolution of these issues should take place through a School Team meeting. We endorse the prevention and conflict resolution strategies and ideas promoted in "Shared Solutions: A Guide to Preventing and Resolving Conflicts Regarding Programs and Services for Students with Special Education Needs" (Ministry of Education, 2007).

The following **IEP Dispute Resolution** process will be implemented in the event of a dispute:

Step 1 – Review of the issue with the classroom teacher

- The parent, guardian or adult student (aged 18 years or older) should bring concerns or issues forward to the classroom teacher for appropriate member of staff of resolution.
- In the case of a concern expressed by a community member, contact should be initiated with the principal of the school rather than classroom teachers.

Step 2 – Review by the school principal

- If the parent, guardian or adult student and the classroom teacher are not able to resolve the issue, the parent, guardian or adult student should request that the issue be reviewed by the school principal (or designate). The school principal (or designate will review the issue and work to resolve the issue.
  - o In the case of a concern about an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that cannot be resolved by the principal alone, the principal and parent may invite the Special Education Consultant assigned to the school to help resolve the issue.

Step 3 – Review by the Superintendent of Education

- If the parent, guardian or adult student and the school principal are not able to resolve the issue, the parent, guardian or adult student should request that the issue be reviewed by the school's superintendent of education (or designate).

- The superintendent (or designate) will review the matter as it relates to the board's established policies and procedures and the *Education Act* of Ontario and will respond to the parent, guardian or adult student regarding their concern.
  - o In the case of a concern expressed about an IEP that cannot be resolved by the school superintendent, the Superintendent of Education, Student Support Services (or designate) will assist to resolve the issue.

Step 4 – Review by the Associate Director

- If the parent, guardian or adult student and the school's superintendent of education are not able to resolve the issue, or in the case of an IEP issue, Superintendent of Education, Student Support Services, the parent, guardian or adult student should request that the issue be reviewed by the Associate Director.

Step 5 – Review by the Director of Education

- If the parent, guardian or adult student and the Associate Director are not able to resolve the issue, the parent, guardian or adult student should request that the issue be reviewed by the Director of Education (or designate). The Director of Education (or designate) will review the matter and respond to the parent, guardian or adult student regarding their concern.

Transition Planning

For some of our students, transitions can be challenging. Transitions can take many different forms such as: transitioning between home to school and/or activity to activity during the day, from grade to grade each year, from school to school (Grade 8 to Grade 9) or from school to community after high school. A transition plan is a written document to guide and support short term and long-term changes for students. They are reviewed on an individual basis as part of the Individual Education Plan (IEP). The physical, emotional, and learning needs of the student are considered when developing a transition plan, to determine if the student requires support when making transitions.

When school staff are developing transition plans, they actively gather information from the student, parents/caregivers/guardians, school staff and community partners (when applicable) to ensure the plan will support the student's needs. This information is gathered through a variety of ways such as parent/caregiver/guardian questionnaires, informal meetings/discussions as well as more formal case conferences. Information and plans are developed and then recorded in the Transition Planning section of the students Individual Education Plan (IEP). It is important to note that this plan can be changed and adapted at any time to meet the changing needs of the student. School staff are responsible to ensure the IEP, and this section of the plan, accurately reflects the transitional supports required for a student in their care. At any time that parents/caregivers/guardians would like to review these plans they are encouraged to contact school staff who oversee their child's program at school.

> *PPM 156 Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs* states "A transition plan must be developed for all students who have an IEP, whether or not they have been identified as exceptional by an Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) and including those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness. The transition plan is developed as part of the IEP." Also, PPM 140 *Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)* states that, "school board staff must plan for the transition between various activities and settings involving students with autism spectrum disorders."

In a school setting, transition planning could be done in partnership with different groups of people based on the individual needs of the student and those in their circle of care. There are three main groups of people that could be involved in this process:

- **School Level support could include:** Principal, Vice-Principal, Special Education Resource Teacher, Classroom Teacher, Child and Youth Worker, Itinerant Teacher, Educational Assistant, Special Education Resource Teacher (High School), Student Success Teacher (High-school), Guidance Teacher (High School) and Social Worker (High School)

- **Board Level support could include:** Psychological Consultant, Speech-Language Pathologist, Special Education Consultant, Complex Mental Health Social Worker, Mental Health Secondary Psychologist, Behaviour Analyst (BA) and Transitional EA

- **Community based support could include:** Kidsability, Kerry's Place Autism Services, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Developmental Services Ontario, Family and Children's Services, Dufferin Child and Family Services, Family Counselling and Support Services for Guelph-Wellington

Tools and Resources:

- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2011) *Ontario Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Procedures*. Queen's Printer for Ontario 2011.

- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2017) *Transition Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities*.

- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2004) *Individual Education Plan: Resource Guide*. Queen's Printer for Ontario 2004.

- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014) *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision of Education for Ontario*. Queen's Printer for Ontario 2014.

- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2010) *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools, First Edition Covering Grades 1 to 12.* Queen's Printer for Ontario 2014.

- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2013) *School Effectiveness Framework: A Support for School Improvement and Student Success.* Queen's Printer for Ontario 2013.

- Ontario Ministry of Education (2007). *Effective Educational Practices for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.* Queen's Printer for Ontario.

- Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) Website

Special Equipment Amount (SEA)

The Special Equipment Amount (SEA) provides funding to school boards to assist with the cost of equipment essential to supporting students with special education needs when the need for specific equipment is recommended by a qualified professional. This equipment is to provide students with accommodations that are directly required and essential to access the Ontario curriculum and/or a board-determined alternative program and/or course and/or to attend school. See [Ministry of Education](#) website for further details regarding SEA funding.

The necessary equipment may be computers, software, apps, computer-related devices and required supporting furniture identified for use by students with special education needs. This also includes all training required for the use of the equipment. Non-computer based equipment is also funded by SEA for sensory support, hearing support, vision support, personal care support and physical assists support. SEA funding does not cover curriculum materials and classroom materials.

SEA equipment is board property and is to be used to access the curriculum. We encourage the use of equipment both at home and school. During the summer months students may sign out the equipment for home use.

All SEA equipment must be recommended in an assessment by an appropriately qualified professional that outlines the need for the equipment. According to Ministry guidelines, the following lists of qualified professionals who are members of their relevant governing colleges are recognized to conduct these assessments:

- psychologist or psychological associate
- physician
- social worker
- audiologist
- speech-language pathologist
- augmentative communication therapist
- optometrist/ophthalmologist
- occupational therapist
- physiotherapist

Initiating a Claim for SEA Technology

When requesting SEA technology for students with learning needs, a recommendation by a qualified professional is needed in all cases.

There are 3 ways this can be obtained:

Options	Action
Formal assessment report includes a specific recommendation for technology from a qualified professional.	Present request for SEA equipment to Special Education Consultant.
An existing formal assessment report does not specifically recommend technology but school feels it would be necessary for the student.	Professional recommendation obtained at the Consultant Supported Team meeting (CST).
No formal assessments have been conducted but evidence presented and discussion at CST indicates a clear need for technology for the student.	Professional recommendation obtained at Consultant Supported Team meeting (CST).

In order to provide a more equitable process for obtaining a professional recommendation for SEA technology equipment, schools will be able to generate this documentation at the Consultant Supported Team meeting (CST) through the following process:

1. Follow standard practice of bringing a student to Consultant Support Team (CST). Student concerns brought to In-School Team (IST) and then parent/caregiver/guardian consent obtained for Consultant Supported Team (CST) discussion.

2. Bring the following information to the Consultant Supported Team (CST) meeting:

   - OSR

   - Summary of OSR review including previous formal assessments

   - Social/behaviour and medical information, as appropriate

   - Information about a pattern of learning difficulty

   - Information about what has been tried, evidence of work samples that show the student's needs and how technology has helped

   - Standardized assessment results (examples include: PM Benchmarks, running record, Woodcock-Johnson, CCAT, etc.)

   - Current academic achievement

   - Teacher report and observations

3. After discussion of the above, the Consultant Supported Team (CST) members determine if:

- The team members support an application for SEA technology

- More evidence needs to be obtained (i.e. school-based assessment or further professional assessment). This would be presented at a subsequent CST.

4. If the SEA equipment is supported by <u>all CST members</u>, this is clearly indicated in the CST minutes, including the following statement as well as a brief summary of the supporting evidence:

"Members of the CST are in agreement with a recommendation for technology to support the student's learning needs in reading and written communication based on the evidence presented".

These minutes would be the documentation used as the "Professional Recommendation" for SEA equipment. Note: minutes must be on one separate page containing only one student's information.

5. Required follow-up (within six months to one year of receiving SEA equipment). The school team is required to monitor a student's growth and performance to determine if the student's needs have been met and if no further CST involvement is required. If there are continued concerns about the student's progress, the need for additional assessment (e.g., Psychological Assessment, Speech-Language) or other supports/recommendations (e.g., Mental Health support, medical, etc.) should be discussed at a subsequent CST meeting.

Transportation for Students with Special Education Needs

If the student meets the criteria for special education transportation, the Special Education Consultant for the school will create a transportation plan with the Service de transport de Wellington-Dufferin Student Transportation Services (STWDSTS). STWDSTS is a consortium of five school boards providing transportation for all students including students with special needs who live in Wellington and Dufferin Counties requiring transportation to and from school. The bus drivers, who are employed by the operators, receive extensive driver, safety and first aid training. When a transportation plan is created for a student, it is shared and approved by the school principal and shared with parents/caregivers/guardians. If students have medical needs or specific safety accommodations, this information is shared with the STWDSTS to ensure that drivers are aware and prepared to support the students in their care.

A special transportation request may be made if a student meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. Has a physical disability that prevents him/her from boarding a bus and walking to his/her seat. (In the event that a student has temporary medical needs (e.g. broken

leg) please contact the school principal as this would fall outside of the regular yearly process).

2. Attends a Special Education class outside his/her school catchment area.

3. Has been identified by the school board's Student Support Services Department as requiring special transportation.

4. Has an ongoing medical condition requiring special transportation (in this case, the request must be accompanied by a doctor's note and approved by the superintendent).

5. Attends a provincial school (e.g. Trillium)

A student must be identified with special needs in order to qualify for special transportation. Special transportation requests are approved on an annual basis and must be reviewed each year. The STWDSTS works with the Student Support Services Department and the School Principal to maintain an accurate list of students who receive transportation according to the special transportation criteria.

The STWDSTS website provides bus information, such as bus delays and cancellations, and answers to common transportation questions.

Student Address Changes
- Parents/Caregivers/guardians are to report address changes to the school for the appropriate changes to be made to the Board's database and adjustments can be made to bus routes as needed.

- If parents/caregivers/guardians have concerns about their student as it relates to transportation they are encouraged to contact the school administration.

New Student Registration
- Registration and special transportation occurs throughout the year.

- Parents/Caregivers/guardians must register student(s) at the school for transportation to be initiated. Parents/caregivers/guardians will be contacted by STWDSTS when the transportation is in place.

The Ministry provides a support document for school boards and transportation consortiums to support their work to ensure students are safe while travelling to and from school entitled Report an Incident on School Transportation (2022)

Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario

Provincial and Demonstration Schools are operated by the Ministry of Education. They have been established by the government to help students who are deaf, blind, deaf-blind or students who have been identified as Learning Disabled with severe deficits which may include Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

These schools provide:

- education for students who are deaf, blind or deaf-blind or who have severe learning disabilities

- an alternative education option

- regional resource centres for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind

- preschool home visiting services for students who are deaf, blind or deaf-blind

- learning materials and media for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind

- school board teachers with resource services

- a valuable role in teacher training

Placements in Provincial and Demonstration Schools
W. Ross Macdonald School is located in Brantford and provides education for students who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind. Please click the following link for information [W. Ross Macdonald School.](#)

Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf is located in Milton and offers services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Please click the following link for information [Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf.](#)

Trillium School is located in Milton and provides education for students who have severe learning disabilities. Please click the following link for information [Trillium School](#) information.

The Provincial Schools Resource Services Department provides a range of services to families and school boards in support of students who are blind, deaf-blind, low-vision, Deaf, hard of hearing or who have a severe learning disability.

Provincial school programs include workshops, on-line learning opportunities and early intervention programs designed to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and ideas so that students across the province are able to achieve their full academic potential.

A referral process is in place for individual students to be seen by resource consultants.

If you would like more information about the [Provincial and Demonstration Schools](#)you can

view their website or contact the Special Education Department at the Grant Evans Education Centre, 519-941-6191.

Transportation to Provincial and Demonstration Schools

Transportation is provided by the Upper Grand District School Board to Provincial and Demonstration Schools.

A decision is made at the time of acceptance into one of these programs as to whether the student will be a day or a residential student. The Service de transport de Wellington-Dufferin Student Transportation Services (STWDSTS) then arranges transportation for the student and informs the parents/caregivers/guardians of the approximate times for departure and arrival. Arrangements are made if the student needs to have an assistant ride with them. Transportation is arranged after the student's application has been accepted and approved by the Provincial or Demonstration school.

Coordination of Services with other Ministries or Agencies

Collaborating with other Ministries and community agencies often involves representation from Special Education. Some areas have been described in the Delivery of Program section of the Special Education Report. The following list outlines other committees or projects that UGDSB Staff work with other Ministries and agencies:

Child in Extended Social Care Teams have been set up to help students who succeed at college, university and apprenticeship training. Staff from the Upper Grand District School Board are part of two Crown Ward Championship Teams and work with committee members to offer mentorship, peer support, motivation and guidance to students. As well, this team has worked with our community child protection agencies to set up the Joint Protocol for Student Achievement to directly support and improve the education outcomes for students who are associated with or under the care of child protection agencies.

Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings

The Board works cooperatively with Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS) in providing health support services for students in school. Professional Health Services offered through the Home and Community Care include nursing, nutritional counselling, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech/swallowing therapy, and mental health and addiction (nursing). The Health Support Service Policy 509, provides more detail about the services provided in schools.

To access School Health Support Services, referrals are made with the consent of parents/caregivers/guardians by the school principal. A parent/caregiver may also request a referral for an assessment through the school principal. The school-based Speech and

Language Pathologists must complete an eligibility assessment and referral for speech and swallowing referrals. The Psychological Consultant, Social Worker and/or Child and Youth Counsellor are involved in a referral to the Mental Health and Addiction Nurses (MHAN).

Program staff work with Home and Community Care Support Services staff on a number of student based services such as transition planning, case conferences and delivery of professional services. For example, Case Managers from Home and Community Care Support Services attend transition to school meetings as necessary.

The Upper Grand District School Board Manager of Communication, Language and Speech Services and the Principal of Special Education attend regularly scheduled meetings with representatives of the Central West Home and Community Care Support Services and Waterloo-Wellington Home and Community Care Support Services to review services.

Committee Membership at Ministry of Children and Youth Services Planning Tables

Dufferin Coalition for Kids (DuCK) is a comprehensive planning table that exists to help Dufferin County children and youth achieve success. DuCK members, including the UGDSB, represent organizations providing service to child, youth and families in Dufferin County. (Coalition for Kids)

Growing Great Generations is a collaborative planning table for children and youth from birth to 18 in Guelph and Wellington County. This planning table is comprised of representatives from key stakeholders including the UGDSB. Members participate in system-level planning to identify priorities and take action to support, strengthen and align social and health services for local children, youth and their families.

Associated Subcommittees of the Planning Tables

- System of Care: promotes improved access to service for children, youth and their families in Dufferin

- Parenting Committee: promotes a culture of positive parenting in Dufferin

- Ensuring System Success: focuses on the success of students with complex needs who are supported by a variety of community agencies (Guelph, Wellington and Dufferin)

Growing Great Kids

Growing Great Kids is a partnership of organizations that provide services to children prenatal to age six in Guelph and Wellington County. Through this partnership, the Growing Great Kids System of Care has been developed to make it easier for families to access

community–based services and supports. Families can call a single number known as KIDS LINE at 519-846-2715 or 1-800-265-7293, ext. 3616 between 8:45 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. weekdays or email anytime at **info@growinggreatkidsguelph-wellington.com**. Upper Grand staff members serve on sub-committees within Growing Great Kids.

New Heights New Hopes

This is a collaborative project with school boards and community child care agencies and service providers. The New Heights New Hopes Committee designs resources and activities to help children and their families successfully transition to kindergarten. They may also follow up during the Fall to monitor the success of these transitions.

Awareness and Advocacy Committees

Staff participates in specialized committees that focus on issues facing students with special needs, such as:

- Wellington Developmental Services Planning Group

- Dufferin Developmental Services Planning Group

- Community Participation Supports Committee

Other Community Agencies

The staff portal is used to help UGDSB staff know about community agencies through the following links:

- [My Dufferin Service Directory](#)

- [Guelph-Wellington Community Agencies](#)

Protocols for Partnerships: Policy Program Memorandum 149 Collaborative Agreements and Third Party Protocol

What is PPM 149?

PPM 149 is the Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies for Provision of Services by Regulated Health Professionals, Regulated Social Service Professionals, and Paraprofessionals.

What is the purpose of this protocol?

PPM 149 is to establish a process for:

- collaborating with community partners

- fostering continuous improvement of the delivery of programs and services for all students

- making the best use of resources in the community

- bringing services to students

What types of community agencies are involved?

- external agencies who employ health professionals (e.g., psychologists, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, nurses), social service professionals (e.g. social workers) and paraprofessionals (e.g., child and youth counsellors, Sign language interpreters)

- cannot duplicate the work of current Board employees except on a short term basis as outlined in each agency's agreement with the Board

Agencies with Collaborative Agreements with UGDSB

- Dufferin Child and Family Services (DCAFS)

- Homewood Regional Services – Community Addiction Services (CADS)

- Kerry's Place Autism Services

- Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington (CMHAWW)

- COMPASS

- KidsAbility

- Home and Community Care Support Services Waterloo-Wellington

- Community Living Dufferin

What is a Third Party Protocol?

This Protocol is used when a parent/caregiver/guardian or community member wishes to provide services for a student at school, during school hours. An example of such a request could be a parent's/caregiver's desire to have their child receive therapy from a private practice occupational therapist during school hours in the classroom or withdrawn to a separate space within the school. These services are parent/caregiver/guardian directed rather than school board directed. Click here to access the [Upper Grand District School Board Third Party Protocol](#).

How Third Party Protocols differ from PPM 149 Collaborative Agreements

Third Party Protocol	PPM 149 Collaborative Agreement
Third party agreements cover **requests by parents** for services and/or programs to be delivered for their child during school hours.	PPM 149 refers to agreements with community agencies initiated, developed and evaluated by the Board.
These services are paid for by the parents/caregivers/guardians or by another party on their behalf or are being provided for free at the request of the parents/caregivers/guardians.	These services are paid for by the community agency and the provider is an employee of that agency.
Specific services and supports are agreed upon by the family and the school team. Includes a wider variety of supports.	Specific services and supports are agreed upon by the Board and the Agency.

Third party protocol outlines the following terms and conditions under which these services can be provided.
● Must be provided with informed parental/caregiver or student consent
● Must be provided with the consent of the Principal
● Must support the student's program at school
● Must align with the Board's philosophy and approaches
● Be short term usually 2 – 4 sessions
● May Include:
  1. Observation
  2. Consultation
  3. Demonstration
  4. Transition Planning and Support
● **Must** NOT include assessment or direct service except in **extenuating**
	PPM 149 Protocol for Collaborative Agreements outlines the terms and conditions under which these services can be provided.
	● Must be provided with informed parental/caregiver or student consent (as appropriate)
	● Must fit with the Board's philosophy and approaches AND
	● Must augment but not replace services already provided by Board staff
	● May be short or long term as determined by the agreement with the agency
	● May include assessment and direct service
	● May include:
	  1. Observation
	  2. Consultation
	  3. Demonstration
	  4. Transitional Planning and Support

Third Party Protocol	PPM 149 Collaborative Agreement
circumstances	

Special Education Acronyms and Terms

Acronym	Description
ABA	Applied Behaviour Analysis
AFAC	A Functional Assessment and Curriculum
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
BA	Behaviour Analyst
BMS	Behaviour Management Systems
CCED	Comité consultatif pour l'enfance en difficulté (SEAC)
CAD	Communication Disorder Assistant
CIPR	Comité d'identification, de placement et de révision (IPRC)
CLEVR	Online Student Database
CPS	Collaborative and Proactive Solutions
CST	Consultant Supported Team
CYC	Child Youth Counsellor
EA	Educational Assistant
ESL	English as a Second Language
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IPRC	Identification, Placement and Review Committee
IST	In School Team
LRC-10	Learning Resource Classes-10 (cap of 10 students)
LRC-16	Learning Resource Classes-16 (cap of 16 students)
LRC-19	Learning Resource Classes-19 (cap of 19 students)
LRC-25	Learning Resource Classes-25 (cap of 25 students)
OT	Occupational Therapist
PEI	Plan d'enseignement individualisé (IEP)
SCIT	Student Centred Instructional Tool
SEA	Special Equipment Amount
SEAC	Special Education Advisory Committee
SEPPA	Special Education Per Pupil Amount
SERT	Special Education Resource Teacher
SIP	Special Incidence Portion

Acronym	Description
SLP	Speech-Language Pathologist
SPA	Special Program Assistant
SST	Specialized Support Team
SW	Social Worker
UGDSB	Upper Grand District School Board
VTRA	Violence Threat Risk Assessment
Ministries	
EDU	Ministry of Education
MCCSS	Ministry of Children & Community Services
MCSS	Ministry of Community and Social Services
MOHLTC	Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care
MTCU	Ministry of Training, Colleges &Universities
Ministry Terms	
ADP	Assistive Devices Program (MOHLTC)
AODA	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (MCSS)
HCCSS	Home and Community Care Support Services
OSAP	Ontario Student Assistance Plan (MTCU)
OSR	Ontario School Record (EDU)
OSSD	Ontario Secondary School Diploma
OSSLT	Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test
PPM	Policy Program Memorandum (EDU)
Education Groups	
ADFO	Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariens
AEFO	Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens
CODE	Council for Directors of Education
CODELF	Conseil ontarien des directrices et des directeurs de l'éducation de langue française
CPCO	Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario
EQAO	Education Quality & Accountability Office
ETFO	Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
MACSE	Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education
OCASE	Ont. Council of Administrators in Special Education

Acronym	Description
OCSOA	Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association
OECTA	Ont. English Speaking Catholic Teachers' Association
OFIFC	Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres
OPC	Ontario Principals' Council
OPSOA	Ontario Public Supervisory Officials' Association
OPSTF	Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation
OSCA	Ontario School Counsellors' Association
OSLA	Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists
OSSTF	Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation
OTF	Ontario Teachers' Federation
PAAC SEAC	Parent Association Advisory Committee on Special Education Advisory Committees
PPE	Parents partenaires en education
Parent/Caregiver/ Guardian/Student Needs Associations	
ABC	Association for Bright Children
AO	Autism Ontario
CADDAC	Centre for ADHD/ADD Advocacy, Canada
CADS	Homewood Regional Services – Community Addiction Services
CEC	Council for Exceptional Children
CHS	Canadian Hearing Society
CLO	Community Living Ontario
CMHAWW	Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington
CNIB	Canadian National Institute for the Blind
CPF	Canadian Parents for French
DCAFS	Dufferin Child And Family Services
LDAO	Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
FASD ONE	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Ontario Network of Expertise
NEADS	National Education Association of Disabled Students
OAAIS	Ontario Association. of Alternative and Independent
OACMHC	Ontario Association of Children's Mental Health Centres

Acronym	Description
OACRS	Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Centres
OASAR	Ontario Association for Students at Risk
OBIA	Ontario Brain Injury Association
OFCP	Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy
OPVIC/VIEWS	Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children
OSAC	Ontario Society for Autistic Citizens
SBHAO	Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Society
TESS	The Easter Seal Society
TSF	Tourette Syndrome Foundation
VOICE	VOICE for the Hearing Impaired