

Special Education Policy



Student Services

Special Education Policy

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Special Education Policy

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Preface

The purpose of this document is to outline Department of Education policy with regard to the education of Nova Scotia students with special needs in the primary, elementary, and secondary school system in the Province of Nova Scotia. It is intended to assist school boards in the development of policies that direct the delivery of programs and services to students with special needs.

Each section is preceded by background information that provides the rationale for the policies. Guidelines and procedures follow to further elucidate the policy. The policy may be a legislated or regulatory requirement or an expectation of school boards, or it may identify the need for the development of policy. Each policy is referenced to a legislative authority where applicable and cross-referenced to relevant documents that may assist school boards in developing and/or reviewing policies. Unless otherwise specified, the term “regulations” is used in this document to refer to the regulations made by the Governor in Council or the Minister.

Note: Parent under the *Education Act* 3(1)(t) includes guardian and in this policy means a parent or guardian who is legally responsible for the care and custody of a student.

Overview

The Nova Scotia Department of Education recognizes and endorses the basic right of all students to full and equal participation in education.

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, 15(1)

This right is reflected in the Regulations of the Governor in Council pursuant to the *Education Act* and is supported from a programming perspective in the *Public School Programs* (PSP) document produced annually by the Department of Education. In preparing all students for lifelong learning, the Department of Education states:

All children in Nova Scotia need a broad-based, quality education. Quality in education is demonstrated by the excellence of individual courses, programs, and shared experiences. Quality is also demonstrated by the diversity of educational experiences in which students are actively involved and by the extent to which individual students needs are met.

Public School Programs: 2003–2004

This quality education is characterized by six essential graduation learnings, which all students are expected to strive to achieve. These broad outcomes can be reached through many avenues using a wide variety of strategies and resources.

Essential learnings form the foundation for lifelong learning and provide parents, school communities, and the general public with general expectations that all students work toward. It is our responsibility as educators to ensure that students receive the necessary support, encouragement, and guidance to achieve goals within these broad outcome areas.

Statement of Principles

Right to an Appropriate Education

A right to an appropriate education means the fundamental educational human right of every individual to have their unique learning needs responded to on an individual basis.

Right to Quality Education and Qualified Teachers

All students have a right to a quality education taught by licensed qualified teachers.

Right to Inclusive Education

Inclusive education embodies beliefs, attitudes, and values that promote “the basic right of all students to receive appropriate and quality educational programming and services in the company of their peers” (*Inclusion, Supporting Student Success* fact sheet, see Appendix B).

The goal of inclusive schooling is to facilitate the membership, participation, and learning of all students in school programs and activities. The support services that are designed to meet students’ diverse educational needs should be co-ordinated within the neighbourhood school and to the extent possible, within grade level / subject area classrooms.

Teachers' Responsibility

Teachers are responsible for teaching all students who are placed under their supervision and care. This includes responsibility for safety and well-being, as well as program planning, implementation, and evaluation. This is not a responsibility that can be transferred or delegated to non-teaching staff (*Education Act*, sections 26 and 38).

Parental Involvement

Parents have a duty and a responsibility to support their children in achieving success. They are an integral part of their children's education and should be involved in program planning from the outset (*Education Act*, Section 25; *Special Education Policy*, Policy 2.2).

Student Involvement

All students are expected to achieve to the best of their individual abilities the essential graduation learnings as stated in *Public School Programs (Education Act*, Section 24).

Individual Program Plan and Accountability

An Individual Program Plan (IPP) is developed in consideration of the student's strengths and challenges. The outcomes in the IPP form the foundation for the evaluation of student progress. This progress is an important component in measuring school success.

Collaboration

Collaboration and consultation are essential in planning and supporting students with special needs to ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach to program planning and service delivery.

Section 1.0: Student Services and Supports

Background

The Student Services division of the Department of Education is responsible for setting the direction and establishing the vision, goals, policy, and action plans for special education programming and services for the Province of Nova Scotia.

School boards provide the programs and services necessary to meet the needs of students within their jurisdictions. Boards are responsible for regional management, policy development, and operational issues. Support services may be required by any student at any point during his or her school life and should be designed to be flexible enough to accommodate a wide range of needs at any given time. This necessitates a service delivery model that emphasizes teamwork, collaboration, and co-operation in the provision of a continuum of programming options to meet student needs. A proactive approach in working with students with special needs encourages consistency and comprehensiveness across settings.

Policy 1.1: Establishment of Provincial Policies and Guidelines

The Department of Education is responsible for establishing policies and guidelines regarding programming and services for students with special needs.

Guidelines

- The department will carry out policy directives of the government and Minister of Education and co-ordinate with other departments on delivering related services to students, particularly for students with special needs.
- Departmental policies, procedures, guidelines, and handbooks are accessible on the Department of Education website.
- A committee on Special Education Programming and Services (SEPS) provides advice and support to the Department of Education by reviewing and monitoring programming and services for students with special needs. The committee also advises on Department of Education program initiatives and makes recommendations on special education policy and procedures to help ensure that the needs of students with exceptionalities are represented. See Appendix C: Special Education Programs and Services (SEPS) Committee Terms of Reference and Membership.
- The Student Services division maintains a database of the number of students receiving special education services, as well as the number of personnel involved in the delivery of those services.
- The Student Services division meets regularly with school board personnel responsible for student services to facilitate effective and comprehensive programming for students with special needs.

Policy 1.2: School Building Access

The Department of Education and school boards are responsible for ensuring that all new school buildings or major renovations of existing buildings provide equal access for all.

Guidelines

- The Department of Education utilizes the *Design Requirements Manual* (Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Public Works 2007), which outlines standards for accessibility in new school buildings.
- As stated in the *Education Act* 64 (2)(e), school boards are required to “develop short and long term plans for the provision of barrier-free access to and within educational facilities.”
- The Department of Education assists school boards by providing formula funding, a component of which is for property services and includes building improvements such as building accessibility to existing buildings. Additionally, government provides Tangible Capital Assets funding, approved annually, for new schools and major renovation projects.
- School boards are responsible for developing emergency/evacuation procedures with particular reference to students who are unable to independently follow standard emergency procedures.
- Principals are responsible for ensuring that program planning teams develop emergency/evacuation procedures for individual students who are unable to independently follow standard emergency procedures. These procedures should be documented as a part of each school’s fire safety plan.

Policy 1.3: Special Education Grant

In addition to a program formula funding grant, the Department of Education provides a special education formula funding grant to each school board to assist with the costs of programming and services for students with special needs.

Guidelines

In addition to the special education formula funding grant, resources are provided through targeted funding to assist school boards with the cost of providing programs and services for students with special needs.

Procedures

The special education formula funding grant is determined by the application of a special education support matrix, which applies funded enrolment against a standard resource grid to derive a full-time equivalent number, which is then valued based on a board's average teacher salary.

The standard resource grid applies the following ratios:

- resource teachers 1:165
- speech language 1:2,000
- psychology 1:2,500
- administration 1:7,000
- support for intensive needs students funded at 1:10 or 1.76 percent of the total population
- teacher assistants 1:104

In addition, targeted funding grants are provided to school boards for specific initiatives.

Students for Whom Special Education Funding May Be Used

The funds provided through the special education grant shall be used to supplement the cost of programming and provision of services to students whose special needs are such that they require supports in addition to those

provided by a classroom teacher. The funds shall be used for students who are assessed as having any of the following exceptionalities:

- cognitive impairments
- emotional/behavioural disorders
- learning disabilities
- physical disabilities and/or health impairments
- speech impairments and/or communication disorders
- sensory impairments—vision, hearing
- multiple disabilities
- giftedness

The preceding descriptors should not be used as labels for individual students. Student strengths and challenges must be the basis for developing appropriate programming, and descriptors should be used only as necessary for administrative purposes related to funding and data collection.

Personnel

In order to provide these programs and services, boards may charge against the special education grant the salaries and benefits of

- persons to direct, develop, implement, and evaluate special education programs and services
- special education/resource teachers
- school psychologists
- speech-language pathologists
- teacher assistants
- others as approved by the Minister of Education

Salary and benefit costs of these personnel may be prorated on the basis of the percentage of time spent in providing special education programs and services.

School boards may enhance programs and services for students with special needs by co-operating with other school boards or agencies in the sharing of personnel, provided that they are personnel within the above categories.

Travel

Boards may charge to the special education grant travel costs for personnel listed above who are required to travel from school to school to provide programs and services for students with special needs. Travel costs shall be determined in accordance with board policy.

Equipment and Materials

Boards may use funds from the special education grant to purchase or rent specialized equipment and materials for the purposes of educational programming (not normally provided for regular school programs or individual students) that is required to optimize the learning of students with special needs. This grant is not to be used to fund capital expenditures or to purchase medical supplies and materials, such as syringes, drugs, catheters, walkers, etc. General supplies and materials typically required in classrooms are not eligible.

Transportation

No part of the special education grant may be used for transportation of students with special needs.

Funds available for special education cannot be used to fund programs provided through the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA).

Policy 1.4: Provincial Review and Monitoring

The Department of Education monitors and reviews matters affecting the educational progress, health, and comfort of students.

Guidelines

- The Department of Education consults and collaborates with school boards in the review of programming and services for students with special needs. This is effected through reviews requested by school boards and through ongoing audit and data collection procedures.
- Specialized school health-care protocols should be developed by school boards in collaboration with district health authorities. Some health-care protocols are at the provincial level. The Department of Education collaborates with the Department of Health, agencies, and organizations to address health-care issues that affect school-aged children and youth across the province.
- Guidelines for the transportation of students with special needs are outlined in the *Handbook for Transportation of Students with Special Needs in Nova Scotia* (Nova Scotia Department of Education 1999). School boards should ensure that all involved personnel are informed of and follow these guidelines. Whenever possible, school boards should make provision for the transportation of students with special needs with their age peers.

Policy 1.5: Appropriate Education

School boards are required to provide an appropriate education for all students who reside within their jurisdiction who are of school age and who are enrolled in a public school.

Guidelines

- In order to provide a quality education for all students, school boards are strongly encouraged to appoint student services personnel at the board level to provide leadership and professional development in programming and service delivery for students with special needs. The Department of Education recommends that personnel have expertise in the following:
 - establishing and maintaining effective ways of identifying students with special needs
 - assessing students' strengths and challenges to determine what kinds of programming and services should be provided for them
 - planning and organizing a variety of interventions and programming for students with special needs
 - developing, implementing, and evaluating individualized program plans and transition plans
 - co-ordinating the resources needed to deliver comprehensive programming
 - co-ordinating the efforts of all those who are engaged in meeting the needs of students with special needs
 - involving community representatives in program planning to ensure their understanding and support
 - consulting with and mediating among diverse stakeholders, parents, and advocacy groups
 - conducting programs for staff development such as in-service and continuing education programs
 - the process of policy development

School boards are strongly encouraged to appoint teachers with competencies and qualifications in teaching students with special needs (e.g., resource teachers) and to utilize the expertise of other professionals such as speech-language pathologists and school psychologists to provide professional assistance in assessment, program planning, implementation, and professional development. See Appendix D: Excerpts from *Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services*.

Policy 1.6: Administrative Responsibility

School boards are responsible for designating administrative responsibility for special education programming and services at the superintendency or programs and student services director level.

Guidelines

Through the proactive participation of a person with responsibility for students with special needs at the senior management level, the funding, planning, and implementation of programming and services for students with special needs are established as priorities throughout the school board. Directors of programs and student services should have knowledge, expertise, and experience in the delivery of special education programs and services, as well as related support services.

Policy 1.7: Establishment of School Board Policy and Procedures

Each school board shall develop and maintain a written policy and procedures to ensure that programming and services are designed, implemented, evaluated, and reviewed for students with special needs.

Guidelines

- The school board policy shall:
 - adhere to the regulations, policies, and procedures of the Department of Education
 - clearly define a commitment to the provision of services to students with special needs in keeping with the intent of provincial policies
 - outline programming and services available for students with special needs and procedures for accessing programming and services
 - outline a mechanism for reviewing the policy as required and at least once every five years
- Appropriate inservice and communication with teachers, administrators, parents, and agencies should accompany implementation of, and changes to, the policy. The provincial and board special education policies and related documents should be incorporated into the orientation process for all new teachers, administrators, and board personnel.

Procedures

- The development of a policy should be the responsibility of the Student Services Co-ordinator in conjunction with the Superintendent and/or Director of Programs and Student Services.
- The policy should be developed in collaboration with stakeholders in special education programming and services: e.g., parents, classroom teachers, representatives of health and community services agencies, and support personnel.
- The school board is responsible for approving the policy.
- The school board's policy should be available to staff and parents in each school or via the school board website.
- The Director of Student Services, Department of Education, should be notified of subsequent revisions or updates to the policy.

Policy 1.8: Establishment of School Board Appeal Process

Each school board shall develop an appeal process pursuant to the *Education Act* and *Ministerial Education Act Regulations*.

Guidelines

This appeal process policy should be:

- made pursuant to the *Education Act*, Section 145(1)(i) and the *Ministerial Education Act Regulations*, (sections 53–61, Board of Appeal—Special Education)
- established within the parameters of the *Special Education Policy*, Department of Education, and the School Board and Ministerial Appeal Procedures

Section 2.0: Programming

Background

This section provides an overview of the stages and components of program planning that should be considered for students with special needs.

Teachers examine the student's individual strengths and challenges for the purpose of guiding the development of outcomes to meet these needs.

The student's program is the central focus around which other decisions revolve, such as determining the environments in which the student will learn. Preparing all students for a lifetime of learning requires appropriate programming in a variety of educational settings.

Quality programming is demonstrated by the extent to which the individual student's needs are met (*Public School Programs*, Nova Scotia Department of Education) and by the diversity of educational experiences in which students are actively involved. Quality in education is also demonstrated by the excellence of individual courses, programs, and shared experiences.

In order to facilitate these types of experiences, the Department of Education supports an inclusive approach to the education of all students as stated in the *Education Act*, Section 64(i)(d).

The goal of inclusive schooling is to facilitate the membership, participation, and learning of all students in school programs and activities. The support services that are designed to meet students' diverse educational needs should be co-ordinated within the neighbourhood school and, to the extent possible, within grade level / subject area classrooms. The process by which this goal is achieved is complex and is dependent on a number of factors for its success, including

- understanding of and commitment to an inclusive philosophy at all levels of the education system; this entails an acceptance of all students, a belief that all students can learn, and a social ethic of respect for diversity
- leadership at the board and school level to bring about a collaborative culture within schools and between schools and communities and other agencies to address the needs of students
- school boards providing a continuum of programming options and services to meet the special needs of students and communicating the process of accessing these options to schools and parents
- the early and ongoing involvement of parents in the educational programming for their children
- the provision and creative use of supports for teachers and students
- public awareness strategies that explain the philosophy of inclusive schooling and showcase exemplary practices

Implementation of inclusive schooling requires a continuing collaborative effort among all partners in the education process: parents, community, schools, boards, health and community service agencies, and government departments.

The vision is to have all Nova Scotia schools embrace and practise inclusive schooling. In such schools

- a focus on outcomes is emphasized, establishing expectations that all students work toward in a variety of ways
- there is an emphasis on activity-based, small-group work where students interact with each other
- classroom teaching and management strategies are flexible enough to provide for short-term interventions, which may involve individual or small-group work in other settings
- creative use is made of human resources to assist and support students (e.g., peer helping, tutoring, and mentoring programs)
- program planning teams meet regularly and use a collaborative problem-solving approach to address the programming and support service needs of individual students
- parents are active participants in the program planning process

- instructional leadership and support are provided by administrators and school-based student services staff to assist classroom teachers in developing appropriate programming for all students
- ongoing training and staff development are seen as a priority and are facilitated
- there are strong linkages between the school and outside agencies and a co-operative approach to support service delivery

Policy 2.1: Use of Resources for Appropriate Programming

Each school board is required to provide appropriate programming for all students with special needs and must use allocated resources for this purpose.

Guidelines

The Department of Education provides a non-global grant and other targeted grants to assist school boards with the costs of providing programming and services for students with special needs. The provisions of these grants may be subject to change from year to year. (See Policy 1.3.)

Procedures

The Department of Education supports the use of a wide variety of delivery structures, which necessitates flexible scheduling and the co-operation and involvement of all team members in implementing services for students with special needs. School board staff responsible for student services, in conjunction with school administrators, develop the roles of student services personnel to meet the needs of the students for whom they are responsible. These responsibility areas are developed in the context of school board and provincial policies and guidelines. As the needs of the students change, the role of personnel may also change.

Appendix D contains suggested areas of competency and samples of guidelines concerning the role of resource teachers. School boards may wish to refer to the *Teacher Assistant Guidelines* (Nova Scotia Department of Education 1998) for more information on the roles and responsibilities of teacher assistants in the public school system.

Policy 2.2: Program Planning Process

Each school board is responsible for establishing a process of identification, assessment, program planning, and evaluation for students with special needs.

Guidelines

The school board is responsible for the implementation of this process; therefore, each procedural step should be documented in the school board's special education policy. School boards are encouraged to refer to the appropriate sections of the Department of Education's *Special Education Policy*.

Procedure

On the following pages is an outline of the program planning process.

Identification, Assessment, and Program Planning Process

Stage 1: Screening and Identification

This stage may be initiated by a variety of people. Some children and students may come to school with assessments and programming information from other agencies or from another school. Some students may have been in school for a number of years, and their special needs may be identified at a later stage. The planning process can be initiated at any time, based on student need.

If a student has been identified as needing an individual program plan before entry to school, the team may wish to start the process at Stage 3, Referral to Program Planning Team, to avoid delay.

Parents are expected to be involved at the beginning of the process. Classroom teachers, parents, students, and outside agency personnel and resource teachers are all possible initiators at this stage. The principal should be aware of any communication concerning students at this stage.

Stage 2: Exploration of Instructional Strategies

After a student has been identified as requiring additional planning to meet his or her needs, the classroom teacher uses available material and human resources to explore a variety of strategies in the learning process. In all schools there is a wealth of experience to draw upon. In exploring alternative methods of working with students, teachers may also wish to consult co-ordinators, school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, or other available personnel. The key at this stage is to be as creative as possible in determining a wide variety of behavioural and/or instructional strategies to meet student needs while ensuring accurate record keeping in terms of the outcomes of utilizing these approaches. Determining why a method does not produce the desired outcome can yield as much information as one that does. Co-operation and collaboration among professionals and parents are essential at this stage.

The identification, assessment, and program planning process may not go beyond this stage for many students, as their needs may be met through adaptations that support them in achieving provincially approved curriculum outcomes. However, adaptations will require review at least once annually, as student needs change over time. It is also necessary to ensure that the adaptations are supporting student success in meeting the outcomes.

Stage 3: Referral to Program Planning Team

If a student's needs are not met as outlined in stage 2, the classroom or subject teacher and/or parent should make a referral to the principal to establish a program planning team for the student. In some boards there are school teams that provide peer support for problem solving and creative suggestions for meeting student needs. This team may also be involved in prioritizing referrals. If either the teacher or parent disagrees on the need for a referral, the matter should be referred to the principal. Guidance counsellors and resource teachers may provide valuable insight on student strengths and challenges at this stage.

The *Education Act* outlines the responsibility of school boards in this regard: "A school board shall, in accordance with this Act and the regulations ... develop and implement educational programs for students with special needs within regular instructional settings with their peers in age, in accordance with the regulations and the Minister's policies and guidelines..." [Section 64(2)(d)].

The responsibility of teachers to engage in the process is also outlined in the act: “It is the duty of a teacher in a public school to ... implement teaching strategies that foster a positive learning environment aimed at helping students achieve learning outcomes; ... participate in individual program planning and implement individual program plans, as required, for students with special needs ...” [Section 26(1)(c)(g)].

The format of the referral depends on school and school board procedures. The initiator of the referral may be required to have certain types of information available for the principal in order to make an informed decision about whether or not to select team members and set a date for the program planning team meeting. Information required could include anecdotal information, observation records, informal assessment, interviews with the student and involved agencies, school records, or any other information available that may be of help in program planning. Care should be taken not to use outdated or irrelevant assessment data. (See policies 2.4 and 2.5.)

Stage 4: Program Planning Team Meeting

The program planning team must ensure that the problem or difficulty facing the student and/or teachers and parents is clarified before proceeding with the planning. The reason for referral does not always match the team’s clarification of the problem, and careful problem solving at this stage can prevent unnecessary or inappropriate steps being taken.

Team members are those who have responsibility for the student’s learning. The team includes the principal or vice-principal, teachers directly involved in teaching the student, and parents (see Policy 2.4). These members form the core of the student’s program planning team. The selection of additional members depends on the needs of the student and on the personnel resources of the school board and community. In some cases, students may have ongoing involvement with health or community agency professionals. These professionals may be invited to a program planning team meeting to share their understanding of the student’s learning needs, and written reports can also be shared—with parental consent—if they are not able to attend a meeting. It should be noted that the school retains responsibility for programming and implementation decisions. In cases where there are many teachers involved, as in high school, reports can be gathered from teachers for presentation at the team meeting; however, key personnel should be present. In some cases, this may include the student, especially at a high school level when career/transitional decisions are being discussed. Every attempt should be made to encourage

parents to feel comfortable in presenting their views of the student's strengths and challenges.

The team meeting provides an opportunity for members to come together to clarify, given all available information, the student's strengths and challenges and to decide on future actions to be taken in terms of program planning.

The meeting should not be a forum for teachers, administrators, and other agency personnel to present a completed program to the parents.

If this is done, the parents become outsiders to the process and do not have the opportunity to affect decision making in any meaningful way. Together, the members should discuss the information each has observed and collected. Concerns should be expressed openly and information presented, without judgmental rebuttal. However, in cases where differences of opinion occur, the chairperson acts as mediator in the process.

The team decides whether or not to proceed with the development of an IPP. The meeting may highlight the need for adaptations while maintaining the outcomes of a prescribed course. When this occurs, adaptations must be documented and stored in the student's cumulative file. [See the *Adaptations: Strategies and Resources* fact sheet, and *Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services* (2002)]. However, when the outcomes of the provincially approved curriculum must be changed or additional outcomes are needed to meet the needs of the student, an IPP becomes necessary. An IPP may focus on behavioural as well as curriculum outcomes to address student behaviours that may inhibit learning. At this point, the chairperson designates responsibility areas to the team members to develop the IPP according to the priorities, outcomes, and strategies set at the meeting or to collect further information if necessary. Minutes of the program planning team meetings are distributed to team members by the chair.

Stage 5: Individual Program Plan Development

The student's program planning team uses information gathered to write the individual program plan. Those who have responsibility for implementation of any part of the IPP should be involved in developing the outcomes, and deciding on strategies and evaluation procedures. The IPP includes the following (Policy 2.6):

- a summary of student strengths and challenges
- annual individualized outcomes

- specific individualized outcomes
- strategies and resources
- responsibility areas
- reviewing and reporting dates
- signatures

Stage 6: Implementation of Individual Program Plan

Team members are assigned responsibility areas and monitor student progress. The teacher responsible for teaching the student is also responsible for evaluating and reporting to parents the student's progress in that curriculum area (policies 2.5 and 2.6).

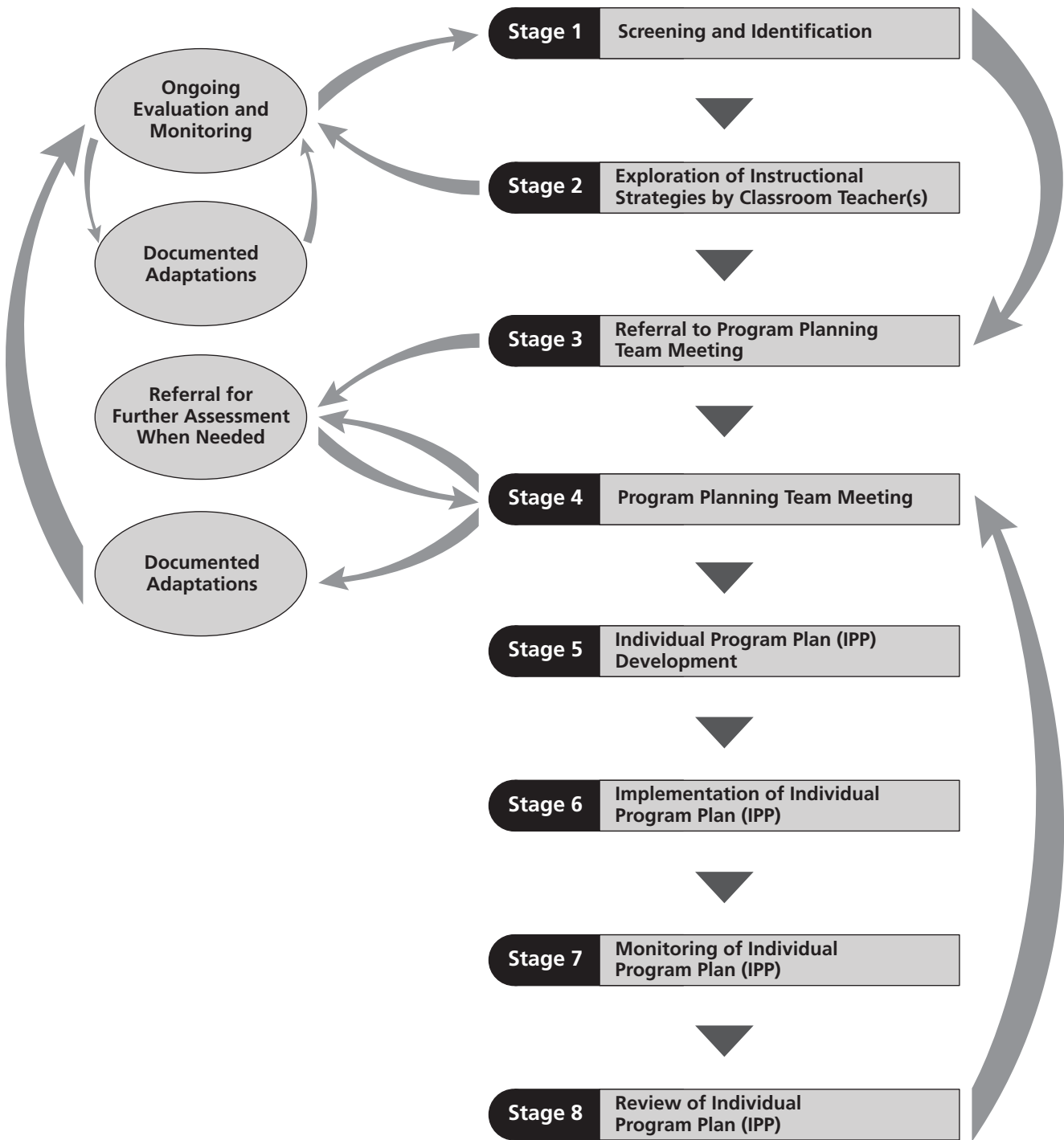
Stage 7: Monitoring

Teachers and other designated professional team members are required to evaluate individual program plans in order to continually assess student progress.

Stage 8: Review of Individual Program Plan

The program planning team is responsible for reviewing the student's progress toward meeting the outcomes of the IPP and meeting to discuss changes when necessary. The individual program plan should be reviewed prior to each reporting period.

Identification, Assessment, and Program Planning



Policy 2.3: Program Planning Teams

Each school board is responsible for ensuring that individual program planning teams are established at school level to develop, implement, and monitor programming for students with special needs.

Guidelines

The responsibility for ensuring that appropriate programming is developed and implemented for students with special needs lies with the principal. The planning and implementation of individual program plans is accomplished through a team process. The student's program planning team comprises the school principal or vice-principal, teachers directly involved in teaching the student (e.g., classroom teachers, resource teachers), parents, and the student, as appropriate. Selection of additional members will depend on the needs of the student and on the personnel resources of the school board and the community.

For example, additional members may include

- student services co-ordinator/facilitator/consultant
- guidance counsellor
- school psychologist
- speech-language pathologist
- itinerant teacher
- representatives of involved community agencies

Policy 2.4: Assessment: Parental Involvement

Each school is responsible for involving and informing parents with respect to decisions regarding assessments designed for their child.

Procedures

School boards are responsible for developing guidelines on the nature of consultation with the parent or guardian prior to, and subsequent to, the completion of an assessment.

The principal is responsible for ensuring that parents are involved in the identification, referral, and assessment processes. The following key points should be considered:

- At the time of registration or early in that school year, all parents should be made aware of the school board's policies, procedures, and guidelines for identification, assessment, and referral.
- Before a referral for assessment to either school board employees or professionals from other agencies is initiated, the parents, as program planning team members, must be consulted.
- Informed parental consent is required in writing for any formal individual assessment carried out by employees of the board or persons/agencies to whom the student has been referred. See Appendix A: Definitions.
- A follow-up meeting is held with the parents to discuss the results of referral(s)/assessment(s).
- Parents have a right to obtain a copy of the assessment report upon request.

Policy 2.5: Appropriate Assessments: Qualified Personnel

Each school board is responsible for ensuring that appropriate assessments are carried out by qualified personnel.

Guidelines

Good professional practice suggests that the educational progress of all pupils be monitored regularly in order to identify as soon as possible students who are at risk. Classroom teachers are in a position to offer an abundance of information regarding students in their care. Informal assessments (e.g., observation, running records, checklists, portfolios, etc.) should form the basis of a comprehensive profile of strengths and challenges. When formal assessment is deemed necessary, parental consent is required, and the purpose, format, and results of the assessment should be discussed with parents in a timely manner. (Policy 2.4)

Formal and informal assessment should be selected and conducted in such a way that interpretation will be free of bias due to gender, language, culture, or race. Bias-free assessment is particularly important when schools are using assessments in decision making regarding changes in program or implementation of supports.

Policy 2.6: Individual Program Plans

An individual program plan (IPP), based on the student’s strengths and challenges, will be developed and implemented for every student for whom the provincial curriculum outcomes are not applicable and/or attainable.

Guidelines

Each school district will establish procedures and guidelines for the development and implementation of IPPs including the components and processes as outlined in this policy.

Teaching practice necessarily includes the use of a variety of differentiated teaching strategies to enable students to meet or to extend their learning beyond the designated outcomes. The manipulation of additional variables such as time, classroom organization, and evaluation techniques will also be necessary to meet diverse student needs. However, specific individualized adaptations to meet student needs may become necessary to enable a student to meet the public school program outcomes. Adaptations are defined as “strategies, and/or resources to accommodate the learning needs of an individual student. They are planned, implemented, and evaluated to enable a student to achieve the public school curriculum outcomes.” (*Adaptations, Supporting Student Success* fact sheet). Adaptations, strategies and/or resources are documented in the student’s cumulative record.

When the program planning team has determined that adaptations are not sufficient to address student needs and that the outcomes of the provincially approved curriculum must be changed or additional outcomes need to be developed to meet the needs of the student, the team is responsible for developing an IPP. IPPs should be developed in the context of the curriculum outcome areas of the *Public School Programs* (PSP). The PSP outlines compulsory and elective program components for all students. These will need to be addressed for students who have IPPs in one or more subject areas (Nova Scotia Department of Education 2003). Some students may require a combination of adaptations and an IPP. For example, a student may require adaptations in language arts and an IPP in mathematics. For students who have special needs in non-academic areas such as behaviour or social skill development, the IPP should detail the outcomes involved and the supports

and services needed to enable the student to reach these outcomes. In some instances, a student may have individualized outcomes that are developed to address specific challenges in life skills and/or personal development. For students with IPPs at the secondary level, the Nova Scotia Department of Education course code list (available at www.EDnet.ns.ca in the Document Depot under Provincial Course Code Files) provides a listing of course codes that can be used for credit designation.

See Appendix A: Definitions for more information about curriculum outcomes.

Procedures

The components of the IPP for each student should include the following:

A Summary of the Student's Strengths and Challenges

The summary should include information on the student's physical, behavioural, social, and academic strengths and challenges. Team members should objectively summarize the student's strengths and challenges based on the student's learner profile and relative to educational programming. Clarity and specificity are required, as the student's challenges describe the area(s) in which the student is having difficulty or requires additional programming. These challenges are used to develop the outcomes, and the strengths are used to develop the strategies to achieve the outcomes. A summary of the types of assessments used in determining strengths and challenges should be included in the IPP, while more complete results/reports should be kept in the student's confidential file.

Annual Individualized Outcomes

Annual individualized outcomes are statements of expected achievement over one school year. These statements are estimates of future performance based on past achievement, present performance, and priority areas of desired development. They are based on student needs in relation to the learning outcomes framework as outlined in the PSP. "The learning outcomes framework consists of a series of curriculum outcomes statements describing what knowledge, skills, and attitudes students are expected to demonstrate ..." (Nova Scotia Department of Education 2003). Priority areas should be established in consultation with parents through the program planning team process to ensure a co-ordinated effort between the home and school.

Specific Individualized Outcomes

Specific individualized outcomes are statements outlining steps that lead to the attainment of the annual individualized outcomes. Specific outcomes are arranged according to the developmental process involved and the expected progression toward identified annual outcomes. The specific outcomes are the basis of the evaluation of the student's growth toward attainment of the annual individualized outcomes. Specific outcomes should be grouped under curriculum outcomes in each program area where applicable.

Strategies and Resources

These services may be divided into three categories:

- educational strategies (e.g., specific instructional strategies, organizational techniques, evaluation procedures)
- materials/equipment (e.g., assistive technology software and devices, alternative format materials, optical aids)
- human resources (e.g., resource teachers, speech-language pathologists, school psychologists, teacher assistants, mentors)

Responsibility Areas

Specific responsibilities for teaching and evaluating outcomes must be assigned to individuals with the appropriate professional competence. The position of each individual should be written next to their name. However, the overall responsibility for the evaluation of the plan rests with the team as a whole. For more information on monitoring see *Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services* (Nova Scotia Department of Education 2002). The team is responsible for ensuring that the plan outlines a comprehensive and cohesive approach to meeting student challenges.

Reviewing and Reporting

The team is responsible for evaluating student progress toward meeting individualized outcomes. Individual teachers are responsible for the ongoing evaluation of their designated responsibility areas. When the team meets to review the IPP, a determination is made as to whether the outcomes have been achieved, if they should be continued, or if additional outcomes are required. A review should take place prior to each reporting period as students on IPPs will receive reports at the same times as students following the public school program. (The provincial IPP report template can be found

in Appendix E.) Frequency of reporting and communicating with parents about student progress and achievement is outlined in the *Reporting Policy Framework: Pilot Draft, September 2002* (sections 2.5 and 2.6). When an IPP is developed for a particular subject in grades 10–12, the course title must be followed by the designation IPP on the student’s interim and final transcripts (e.g., Eng. 10 IPP). The annual individualized outcomes for each credit designated IPP must be attached to the interim and final transcripts.

Signatures

The IPP should be signed at a meeting with parents at which the team members from the school, or representatives of that group, review and discuss the plan. Signatures indicate agreement with the IPP. In cases where parents do not agree with the outcomes and/or placement in the IPP, an appeal procedure may be initiated. All efforts should be made to resolve any disputes that may arise, through discussions and mediation (Policy 1.8). If the school is experiencing difficulty in having the parents attend a meeting, the Co-ordinator of Student Services should be notified. Parents must be provided with a copy of the IPP.

Policy 2.7: Transition Planning

Transition planning is part of the individual program planning process for each student with special needs.

Guidelines

Transition is the passage from one stage to another and is a lifelong process. While this applies at all stages throughout a student's years in school, special emphasis should be placed on particular phases of this process: for example, the transitions from home to school, from grade to grade, from school to school, and from school to community. School-to-community transition is the crossover from youth to adulthood and carries with it expectations of independent living, employment, and recreational pursuits. Transition planning takes into consideration all major aspects of each student's life experiences and assists in determining appropriate resources and programming.

Procedures

- Transition planning is an integral part of individual program planning. Careful attention should be given by the program planning team to ensure that all those involved or potentially involved with the development of the student's transition plan are part of the decision-making process.
- A well-established transition planning process involves a thorough review of the data collected. The individualized transition plan considers the strengths, challenges, and aspirations of the student and results in documented outcomes that can be tracked and monitored.
- It is the responsibility of the program planning team to explore options that are available and appropriate for the student. School-to-community transition planning should begin when a student enters junior high school. Transition outcomes must be documented and incorporated in the student's IPP and filed in the student's cumulative record. If a student does not have an IPP but has special needs that may necessitate transition planning (e.g., physical/mobility/transportation needs), the transition plan should also be stored in the student's cumulative

record. School-to-community transition planning should address any area necessary for students to participate successfully in post-secondary training or employment: leisure/recreation, living arrangement, personal management, personal family relationships, health/medical services, financial planning, transportation, advocacy/legal services, or other.

Policy 2.8: Evaluation of Programs

School boards shall establish procedures for regular evaluation of programs and services for students with special needs.

Guidelines

Program evaluation should encompass all aspects of program development and implementation and use data-driven decision making. Whenever possible this should include student achievement data, such as Reading Recovery entry and exit dates and exit data, Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia (PLANS) data, etc. Also, looking at patterns and trends related to student success over time will support programs and services evaluation representing student growth.

Policy 2.9: Access to School Records

Each school board is required to provide access to school records in accordance with the provisions of the *Education Act* and Regulations, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and the Department of Education *Student Records Policy*.

Guidelines

The school system collects and maintains personal information on students in the form of cumulative records, confidential files, and other files, e.g., youth criminal justice record. School boards are responsible for establishing policy guidelines regarding access to school records, and confidentiality of information subject to the *Education Act*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* and the policies of the Department of Education, as well as other applicable laws.

Procedures

- The access rights of the following persons should be considered in developing procedures for access:
 - student
 - parent
 - teacher
 - specialist teachers, APSEA teachers, guidance counsellors, student services personnel
 - third party
 - courts of law
 - Minister of Education or designate
 - superintendent or designated school board officials
- The *Student Records Policy* (Nova Scotia Department of Education 2006) outlines definitions, policy directives, and policy guidelines relating to records, content, access and transfer, maintenance and retention, accountability, and monitoring.

Section 3.0 Partnerships

Background

It is recognized that in order to provide students with a “broad-based, high quality education, it is necessary to expand the traditional context of educational decision making in order to include multiple agencies/ departments, the community, parents and other potential partners” (*Public School Programs*, Nova Scotia Department of Education 2003).

Achieving the goals of the public school program requires schools and classrooms that focus on providing excellence in teaching and learning. Achieving this level of quality can best be done through teamwork where partners have meaningful involvement in decision making.

Success in schooling begins in and is sustained by the home. The family is the centre of learning. Parents are the child’s first teachers.

If students are to be successful learners, parents must demonstrate their respect for education and value its worth. Students should know that their family, school, and community have high expectations of them and will work together to help them achieve these high expectations.

The *Education Act* specifies roles and responsibilities for students, parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, support staff, and school boards.

Policy 3.1: Parent Rights

Parents have a right to be involved and informed about their children's educational programming and progress.

Guidelines

- Parents have extensive knowledge and experience with the strengths and challenges of their children. As the primary advocates for their children, they have an obligation to take an active role in sharing this knowledge with the school. Their involvement in the program planning process can be invaluable in meeting individual needs.
- Decisions about program planning and services should be reached through a collaborative, consultative approach in which team members work together in partnership to support the student.
- As stated in Section 25 of the *Education Act*, parents have a responsibility to support their children's teachers in their efforts to provide an education for their children.
- Section 26(1) of the *Education Act* outlines the duties of teachers, including the responsibilities to participate in individualized program planning and to communicate regularly with parents.

Policy 3.2: Program Planning/Collaboration

School boards are responsible for ensuring that the individual program planning process is collaborative in meeting student needs.

Guidelines

- The nature and intensity of the services and the personnel involved will vary according to the needs of the students within the school setting.
- A common goal for all students is to acquire the knowledge and skills to lead independent and purposeful lives. Students with special needs will attain this goal to varying degrees, depending on the interaction among several factors, including the nature and degree of the student's strengths and challenges, the motivation of the student, and the co-operation, communication, and supports among schools, parents, and community agencies.
- Collaborative planning among teachers across settings is essential for consistent and comprehensive programming, and the principal has an essential role in facilitating this interaction.
- School boards are responsible for ensuring that the individual program planning process provides for the active involvement and participation of parents. Principals should ensure that parents receive supporting documentation, such as *The Program Planning Process: A Guide for Parents* (Nova Scotia Department of Education 2006) and the *Program Planning* fact sheet—see Appendix G.

Policy 3.3: School Board Collaboration

School boards are responsible for collaborating in the development and provision of programs and services for students with special needs.

Guidelines

- The *Education Act* provides for the establishment of agreements between and among boards for the education of students within its jurisdiction.
- Collaboration in planning, funding, and delivery assists in the provision of services that might not otherwise be available. The administrative structures of shared services ensure local control, provide the basis for a co-ordinated approach to specialized services, and provide a model for expansion to other program areas.
- Government departments and agencies have differing mandates and jurisdictions for the provision of services to students with special needs. Co-ordination is essential to ensure that appropriate personnel are involved in decision making and duplication of services is minimized.

Policy 3.4: Provincial and Interdepartmental/ Interagency Collaboration

The Department of Education is responsible for actively participating in interdepartmental and interagency collaborative efforts in the design and implementation of appropriate programs and services for students with special needs.

Guidelines

- The Department of Education collaborates with other government departments responsible for the well-being of children and youth to help ensure consistent and comprehensive services for students with special needs.
- The Department of Education participates on a variety of interdepartmental and interagency committees. These committees collaborate to problem-solve complex issues, carry out cross-jurisdictional reviews, develop reports, and identify gaps in programming and service delivery.
- The Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) is an interprovincial co-operative agency established in 1975 by joint agreement among the four Atlantic provinces. APSEA is authorized to provide educational services, programs, and opportunities for persons from birth to 21 years of age with low-incidence sensory impairments. This includes children and youth who are deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired and who are residents of Atlantic Canada.

Appendix A: Definitions

Legislation: A law passed by a legislative body, such as the provincial legislature.

Regulation: A rule or order having the force of law designed to govern behaviour.

Policy: A course of action selected from alternatives in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions.

Guideline: An outline of policy or conduct.

Procedure: A way of accomplishing certain activities or of acting.

Formal Individual Assessment: Formal individual assessment refers to an individual assessment performed by a qualified professional using formal assessment instruments, such as standardized tests, as well as other sources of information. It is intended to produce diagnostic information about the student's ability. Formal assessment instruments have standardized procedures for administration, scoring, and interpretation. They may be "norm-referenced," meaning that they are normed on a representative sample of students and provide age or grade level score, standard scores, or percentiles that allow the educator to compare a student with other students of the same age and grade.

Curriculum Outcomes: Statements that articulate what students are supposed to know and be able to do in particular subject areas. Outcomes statements also describe what knowledge, skills, and attitudes students are expected to demonstrate at the end of certain key stages in their education as a result of their cumulative learning experiences at each grade level in their entry to the graduation continuum.

- **General curriculum outcomes:** what students are expected to know and be able to do upon completion of study in a curriculum area
- **Key-stage curriculum outcomes:** what students are expected to know and be able to do at the end of grades 3, 6, 9, and 12 in a curriculum area
- **Specific curriculum outcomes:** what students are expected to know and be able to do at a particular grade level in a curriculum area

Essential Graduation Learnings: Statements describing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes expected of all students who graduate from high school. Achievement of the essential graduation learning will prepare students to continue to learn throughout their lives. These learnings describe expectations not in terms of individual school subjects but in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed throughout the curriculum. Essential graduation learnings are cross-curricular, and curriculum in all subject areas is focussed to enable students to achieve the learning. Essential graduation learnings serve as a framework for the curriculum development process.



Inclusion

Supporting All Students

Inclusion is an attitude and a value system that promotes the basic right of all students to receive appropriate and quality educational programming and services in the company of their peers.

> Inclusion facilitates the membership, participation, and learning of all students in school programs and activities.

> Differentiated instruction provides a range of strategies based on a teacher's response to individual learners' needs.

> Transition planning supports passage from one stage in a student's life to another—from home to school, grade to grade, school to school, community to school, and school to community.

What are the elements of inclusion?

- Students are equal members of their neighbourhood schools.
- There is a collaborative culture within schools, and between schools and communities and other agencies, to address the diverse needs of students.
- There is early and ongoing involvement of parents and guardians in their children's education.
- A process of identification, assessment, planning, and evaluation for students with special needs is in place and documented.
- An Individual Program Plan (IPP), based on a student's strengths and needs, is developed and implemented for a student for whom the provincial curriculum outcomes are not applicable and/or attainable.
- Differentiated instruction addresses the needs of every student and accommodates the learning styles of all students.
- Supportive and collaborative school leadership is evident.
- Research identifying effective programming and services is used to enhance student learning.
- Transition planning is part of the individual planning process for each student with special needs.

What should I look for in schools that practise inclusion?

- early and ongoing involvement of parents and guardians in their children's education
- an understanding of, and commitment to, inclusion at all levels of the school community
- leadership supporting a collaborative culture within the school, and between the school and school community, to address the needs of students
- the provision and creative use of supports for teachers and students
- creative use of human resources to assist and support students (such as peer helping, tutoring, and mentoring programs)
- a focus on outcomes for all students that students work toward in a variety of ways
- a range of classroom teaching and management strategies
- school teams meeting regularly to discuss student progress
- ongoing staff training and development
- showcasing of exemplary teaching practices and their results
- strong links between the school and outside agencies

Supporting
Student
Success

- > “Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.”
Charter of Rights and Freedoms [Section 15 (1)]

Information about inclusion may be found in the *Special Education Policy Manual*, Nova Scotia Department of Education (1996).

For more information about inclusion, please contact

School: School Principal

School Board: Student Services Co-ordinator

Department of Education: Student Services Division (902) 424-7454

How can we all support inclusion¹?

Students can support inclusion by

- valuing the contributions of the diversity within the school community
- encouraging a sense of belonging to the school community among all peers
- contributing to an orderly and safe learning environment

Parents can support inclusion by

- working with their children and the school to support learning
- becoming involved in program planning as a member of the program planning team to share their understanding of their children’s strengths and needs

School staff can support inclusion by

- using a variety of instructional and assessment strategies to meet student needs²
- referring to the program planning team when further support is required to meet the needs of a student
- communicating regularly with parents
- co-operating and collaborating with parents, the program planning team members, and board personnel
- demonstrating acceptance of and sensitivity to the diversity in classrooms

Principals can support inclusion by

- providing leadership to support a collaborative culture that meets the needs of all students
- encouraging sharing of effective practices
- supporting a safe, orderly, positive, and effective learning environment
- communicating and monitoring school process of identification, assessment, program planning and reporting student progress, and achievement
- supporting vision building as a collective exercise for long range, continuous improvement and growth

Community members can support inclusion by

- supporting inclusive schooling through school improvement planning with school advisory councils, home and school associations, etc.
- collaborating as service delivery agencies to meet the needs of children and youth in the public school system

- > This is one of a series of six Supporting Student Success fact sheets. Other topics in the series include Adaptations, Assistive Technology, Enrichment, Program Planning, and Transition.

1. To obtain a broader list of responsibilities refer to the *Education Act* (in particular sections 24, 25, 26, and 38), the *Regulations under the Education Act*, and the *Special Education Policy Manual*.
2. See the *Adaptations: Strategies and Resources* Supporting Student Success fact sheet.

Appendix C: Special Education Programs and Services (SEPS) Committee Terms of Reference and Membership

Approved by Deputy Minister, June 13, 2006

Role

The role of the SEPS Committee is defined in Special Education Policy 1.1 as follows:

A committee on Special Education Programs and Services (SEPS) provides advice and support to the Department of Education by reviewing and monitoring programming and services for students with special needs. The committee also advises on Department of Education program initiatives and makes recommendations on special education policy and procedures to help ensure that the needs of students with exceptionalities are represented.

Mandate

The SEPS Committee will meet at least four times per year unless otherwise determined by the committee. In accordance with Policy 1.1, it will perform the following functions:

- a. provide advice and support to the Department of Education by reviewing and monitoring programming and services for students with special needs
- b. advise the Department of Education on its initiatives and make recommendations on special education policy and procedures

- c. monitor the ongoing progress of the recommendations of the *Special Education Implementation Review Committee Report* (Nova Scotia Department of Education 2001)
- d. review provincial data regarding core service(s) caseloads by November each year and recommend service and funding levels to address gaps in service
- e. review the annual report prepared by the Department of Education on the implementation by school boards of the special education policy
- f. review an annual report on progress in implementing the special education policy and the recommendations in the *Special Education Implementation Review Committee Report* and on the resources provided to school boards and to schools to assist in implementation
- g. advise the Department of Education on areas of policy that may require review and/or revision
- h. advise the Department of Education regarding the development, implementation, and delivery of pre-service and in-service needs (related to programming and services for students with special needs) of teachers, administrators, professional support staff, and teacher assistants
- i. review an annual report prepared by the Department of Education of each board's progress in providing barrier-free access to public schools
- j. provide input into the development and implementation of communication plans for parents and the broader school community to improve understanding of inclusive schooling and of programming and services available for students with special needs
- k. act in an information sharing and supportive role to the Director of Student Services and among the agencies and groups involved in the education of students with special needs
- l. conduct the business of the committee in a respectful, inclusive, and effective manner, as outlined in attached operating procedures.

Membership

1. A Special Education Programs and Services (SEPS) Committee will consist of not more than 21 members selected in consultation with the Deputy Minister of Education and the Director of Student Services.
2. Of the total 21 committee members, 11 members are designated as follows: Director of Student Services, a representative from each of NSSBA, NSTU, a representative of University Faculties of Education, School Board Student Services Co-ordinator, and a representative from each of the Departments of Health, Community Services, and Justice, representative from the Disabled Persons Commission and the Human Rights Commission. A Department of Education staff person will act as secretary to the committee and Department of Education staff to attend as necessary.
3. The remaining 10 members of the committee will be representatives selected from not-for-profit organizations registered under the *Societies Act* with a provincial focus that have a mandate to support and advocate on behalf of children and youth in the public school system who have special needs. Organizations will maintain a membership list with mailing addresses, updated constitutions, and annual general meetings with a slate of table officers.

The Department of Education ultimately decides on SEPS membership, role, mandate, and terms of reference.

Operating Procedures

1. The Chair of SEPS is to be chosen annually by the Deputy Minister in conjunction with the Director of Student Services.
2. The recording of meeting minutes and administrative support is to be provided by Student Services division staff and the minutes circulated within 30 days of meetings.
3. The format of the minutes is to be columns indicating item, decisions, actions, person(s) responsible, and timeline.

4. The annual meeting schedule is to be set at the last regular meeting of each school year.
5. The agenda is to be circulated one week prior to meetings.
6. Decision making is to follow a consensus model that encompasses these understandings:
 - I understand the proposal or topic under consideration.
 - I can live with the position taken.
 - I will support the decision publicly.

All three conditions must be met in order to have true consensus.

7. The Chairperson of SEPS, in consultation with the Director of Student Services, will be responsible for developing meeting agendas.
8. With reference to communication of recommendations on policy and procedures, SEPS will respect the Department of Education hierarchies.
9. The Chair of SEPS Committee, in consultation with the Director of Student Services, will prepare an annual report following the last meeting of each school year.

Appendix D: Excerpts from *Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services*

(Nova Scotia Department of Education 2002)

Resource Teacher Competencies

All teachers, including resource teachers, are expected to have and to apply core competencies within an inclusive approach to education. This approach is characterized by supportive learning environments, designed to address the diverse strengths and challenges of students, in which all teachers demonstrate the following in their daily teaching:

- an understanding of the characteristics of learners
- the use of a variety of instructional strategies
- the use of a variety of assessment, evaluation, and reporting strategies
- an understanding of a learning outcomes framework
- a thorough knowledge of learning outcomes for the curriculum taught
- an understanding of educational implications that may be associated with the culture, language, gender, religious beliefs, and/or sexual orientation of students
- implementation of a student-centred approach to learning
- collaborative planning, implementation, and evaluation of programming

Although the following competencies also apply to all teachers, the broadened and evolving role of the resource teacher calls for additional skills in the following areas:

Knowledge and Application of Special Education Policy and Related Documents

- Special Education Policy with emphasis on
 - 2.2 Process of Identification, Assessment, Program Planning and Evaluation for Students with Special Needs (Appendix II)
 - 2.3 Program Planning Teams Responsible for Programming and Monitoring (Appendix V)
 - 2.6 Individual Program Plans (Appendix VI)
 - 2.7 Transition Planning (Appendix VII)
- school board policies, guidelines, and procedures
- roles, rights, and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers, and schools
- relationship between special education policy and the PSP

Knowledge and Understanding of the Characteristics of Learners

- educational implications of various cognitive, sensory, physical, social, and emotional factors that affect students
- educational research as it pertains to the characteristics of learners
- developmental nature of learners

Skills and Strategies in Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting

- assessment approaches that are consistent with the information being sought and that match the specific strengths and challenges of individual learners
- administration, interpretation, and reporting on assessments of academic achievement
- application of qualitative assessment and quantitative assessment information to programming decisions
- evaluation of the ongoing effects of instructional strategies, adaptations, and supports
- reporting of student information to a variety of audiences regarding assessment, achievement, and programming

Knowledge and Application of Instructional Content and Practice

- instructional strategies matched to the specific strengths and challenges of individual students
- general knowledge of curriculum across grades, subjects, and courses
- ability to identify incremental steps in program design
- ability to provide appropriate intensive intervention in the areas of literacy and numeracy
- ability to participate in the development and implementation of adaptations and IPPs
- ability to assist in selection, adaptation, use, evaluation, and revision of instructional strategies and supports
- ability to assist in the selection, adaptation, integration, and evaluation of assistive technology (Appendix XII)

Skill in Communicating and Working in Collaborative Partnerships

- collaborative practices in working with students, parents, school personnel, and community personnel
- collaborative practices in working with community agencies and government departments, especially in the areas of health, justice, and community services

Speech-Language Pathologists

For speech language pathologists hired after 1986, possession of a post-graduate degree in the field of speech-language pathology or communication disorders is required, as well as certification by the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists. This degree should include university courses in theory and practical education in areas such as:

- phonological development and disorders
- normal language development
- childhood language disorders
- voice and voice pathology
- audiology and aural rehabilitation
- neuroanatomy

- neurophysiology
- speech science
- fluency
- augmentative and alternative communication

School Psychologists

For school psychologists hired after 1984, possession of a master's or equivalent degree in psychology that is acceptable to the Board of Examiners and at least six years of supervised professional experience in the field in a manner satisfactory to the Board, or a doctoral degree and 2 years supervised professional experience in the field in a manner satisfactory to the Board, are required for certification. (*Psychologist Act* 1980, c. 14, 5.1)

School Name

Individual Program Plan Report

Month Year



Student:
Provincial Student ID #:
Teacher:
Principal:

Grade:
School Address:
Telephone:
School Board:

<p>Specific Individualized Outcomes</p> <p>Specific individualized outcomes are based upon the annual individualized outcome shown below.</p>	<p>Student Progress</p> <p>A The student consistently demonstrates achievement of this outcome during the current reporting period.</p> <p>B The student is consolidating knowledge/skills/attitudes required by this outcome.</p> <p>C The student is demonstrating initial understanding of the knowledge/skills/attitudes required by this outcome.</p> <p>D The student is experiencing difficulty with this outcome.</p> <p>N/A This outcome was not addressed in the current reporting period.</p>
<p>Focus of Instruction</p> <p>I Introducing</p> <p>D Developing</p> <p>W Working Independently</p> <p>N Not Introduced</p>	

IPP report for **Academic Course:** _____ **Social Development** **Life Skills**
(See back page for definitions)

Annual Individualized Outcome:

End of Year/Semester Student Progress:

Specific Individualized Outcomes	Focus of Instruction	Student Progress	Notes

Teacher's Signature: _____

Page # of ##

Student: _____ Provincial Student ID #: ##### Month Individual Program Plan Report

Annual Individualized Outcome:			
End of Year/Semester Student Progress:			
Specific Individualized Outcomes	Focus of Instruction	Student Progress	Notes

Teacher's Signature: _____

Annual Individualized Outcome:			
End of Year/Semester Student Progress:			
Specific Individualized Outcomes	Focus of Instruction	Student Progress	Notes

Teacher's Signature: _____

Student: _____ Provincial Student ID #: ##### Month Individual Program Plan Report

Annual Individualized Outcome:

End of Year/Semester Student Progress:

Specific Individualized Outcomes	Focus of Instruction	Student Progress	Notes

Teacher's Signature: _____

Annual Individualized Outcome:

End of Year/Semester Student Progress:

Specific Individualized Outcomes	Focus of Instruction	Student Progress	Notes

Teacher's Signature: _____

Page # of ##

Student: Provincial Student ID #: ##### Month Individual Program Plan Report

Additional Comments:

IPP for Academic Course(s): addresses outcomes which are either provincially prescribed courses as per the Public School Program or Locally Developed Courses approved by the Department of Education

IPP for Social Development: addresses outcomes supporting a student’s needs related to behaviour, social skills, and/or communication

IPP for Life Skills: addresses outcomes supporting a student’s needs related to personal health, well-being, mobility, and/or the student’s environments



Appendix F: Guidelines for the Administration of Medication to Students

The following guidelines regarding the administration of medication during the school day have been developed through consultations by the Department of Education with Doctors Nova Scotia, the Pharmacy Association, Nova Scotia Nurses Union, and school boards.

These guidelines outline procedures for the administration of oral or inhaled medication that requires, by law, a prescription by an authorized health care professional or is prescribed by a physician, and must be administered by school board personnel during school hours in order for the student to attend school.

Guidelines

- The Education Act states “... students should have a right and a responsibility to participate fully in learning opportunities ...” In recognition of this right and responsibility, schools/boards are responsible to develop, in partnership with appropriate health care professionals, a plan for the administration of medication when medication must be administered during school hours.
- Administration of medication by any other route is deemed to be specialized health care requiring an individualized plan in order to be performed by persons designated in the plan with the appropriate training. Parties in the planning process should include parents, school board personnel and appropriate health care professionals.
- When a health care professional has deemed that medication must be administered during school hours in order for the student to attend school, a request for the administration of oral and inhaled medication must be made in writing by the parent to the school board.

Accompanying the request must be copies of any written information provided by the pharmacy including, but not limited to, the name of the medication, the dosage, the frequency, the time and method of administration, storage and safekeeping requirements, the possible side effects, if any, and the dates for which the parental authorization applies. The parent is responsible for ensuring that the school board receive new documentation any time a medication change occurs.

- The medication must be in an original container provided by the pharmacy with the pharmacy label.
- A record of administration of medication shall be maintained, which includes:
 - the pupil's name
 - parent(s) name(s)/home and emergency telephone numbers
 - name and telephone number of health care professional prescribing the medication
 - dates and times of provision
 - dosage given
 - name of the person administering and supervising
- Medication must be administered in a manner which allows for sensitivity and privacy and which encourages the student to take an appropriate level of responsibility for his or her medication.



Program Planning

A Team Approach

What is the program planning process?

The program planning process is a team approach to plan an appropriate education for students with special needs, and to ensure effective transitions from the early years to adult life.

Why is the program planning process important?

Through the program planning process, students with special needs are supported to meet their learning outcomes. Students are more likely to succeed if members of the program planning team work together.

How does the program planning process assist students to achieve learning outcomes?

Any, or all, of the following can happen:

- Strategies and resources specific to the strengths and needs of the student are identified to help students meet the PSP curriculum outcomes. These strategies and/or resources are called adaptations (see Adaptations fact sheet).
- The program planning team may decide to seek additional information or refer the student for further assessment.
- The program planning team may decide to develop an individualized program plan (IPP).

An IPP is a statement of Annual Individualized Outcomes and Specific Individualized Outcomes based on the student's strengths and needs, developed for students for whom Nova Scotia's PSP Curriculum Outcomes are not applicable and/or attainable. Recommended services and supports, roles and responsibilities, and review dates are also outlined in the IPP. Transition outcomes are considered and developed as part of an IPP.

Who can make a referral for a program planning team meeting?

A referral to a program planning team can be initiated by the student, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), the student's teacher(s), or guidance counsellor.

To whom is the referral made?

The first point of contact when requesting a program planning team meeting is the student's teacher. If either the teacher or parent disagrees on the need for a referral, the matter should be referred to the principal who will attempt to resolve the issue. If this does not bring resolution, student services personnel at the school board should be contacted.

- > Learning outcomes are statements of what students are expected to know and be able to do at various points in their school career. These can be Public School Program (PSP) outcomes, or they can be "individualized," developed specifically for an individual student.
- > Members of the program planning team are those who have responsibility for the student's learning. These include
 - parent(s) or guardian(s)
 - principal/vice principal
 - teachers, including resource teachers
 - other professional staff involved
 - the student, if appropriate
 - additional members, depending on the learning needs of the student and personnel resources of the school board and the community

- > The following related resources are available from the Nova Scotia Department of Education website <www.EDnet.ns.ca> and school board programs and services divisions:
 - *The Program Planning Process: A Guide for Parents*
 - *Special Education Policy*
 - *Resource Programming and Services*

What are team member responsibilities?

Parents

- are actively involved in the program planning process
- share information about their child’s strengths, needs and aspirations
- ensure that information to support the most effective transition is shared (e.g., home-to-school, grade-to-grade, school-to-school, school-to-community)
- share information about events, family circumstances, and educational history that could have an impact (good or bad) on programming and services
- share information about other professionals or agencies with which they are working and have worked
- carry out the specific parts of the program plan that are their responsibility as agreed with in the team

Administrators

- assume a leadership role in the program planning process
- support the right of parents to be involved
- ensure that members, including parents, are notified of the date, time, and location of program planning meetings
- chair, or designate a person to chair, the program planning team meeting
- ensure that a written record of proceedings is kept
- are aware of communication regarding programming and services for students
- ensure that the program plan developed through the program planning process is implemented, tracked, and monitored.

Teachers and other professional school-based staff

- participate in the program planning process for students for whom they have responsibility
- implement program plans, as required
- track, monitor, and report on student progress
- review student records to support transitioning and programming

Students (when appropriate)

- speak up for themselves by sharing their strengths, needs, and aspirations
- share information about personal/academic circumstances that could have an impact (good or bad) on their programming
- are involved in the development of appropriate programming and services
- carry out those specific parts of the program plan that are their responsibility as agreed upon by the program planning team

Board-based support staff (when appropriate)

- participate in the program planning process
- support teams to work effectively
- ensure that teams have access to information and knowledge of resources/services available within the board or community

- > This is one of a series of six Supporting Student Success fact sheets. Other topics in the series include Adaptations, Assistive Technology, Enrichment, Inclusion, and Transition.

For more information about program planning, please contact

School: School Principal

School Board: Student Services Co-ordinator

Department of Education: Student Services Division (902) 424-7454

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