



Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Guide to
**Special Education
Identification, Placement,
and Review Committee (IPRC)**

Durham District School Board
JUNE 2026

The Purpose of this Guide

Thank you for the opportunity to partner with you in program and pathway planning for your child. Your knowledge of your child's strengths, programming needs and interests are key in planning for their learning and well-being at school. You are an essential partner to your child's school team.

This guide has been created to provide you with information about the process we follow in the Durham District School Board (DDSB) for consideration and decision-making regarding identification as an exceptional student and program placement.

It is important that parent(s)/guardian(s) understand each of the steps in this process as we strongly believe that your input, and that of your child, is key when decisions are being made about their school program.

If you have questions after reading this guide, we encourage you to contact your child's school for additional assistance.

Key contacts at your school:

- Classroom Teacher
- Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT)
- Principal/Vice Principal
- Inclusive Student Services team members

Thank you for partnering with school teams in supporting your child's program.

Kind regards,

Lauren Bliss
Superintendent of Education, Inclusive Student Services
Durham District School Board

Serving Students and Families

The DDSB recognizes Indigenous rights are distinct. In the exercise of those rights, Indigenous staff and students shall not be subjected to actions with the aim or effect of depriving these distinct rights.

The DDSB is committed to learning, and working environments that centre human rights and equity and are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible, inclusive and free from discrimination, oppression, harassment, and harm.

As a district, we are committed to addressing ableism, shifting practices to an asset-based approach to inclusion and challenging medical models which focus on diagnosis and/or deficit. As a district, we acknowledge and commit to the work that must be done to make these shifts.

The DDSB provides a range of differentiated placements, programs, supports and individualized accommodation to maximize engagement, participation, integration and independence, enable meaningful access to education, and support student success.

In partnership with parent(s)/guardian(s), the DDSB considers the student's individual learning strengths and needs.

School teams and parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to engage in regular communication throughout the school year. Sharing of successes and working through where programming may be adjusted is part of an important partnership between home and school.

Exceptional Pupil and the Program According to the Education Act

An exceptional pupil is “a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that they are considered to need placement in a special education program...”. Students are identified according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education and Training.

A special education program is an educational program that is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation; and includes a plan called an Individual Education Plan (IEP) containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil.

For more information on special education policies, laws, Policy and Program Memoranda and resource documents, visit the [Ministry of Education website](#).

For most students, regular class placement with Indirect Support and appropriate accommodations is the most inclusive setting and must be considered as the first potential option for placement.

Categories of Exceptionality

The Education Act identifies five categories of exceptionalities:

- Behaviour
- Communication (Autism, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Learning Disability, Language Impairment, Speech Impairment)
- Intellectual (Developmental Disability, Giftedness, Mild Intellectual Disability)
- Physical (Blind and Low Vision, Physical Disability)
- Multiple

Supporting Many Paths to Success

On-going assessment of your child's strengths and needs is an important part of supporting your child. The [Special Education in the Durham District School Board Classroom Placement Pathways resource](#) outlines the steps that school teams will take to assess, accommodate, provide specialized supports, and monitor the progress of your child as we learn more about these strengths and needs to best support them. Classroom teachers provide important information to both family and school team staff to determine next steps together. Individualization of a student's learning program is an ongoing cycle of planning, reflection and strategy refinement. A variety of information types, including feedback from you and your child, helps inform next steps.

Should initial accommodations or supports not sufficiently meet your child's needs, the SERT will be activated for more comprehensive supports. In partnership with families, additional assessment and information will be gathered through observation, daily tasks, formal assessment tools, and conversations to further the understanding of the strengths and needs of your child. This information will guide additional accommodations and further individualized planning.

A referral to additional Inclusive Student Services team members may be activated, with parent(s)/ guardian(s) informed consent, to provide support, strategies, additional assessment, and recommendations for your child. A care conference may be arranged to bring together school, family and community supports to share any assessment data or new information and to discuss next steps.

In some situations where a student's needs are complex and/or medical information outlines the need, the steps towards IPRC may be moved along more quickly to meet your child's needs, including supporting programming modification or support through alternative curriculum.

What is an IPRC?

- **An IPRC is a committee of the DDSB which undertakes a formal process that is mandated under Regulation 181 of the Education Act for students who require additional supports to be successful in meeting curriculum expectations.**
- **An IPRC is composed of at least three DDSB staff members, one of whom must be a Principal/Vice Principal or a System Lead of the Board.**
- **Parent(s)/guardian(s) are key players in any decisions that are made regarding your child; you are highly encouraged to attend and participate in the meeting as your input is valued.**
- **Accommodation is an ongoing process involving adjusting services, programs and practices to remove barriers and better respond to or address individual Human Rights Code related needs. Program planning may include assessment by school board or community based, clinicians and the results are shared at school team meetings (or care conferences) with the parent(s)/guardian(s). If appropriate, then an IPRC may be requested.**

The IPRC Committee

The team will strive to ensure that you are an integral part of the planning process. Your input is valuable within the decision making process.

During the IPRC meeting, the committee will:

- decide whether or not your child should be identified as an exceptional student as per Ministry of Education criteria;
- identify the areas of your child's exceptionality according to the categories and definitions of exceptionality provided by the Ministry of Education;
- after considering the options available, the committee will also decide an appropriate placement for your child based on individual needs and strengths;
- review the identification and placement at least once in each school year.

Annual IPRC Review

Your child's special education needs must be reviewed at least once a year at an annual review of placement. You will be notified of this in writing.

Before the IPRC

If a program is not yet meeting a student's needs, school staff will communicate concerns, in-class assessments, planning and strategies to parent(s)/guardian(s) on a regular basis. The teacher may request support from the school team comprised of the SERT and school administrator(s) for programming ideas.

If a program continues to not yet meet the student's need, the school team will host a Care Conference. A Care Conference is an informal, strategy seeking team meeting where all those who have been working to support your child meet with parent(s)/guardian(s) (and your child as appropriate), to determine further in school supports and strategies, the need for outside supports, and whether the student would benefit from a formal identification.

A summary of all information will be presented which may include:

- information you choose to share as parent(s)/guardian(s)
- educational assessments conducted by school staff
- community based assessments subject to the consent provisions completed by other professionals that you have provided informed consent to be involved with your child and are relevant to the identification or placement decision
- strengths, needs and interests of the student; decided in collaboration with you and based on assessment data
- potential programming options

If identification is being considered, the team can describe what placement options are available to meet your child's needs. Most of our students with special education strengths and needs access learning through regular class placements with indirect support. For some, a more intensive, smaller staff to student ratio program is recommended. More information and a list of these programs can be found on the [DDSB Inclusive Student Services web page](#).

Options may also include provincial or demonstration schools run by the Ministry of Education.



Most of our students with special education strengths and needs are in regular class placements.

Requesting an IPRC

As a parent(s)/guardian(s), you have the right to request an IPRC. The request must be written and sent to your child's school principal. The principal shall organize the IPRC and inform you in writing of the process and timelines to IPRC.

The school team may request an IPRC based on their assessment(s) of your child's progress. The principal will inform you in writing.

Within 15 calendar days of receiving your request, the principal must provide you with a copy of the DDSB Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Guide to Special Education Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC).

Schedule of an IPRC

At least 10 days before the IPRC will be held, the principal or chair will provide you with a written notice of when the IPRC will meet (location/format, date and time). If the date is not convenient you may request an alternate date or time and the principal or chair will try and accommodate your request.

If you are unable to attend, the principal will forward to you a copy of the IPRC form. Your input is important even if you are unable to attend. Please offer any information for consideration to your school team in advance of the IPRC. The IPRC Statement of Decision will include a written statement of the identification and the recommendation of placement.

The Importance of Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are an essential part of the IPRC and an equal participant in the discussion that will lead to making a decision for your child. We encourage you to become as involved and informed as possible. We highly encourage you to attend the IPRC if able. If language interpretation services or accessibility supports are required to participate in the meeting, please ask your child's principal to arrange for what you need.

If your child is 16 years or older they are encouraged to attend the IPRC meeting. Children under age 16 may attend with parent(s)/guardian(s) permission. Given the sensitive nature of some of the information presented, you may want to talk in advance with your child and your school principal about how they might be involved in the meeting.

Prior to the IPRC, your input regarding strengths, interests and placement (if change is recommended) needs will be sought.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) should be offered an opportunity to review the student's strengths, needs and interests as well as other relevant updates, including any current assessment data prior to the meeting.

Planning for IPRC Participation

Students and parent(s)/guardian(s) in the IPRC

Parent(s)/guardian(s) and students 16 years of age or older are encouraged to attend the IPRC and are important contributors to the discussion. Staff who have come to know and work with your child will attend an IPRC.

An advocate or support individual, if invited by the student/parent(s)/guardian(s) may also be in attendance to provide support or speak on behalf of students and families. We request that the school team be notified in advance so that meeting room arrangements and any accessibility accommodations can be made for participants.

IPRC Committee

The IPRC Committee is comprised of at least three designated staff from the DDSB. These will include at least one Superintendent and/or Principal/Vice principal. It may include the System Lead for Inclusive Student Services, or other System Leads from the central office. Others might include:

- SERT, or Head of Special Education from the school
- Classroom Teacher and/or other teachers from the school
- Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing or Teacher of the Blind and Low Vision
- Facilitators
- Professional support staff e.g., Psychological Services or Speech and Language Pathologists

Further information about the five categories of exceptionalities, and their subcategories, can be found in the Ministry of Education resource, [Part D: The Identification, Placement and Review Committee \(IPRC\) process](#).

What Happens During the IPRC Meeting?

The IPRC Chairperson begins the meeting by welcoming all attendees and initiating introductions. The purpose and goals of the IPRC meeting are reviewed and participants, including the parent(s)/guardian(s), are invited to provide information to assist the committee in understanding the student's progress, strengths, needs and interests.

A regular classroom placement (mainstream placement) should be considered as the first and most inclusive option. Before recommending a placement in a special education class (small class placement) the IPRC must decide whether this placement will meet your child's needs.

At the IPRC, the chairperson will ask that a summary of strengths, needs and interests be presented to the committee. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will have been offered an opportunity to review this information prior to the meeting. IPRC meetings are usually scheduled for 10-20 minutes.

IPRC Discussion

The IPRC will review all available information relevant to IPRC about your child.

The members will:

- consider an educational assessment of your child;
- consider, subject to the provisions of the Health Care Consent Act, 1996, a health or psychological assessment of your child conducted by a qualified practitioner, if they feel that such an assessment is required to make a correct identification or placement decision;
- connect with your child, with your consent if your child is less than 16 years of age, if they feel it would be useful to do so; and
- consider any information that you share about your child or that your child shares (if they are 16 years of age or older).

The Committee may discuss any proposal that has been made about a special education program or special education services for your child. Committee members will discuss any such proposal at your request or at the request of your child, (if the child is 16 years of age or older).

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be invited to ask questions and to join in the discussion.

IPRC Decision

A decision will usually be made regarding identification and placement. The Chairperson will explain it carefully.

Placement Information

What will the IPRC consider in making its placement decision?

Before the IPRC can consider placing a student in a special education placement, it must first consider whether placement in a regular class, with appropriate special education services, will:

- meet the student's needs; and
- be consistent with parent(s)/guardian(s) preferences.

If, after considering all of the information presented to it, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a regular class will meet the student's needs and that such a decision is consistent with the parent preferences, the committee will decide in favour of placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services.

Regular Class with Indirect Support

The vast majority of our students with special education strengths and needs will access regular class placements. This placement includes individualized accommodations. The placement also involves a number of key supports and strategies often referred to as 'Indirect Support' and can include but are not limited to:

- Learning planned on a foundation of universal design for learning (UDL);
- Differentiation in environmental, teaching and assessment strategies;
- Focused small support groups for specific skill building;
- Targeted and small group instruction and intervention within classes
- Specific tools and resources introduced to address individual learning needs, support, and skill building;
- Leveraging of technology to provide instruction, rehearsal, engagement and support; and
- Programming support from SERT(s), Inclusive Student Services team members, and, with consent, collaboration with involved community agencies and other experts.

In the DDSB, Regular Class with Withdrawal Assistance and Regular Class with Resource Assistance are placements for the relatively small number of students accessing direct teaching by Itinerant (teachers with specialized certifications working in multiple schools) for students who are Blind/Low Vision or Deaf/Hard of Hearing. It is important to note that placement does not indicate any specific educational assistant support.

Special Education Placements

A listing of Special Education Placement class types and description of the program outcomes for each class type can be found in the [Special Education in the Durham District School Board Classroom Placement Pathways resource](#) and individual program brochures.

What Decisions Can Be Made by the IPRC?

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given a record of Decision of the recommendations of the Committee.

The Committee:

- Is clear on what information is being used to inform the decisions of the IPRC
- Describes and provides a statement of the student's strengths, needs and interests
- Determines whether your child is "exceptional", and if so, designates the area of exceptionality as defined by the Ministry of Education and DDSB criteria. A student may be identified with more than one exceptionality
- Determines placement options based on your child's needs and strengths (where the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional)
- Determines the appropriate level of support for the student, based on the placement: and one of five placement options defined by the Ministry of Education
- States the reason for the recommendation if the committee has decided that the student placement is a Special Education Class
- Discusses and makes additional written recommendations of specific programs or services deemed by the committee to be important for understanding and meeting the needs of the student
- The IPRC may also consider referring the student to a provincial committee for consideration of eligibility for admission to one of the Provincial Schools for blind, deaf or deaf-blind students, or to one of the Provincial Demonstration Schools for students with severe learning disabilities

Five Placement Options as Defined by the Ministry of Education

- 1 A regular class with indirect support** where the student is placed in a regular class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialized consultative services.
- 2 A regular class with resource assistance** where the student is placed in a regular class for most or all of the day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified special education teacher.
- 3 A regular class with withdrawal assistance** where the student is placed in a regular class and receives instruction outside the classroom, for less than 50 per cent of the school day, from a qualified special education teacher.
- 4 A special education class with partial integration** where the student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class in which the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for at least 50 per cent of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.
- 5 A full-time special education class** where the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for the entire school day.

An IPRC placement decision cannot be implemented unless a parent(s)/guardian(s) has agreed to the decision or has not filed a notice of appeal within the request time limit (within 30 calendar days of receiving the IPRC Statement of Decision).



If You Agree with the IPRC Decision

If you agree, then you will be asked to indicate by signing the IPRC Statement of Decision that you agree with the designation of the exceptionality and the placement. You may take the document home to consider or you may sign the document at the conclusion of the IPRC. You have a maximum of 30 working days to finalize with parent(s)/guardian(s) signature.

The appropriate staff will then notify the school that you agree with the decision and that an IEP will be developed within 30 school days of formal placement within the recommended program.

If You Disagree with the IPRC Decision

If you disagree with either the identification or the placement, you have 2 options available to you:

1. Within 15 calendar days of receiving the decision, request in writing an additional meeting to re-evaluate the decision of the IPRC. The principal must hold the meeting as soon as possible. Any new or additional information related to the previous decisions can be shared at this time. Following the meeting, the Chair of the IPRC must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of any changes to the decision of the IPRC.

If after the second meeting to re-evaluate the IPRC decision you still disagree, then you have 15 calendar days to appeal the decision in writing.

2. Within 30 calendar days of receiving the IPRC decision, the parent(s)/guardian(s) may appeal the decision in writing.

If you do not agree with the IPRC decision but you do not appeal it, the board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

If as parent(s)/guardian(s), you disagree with the decision reached at the Annual Review of Placement, you may appeal in the same way as described for the original IPRC.

You may appeal the IPRC decision in writing. Address your appeal to:

Superintendent of Inclusive Student Services,
Durham District School Board,
400 Taunton Road East, Whitby, ON, L1R 2K6

What Happens in the IPRC Appeal Process?

The appeal process involves the following steps:

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

The Special Education Appeal Board is made up of three members:

1. one member selected by the school board;
2. one member selected by the parent of the pupil; and
3. a chair member (selected by the school Board and parent members)

The appointed members cannot be an employee of the school board, an employee of the Ministry of Education, or a person who has had any prior involvement in this matter (including anyone who may have been involved in the IPRC process). Once the school board and parent members have been chosen, those individuals appoint a third person to act as chair. This will happen within fifteen (15) days of the parent(s)/guardian(s) member's appointment.

The Ministry of Education requires that every student who has been identified by an IPRC as exceptional must have an IEP. The IEP is developed by the school with opportunity for consultation with parent(s)/guardian(s), the school team and may include input from the central board staff.



Following the IPRC

What is an IEP?

An IEP will be developed for the student, inclusive of an opportunity for your input and your child's, and will include:

- A statement of the student's strengths, needs and interests;
- Specific education expectations;
- An outline of the special education program and services that will be provided;
- A statement about the methods by which your child's progress will be reviewed; and
- A transition plan to assist with changes to a student's experience at school as part of their school life (such as the transition between grades or schools).

The IEP may also include:

- A Student Safety Plan for students whose behaviour poses a risk of injury to themselves and/or others;
- Medical plan for students who may experience an emergency as the result of a medical condition as outlined by a physician to describe the necessary interventions required (e.g., seizures, choking, etc.);
- Emergency Evacuation plan for students who require specialized assistance in the event of a school emergency (e.g., fire drill, lock-down, etc.).

The IEP must be completed within 30 school days after your child has been formally placed in the program by an IPRC, and the principal must ensure that you receive a copy of it. Every student will receive an updated IEP within 30 working days of the start of each school year. Your input into this initial draft is important. The IEP is a working document that will be updated for every reporting period, or as student needs and program strategies change. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to continue to provide feedback as part of the ongoing development and implementation of the IEP.

Where Can Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Obtain Additional Information?

Additional information can be obtained from:

School Based Team Members such as Classroom Teachers/Support Staff, SERT, and School Administrators.

Inclusive Student Services Team Members such as Instructional Facilitator/Inclusive Student Services and System Lead–Inclusive Student Services.

Inclusive Student Services, Durham District School Board:

905-666-6371 or 1-800-265-3968 or Text Telephone (TTY): 905-666-6943

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)



School boards are required to establish a Special Education Advisory Committee which includes representatives from local parent associations and trustees.

These representatives serve as advocates for children and parents, and the associations have useful parent(s)/guardian(s) resources. For more information, view the [SEAC brochure](#).

Members of The Special Education Advisory Committee

c/o Superintendent of Education/Inclusive Student Services, Durham District School Board
905-666-6371 or 1-800-265-3968, extension 6371 and Text Telephone (TTY): 905-666-6943

Local Associations that Further the Interests of Exceptional Persons

Association for Bright Children (ABC) abcontario.ca

Autism Ontario—Durham Region Chapter autismontario.com/region/central-east

Durham Down Syndrome Association ddsa.ca

Easter Seals Ontario easterseals.org

Grandview Kids Family Advisory Council
grandviewkids.ca/about-us/family-leader-program/family-advisory-council

Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region ldadr.on.ca

Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC) opbvic.ca

Sawubona—Africentric Circle of Support sawubonaacs.org

Members At Large:

Lyle Williams seaclw@outlook.com, Stephen Linton stephen.linton@ddsb.ca

DDSB Trustees:

Donna Edwards donna.edwards@ddsb.ca, Kelly Miller kelly.miller@ddsb.ca

Provincial and Demonstration Schools

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

Demonstration Schools for English-Speaking Students with ADHD and Severe Learning-Disabilities:

Sagonaska School

350 Dundas Street West, Belleville, ON K8P 1B2

Telephone: 613-967-2830

Amethyst School

1515 Cheapside Street, London, ON N5V 3N9

Telephone: 519-453-4400

Trillium School

347 Ontario Street South, Milton, ON L9T 3X9

Telephone: 905-878-8428

Schools for the Deaf:

Ernest C. Drury School

255 Ontario Street South, Milton, ON LT9 2M5

Telephone: 905-878-7195

Text Telephone (TTY): 905-878-7195

Robarts School

1515 Cheapside Street, London, ON N5V 3N9

Telephone and Text Telephone (TTY): 519-453-4400

Sir James Whitney School

350 Dundas Street West, Belleville, ON K8P 1B2

Telephone and Text Telephone (TTY): 613-967-2823

Schools for the Deaf/Blind:

W. Ross MacDonald School

350 Brant Avenue, Brantford, ON N3T 3J9

Telephone: 519-759-0730

Helpful Information for Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

School Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Principal Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Inclusive Student Services Team Members:

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Dates to Remember/Key Information: