

13. EQUIPMENT

Purpose of the Standard

To inform the ministry, board staff members and other professionals, and parents about the provision of individualized equipment for some students with special needs

Determination of Need

The need for specialized assistive devices or equipment must be supported by professional assessments and documentation from health facilities and practitioners with expertise in determining the appropriate device. Depending on the specific requirement of an individual student, parents, special education staff, or schools may initiate a referral to an assessment centre or health practitioner for an assessment of need and the determination of appropriate equipment. In some circumstances, special education staff are directly involved with the assessment, with parental consent, particularly for those students requiring writing and augmentative communication devices, sight enhancement or sight substitution adaptive equipment. The assessor forwards the recommendation for equipment required in the school setting to the Coordinator of Special Programs. If necessary, the coordinator will consult with the parent, special education staff or school to clarify the appropriateness of the recommended equipment in the educational environment, prior to authorizing purchase. Purchases greater than \$800.00 that qualify for ISA1 Ministry of Education funding are submitted as requested by the Central Ontario Regional Office.

The Peel District School Board has also established a partnership of collaboration with Erinoak regarding the assessment of students, in-school mediator training, and on-going in-service with new technologies. Assessments are received from the following sources:

Erinoak Treatment Centre for Children and Youth with Physical Disabilities - Assistive Devices Resource Service

University of Waterloo Sight Enhancement Centre

W. Ross MacDonald School

Scarborough Low Vision Clinic

University of Toronto Assessment Centre

Community Audiologists

Community Care Access Centre of Peel

Bloorview MacMillan Centre

Smaller items for the personal care of students with special needs are provided following a collaborative process involving school administrators, classroom teachers, itinerant teachers, consultants, parents, students and teaching assistants.

ALLOCATION OF BUDGET

The Peel District School Board annual budget for personalized purchase of equipment is \$115,000, the majority of which is used for the personalized of small equipment described above. Items costing in excess of \$800 are submitted to the ministry, as per the ISA 1 procedures.

Purchasing

The Board maintains and continues to build an extensive inventory of equipment which is reassigned on a needs basis. This is the first source considered when it is established that a student requires specialized equipment. In order to best match the needs of students not eligible for a prescriptive writing device (computer) with existing equipment in inventory, a committee deals with the process of allocation. New equipment is purchased on a needs basis from a variety of sources.

Criteria:

1. Computer equipment (hardware and software):

both hardware (including peripherals) and software must be supported by the supplier

- training must be provided, if required
- the vendor must supply both a warranty and on-site service
- by tender for less specialized equipment

2. Customized woodworking equipment:

- craftsmen/carpenters who specialize in custom design are contracted on a needs and fee for service basis
- an ability to provide on site consultation and modification is required

3. Attendant care:

- vendors estimate of cost provided
- installation and consultation available
- trial periods available for more costly items