

A parent's guide to **IPRC**



**Identification, Placement
and Review Committees in the
Peel District School Board**

The Peel District School Board is committed to student success.

We recognize that students develop and learn at different rates and the regular classroom program may not meet the needs of some children.

We help those students through a wide range of special education programs and services designed to provide the best possible learning opportunities for them.

One way we try to make sure all students get the special education assistance they need is through identification, placement and review committees. These committees, known as IPRCs, do three main things:

- 1 identify each student who needs special education**
- 2 place the student in a program that will meet his or her needs**
- 3 review how the student is progressing**

IPRCs follow a formal process – governed by provincial law (Ontario Regulation 181/98) – to protect the rights of children and their parents. This regulation requires school boards to set up IPRCs and outlines the related rights and options of children and their parents. As a parent or guardian, your input is valued and essential to make the best possible decisions for your child's education.

This guide explains how school staff and IPRC members prepare for the meetings and how they identify children who need special education programs. It also outlines your rights as a parent or guardian (and those of the student if over 16 years of age) and describes how you and your child are entitled to be involved in making good educational choices for your child. The guide is part of the Peel district school board special education plan, which can be reviewed on our website: www.peelschools.org/speced.

Your child's teacher and principal can also help, and there are other resources, such as parent associations and the websites listed at the end of this guide.

What happens before the IPRC?

Who refers a student to an IPRC?

The school principal may refer a student to an IPRC and will notify the parents in writing. Based on your own concerns about your child's needs, you may also request that the principal make the referral. Your request must be in writing.

The principal is required to give you a written acknowledgement of your request, and to provide you with a copy of our "Parent guide to special education" within 15 school days.

At least 10 school days before the IPRC, you will receive a letter from the IPRC chair with the date and location of the IPRC. IPRCs may be held at your child's school or at an office of the board.

What information will be given to IPRC members?

Before the IPRC, school and board staff will gather information about your child's learning through its in-school review committee. This information may include:

- > classroom and special education resource teachers' assessments and evaluations of your child's needs and academic achievement
- > related health information
- > results of any formal assessments, including those by a psychologist, a speech-language pathologist, and/or an occupational therapist

The assessments may be provided by a health or service professional from a regional or provincial service, or by someone retained by you. Information is gathered to form a profile of your child and will be given to IPRC members before the meeting. You must also be given a written copy of this information, once the chair has received it.

You are encouraged to provide written information about your child's strengths and needs. Give this information to your child's school principal to forward to the IPRC.

Who is on the IPRC?

Your notice in writing of the IPRC will list the members of the IPRC and their titles. An IPRC will have at least three Peel board staff members; an elementary IPRC will usually include a school principal, a special education resource teacher and/or a classroom teacher from your school. At a secondary level IPRC, a special education department head may take the place of the school principal. Sometimes another staff member – such as a psychology staff member or a speech-language pathologist – acts as a resource to the committee. This person may make a presentation about your child or just be available to answer questions.

What is my role as a parent in the IPRC?

You 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.

It is important that you attend the IPRC. If you cannot attend the IPRC on the scheduled date, please contact the principal of your child's school to arrange a different date or time to fit within your work or personal schedule.

You may find it helpful to bring someone to the IPRC to advocate for your child. This may be a friend, a relative or a member of a parent association. As a courtesy, advise the principal of the names of your advocates in advance.

If you do not feel comfortable speaking to the committee in English, ask your child's principal to arrange for an interpreter at the IPRC. Services are also available for parents with vision or hearing impairments, and arrangements will be made to accommodate other accessibility concerns that you may have.

Is my child invited to attend the IPRC?

Students who are 16 years or older may attend the IPRC meeting and have an advocate of their choice. 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 he or she might be involved in the meeting.

How can I prepare for the IPRC?

Become well informed

You may want to access additional information before the IPRC takes place. For example:

- > criteria the Peel board uses to identify students for special education programs
- > exceptionality and identification options, provided by the Ministry of Education
- > placement options the IPRC might consider for your child. Your child's principal will be able to provide you with information about possible IPRC decisions. After the IPRC, your principal can arrange class visits to give you a better picture of the recommendations.
- > *Getting to know special education programs and services* parent fact sheet
- > your child's Ontario School Record file and other records, such as assessment records that the school maintains for your child

You can get copies of this information from your principal.

Become familiar with the exceptionalities

The IPRC will identify your child with one of the following:

- > exceptional behaviour
- > exceptional communication
- > exceptional intellectual
- > exceptional physical
- > exceptional multiple

These exceptionalities are more fully described in the Peel board publication, *Criteria for the identification and placement of students with special needs*.

Know the placement options

The following placements are available to the IPRC:

- > regular class, with special education support
- > withdrawal from the regular classroom for up to half of the school day
- > special education contained class, grouped by exceptionality, either in the home school, or in another school of the board

The Ministry of Education requires that IPRCs first consider placement in a regular class if that placement would meet your child's needs and is consistent with your preferences.

What happens during the IPRC?

The chair, who is identified in your letter of invitation, will guide the IPRC meeting and start by welcoming you and introducing the members. You will then have the opportunity to introduce yourself and anyone else accompanying you.

The IPRC chair will outline the purpose of the meeting. The committee will review your child's strengths and educational needs with you and discuss whether a special education identification and placement is required. You should ask questions and join the discussion. Your input is important.

Any written information you provided in advance will be discussed at the meeting. If the committee decides that an identification is appropriate, it will consider what special education services are required and then discuss placement options.

Provincial legislation and Peel board policies require that the IPRC must first consider a placement in a regular class with special education support. If the IPRC feels that a regular class placement would not be suitable, the committee will consider another placement (placement options are listed earlier in this guide).

Will the IPRC discuss anything else?

You can ask the committee to discuss specific instructional program methods and services that your child needs. If you request it, the committee may make recommendations to the placement school about educational programs and services, but is not required by legislation to do so, as these

will be the responsibility of the classroom teacher and principal in the new placement.

How long is the IPRC meeting?

IPRCs vary in length from 15 minutes to over an hour. Typically, the meeting is no longer than 20 minutes.

What will the committee decide?

The committee will discuss and review your child's strengths and needs and make **one** of the following decisions:

- > Your child is exceptional and a special education placement will be required.
- > Your child is not exceptional and a special education placement is not required.
- > Your child is not exceptional and a special education placement is required.
- > If the IPRC members need more information the decisions will be deferred.

The committee has its discussion and makes its decision while you are in the meeting. You do not have to comment on or respond to the decision at that time. If you decide that you do not agree with the recommended placement, you can appeal. The appeal process is described later in this guide.

Sometimes, if the committee requires more information on your child's assessment or placement needs, it will defer its decision. When the committee has the information it needs, you will receive a copy of it. The IPRC will then be rescheduled and you will be invited to attend again.

What happens after the IPRC?

You will receive a letter stating the committee's decisions about your child. The letter will include:

- > your child's strengths and needs
- > recommendations on future programming methods and services if discussed
- > whether the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional and the identification and definitions of the exceptionality(ies)
- > if a placement has been recommended and, if it is a contained class, the reasons for the decision

If you were unable to attend the IPRC, the principal of your child's school will contact you soon after the meeting to let you know the committee's decisions. If you have not visited the placement, ask your child's principal to arrange a visit before you make a decision.

If the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional and is recommending a special education placement, you will be asked to sign a form consenting to the recommended placement. If you agree with the recommendation, please sign the consent form and return it to your child's school.

May I ask the IPRC to reconsider its recommendations?

You may ask to meet with the IPRC for a follow-up meeting to reconsider its decisions and recommendations. You must do so in writing within 15 school days of the date the IPRC decision is provided to you. The purpose of this follow-up meeting is to review the statement of decision by the IPRC in light of your concerns – or your child's concerns, if he or she is 16 years or older.

The meeting will be held as soon as possible after the request has been received. At this meeting, you will be able to discuss your concerns. While you are present, the committee will decide whether or not to change its decision. After the meeting, you will receive a letter stating whether any changes were made to the committee's decision and the reasons for this.

Do I have to accept the placement offered?

You do not have to accept the placement, but please discuss your concerns with your principal before making a final decision.

What arrangements are made for the new school placement?

Arrangements can begin as soon as you have signed the consent form and returned it to your child's school.

When can my child attend the new class?

The actual start date of the new placement will take into account transportation arrangements and any natural breaks in the school year calendar.

What if the placement is in another school?

The IPRC will give the new school the information on your child. The new school will be notified when your child will begin attending that school.

How will my child get there?

Transportation will be provided within the Peel board guidelines and is typically arranged within two weeks of your signed consent form being received by the school. Please refer to the parent fact sheet, *Getting to know special education programs and services* for additional information, and discuss any concerns with the principal of your child's present school.

Annual and other IPRC reviews

Once in a special education placement, how will I know that my child's needs are being met?

You will be involved regularly in your child's progress in a variety of ways, including:

- > the process of developing, writing and implementing an individual education plan (IEP) – consultation will begin within 30 school days of your child starting in the placement (see the Peel board's guide on IEPs)
- > reviewing report cards sent home from the school
- > parent/teacher meetings, either at your specific request or at the regularly scheduled intervals for each school, when the report card and IEP progress will be discussed

Will there be any other follow-up IPRCs?

You may request a review IPRC after your child has been in the placement for three months.

Your child's special education needs must be reviewed at least once a year by the school, and you will be consulted at that time. If you are in agreement, the formal annual review IPRC will not be held. The annual review IPRC will be held if a change of placement or location for your child is proposed or upon request by you. Your participation is important.

Appeals

What if I still disagree with the committee's decisions?

If you remain dissatisfied with the identification or the placement decision of the IPRC, you may appeal. You must send your notice of appeal

- > in writing
- > within 30 school days of the original IPRC meeting (but within 15 days of a follow-up meeting)
- > addressed to the director of education of the Peel District School Board
- > stating that you are appealing the IPRC decision(s) on identification and/or placement
- > the reasons you disagree with the committee

Your child will remain in the current placement until the appeal is resolved.

Who are the members of the appeal board?

A special education appeal board consists of three members, none of whom may have any prior involvement with the matter under appeal:

- > one member selected by the Peel board
- > one member selected by you (you may want to consult the parent association for your child's exceptionality)
- > a chair selected jointly by the other two members, or by the appropriate district manager of the Ministry of Education, if the two members are unable to agree on a chair

The first two members listed must be selected within 15 school days of the board receiving the notice of appeal. The chair must be selected within 15 school days of the appointment of the other two members.

The procedures and administrative processes for an appeal are set out by the Ministry of Education in Regulation 181.

What does the appeal board do?

The chair of the appeal board will arrange a meeting of the appeal board within 30 school days of being selected as the chair. At this meeting, the appeal board will review the IPRC proceedings, including the statement of decision and all reports, assessments and other documents considered by the IPRC. It will also hear statements and rationale for the IPRC decision from the Peel board and is required to hear from you as the parent.

You (and your child if 16 and over) will be invited to the appeal board hearing, to participate in its processes.

What decisions does an appeal board make?

Within three school days of the appeal board hearing, the appeal board will come to one of the following decisions:

- > agree with the IPRC and recommend that its decisions be implemented
- > disagree with the IPRC and make a recommendation to the Peel board about your child's identification or placement

Will I receive a written decision?

The appeal board will send you a written statement of its decision, its recommendations, and the reasons for those.

How are the appeal board's recommendations implemented?

The appeal board will send the written statement of its recommendations to the director of education for the Peel board. Within 30 school days of receiving this statement, the school board must consider the recommendations of the appeal board, decide what action to take and send you a letter with details of this plan.

This letter will also include information about what you can do if you are still dissatisfied with the plan, including information about the Special Education Tribunal, which is the next level of appeal. The procedures and administrative processes of the Special Education Tribunal are set out by the Ministry of Education in its *Special Education Handbook*, a copy of which can be obtained from the Ministry website at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/speced.html.

Learn more about special education programs

Special education programs in the Peel board range from support programs for students in regular classroom settings to self-contained classes. Integration opportunities can be considered in all placements. Find out more information about special education, including a special education fact sheet, from

- > your child's school
- > the Peel board Special Education Program Services department at **905-890-1099 (or 1-800-668-1196), ext. 2345**
- > the Peel board website at www.peelschools.org/speced
- > associations on the special Education Advisory Committee of the Peel board

About this parent guide

This brochure reflects the changes required by Ontario regulation 181/98. It has been produced by Special Education Program Services and Communications departments, in co-operation with the SEAC.

Important Notes

- > We can provide braille, large print or audio-cassette for communications about your child's special education needs.
- > An interpreter can be made available, if you are not at ease in using English for discussions with your classroom teacher or other school staff concerning special education matters.
- > More information about special education program services is available on our website, www.peelschool.org/speced. All items are also available from your child's school.

Questions?
Call 905-890-1099
(or 1-800-668-1146),
ext. 2345

Special Education Advisory Committee

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 resources. To find meeting dates and the names and phone numbers of SEAC members, please phone **905-890-1099 (or 1-800-668-1196), ext. 2029**, or visit www.peelschools.org/speced.

The following associations have representation on the Peel board SEAC:

- > **Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter**
905-230-8281 www.abcpeel.org
- > **Autism Society Ontario, Peel Chapter**
905-450-2299
- > **Brampton Caledon Community Living**
905-453-8841
- > **Community Living Mississauga**
905-542-2694
- > **Easter Seal Society**
416-421-8377
- > **Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada**
905-453-9366
- > **Learning Disabilities Association Mississauga**
905-272-4100
- > **Learning Disabilities Association of North Peel**
905-791-4100
- > **Parents for Children's Mental Health**
416-921-2109
www.parentsforchildrensmentalhealth.org
- > **Peel Parents of Hearing Impaired Children**
905-812-7644 desandmilesmom@yahoo.com
- > **Brampton Chapter of the Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario**
1-888-274-2226 tsao@primus.ca
- > **IEWS for Blind and Visually Impaired Children**
905-799-3118

Provincial and demonstration schools in Ontario

There are provincial and demonstration schools in Ontario that provide programs for exceptional students with severe disabilities and which may provide full-time residence. These include:

Amethyst School

(for students with a learning disability)

1090 Highbury Avenue, London, ON N5Y 4V9
519-453-4408

Centre Jules-Léger

(for French-speaking students who have a learning disability)

281 Avenue Lanark, Ottawa, ON K1Z 6R8
613-761-9300

Ernest C. Drury School

(for students who are deaf, deafened or hearing impaired)

255 Ontario Street S., Milton, ON L9T 2M5
905-878-2851

Robarts School

(for students who are deaf, deafened or hearing impaired)

1090 Highbury Avenue, P.O. Box 7360, Station E,
London, ON N5Y 4V9
519-453-4400

Sagonaska School

(for students with a learning disability)

350 Dundas Street W., Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
613-967-2830

Sir James Whitney School

(for students who are deaf, deafened or hearing impaired)

350 Dundas Street W., Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
613-967-2823

Trillium School

(for students with a learning disability)

347 Ontario Street S., Milton, ON L9T 3X9
905-878-8428

W. Ross Macdonald School

(for students who are blind and deaf-blind)

350 Brant Avenue, Brantford, ON N3T 3J9
519-759-0730