

Guidelines and Standards

Educational Planning for Students With Exceptionalities



New  Nouveau
Brunswick

Department of Education
Educational Programs and Services Branch
Student Services Unit (Anglophone)
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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education is committed to a process of inclusive, quality education. Every effort is made to educate all students through instruction commensurate with their individual needs, in regular classes within neighborhood schools. Based on the conviction that each individual is a unique learner, schools require flexible curriculum delivery, support services, and appropriate resources. A collaborative effort among educators, parents and the community is essential to the success of the student.

BELIEFS AND PRINCIPLES

The following beliefs form the basis of New Brunswick's philosophy of inclusion as described in the "*Best Practices for Inclusion*" document:

1. All children can learn.
2. All children attend age-appropriate regular classrooms in their local schools.
3. All children receive appropriate educational programs.
4. All children receive a curriculum relevant to their needs.
5. All children participate in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
6. All children benefit from cooperation and collaboration among home, school and community.

Implementation of best practices considers eleven areas of critical importance. These are the areas of school learning environment, collaborative planning, administration, social responsibility, curriculum planning and implementation, support programs and services, classroom practices, planning for transition, partnerships among school, family and community, as well as the areas of innovation and accountability.

As well, guiding principles ensure that students with exceptionalities are included within the regular classroom. These principles include:

1. Good classroom instruction is of paramount importance.
2. Educators are expected to remain current in effective teaching practices and learning theory such as multi-level and/or differentiated instruction, learning styles theory and practice, and multiple intelligence theory and practice.
3. Classroom teachers are expected to provide additional assistance to students who experience difficulties.
4. Collaborative consultation and problem-solving approaches are seen as the most effective processes for resolving instructional-delivery problems and/or student learning difficulties.
5. Classroom teachers are the educators who have primary responsibility for all students including those with exceptionalities.
(adapted from "*Resource for Assisting Struggling Learners*")

RATIONALE

In implementing the philosophy of inclusion, the province of New Brunswick has a responsibility to provide special education programs for students who are deemed exceptional, considering that such planning should occur with the belief and goal that each student will benefit from his or her involvement in the regular education system. Section 12 of the Education Act provides some clarity as to who can be identified as an exceptional pupil, beginning with the presence of an educational delay. However, until this time, districts have, with broad guidelines from the Department of Education, developed local planning procedures and templates for Special Education Plans (SEPs).

A special education program (plan of services) means an education program for an exceptional pupil that is based on the results of continuous assessment and evaluation and which includes a plan containing specific objectives and recommendations for education services that meet the needs of the pupil. (Education Act Section 1, Definitions)

In order to facilitate a greater degree of success in enabling students with exceptionalities to learn and to achieve, a consistent province-wide approach to educational planning is critical. This will help ensure broader student success in meeting educational outcomes, the effective and efficient delivery of services, and will provide common language and understanding that is transferable in and amongst schools and districts within the province.

The purpose of this document is to explain in detail a consistent and standardized method for the development and application of Special Education Plans and to provide a provincial template to be used by school districts. By clearly setting standards for Special Education Plans, all stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, administrators and others) will benefit.

WHEN IS IT APPROPRIATE TO CONSIDER A SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN?

The determination of an exceptional student is the responsibility of the superintendent of a school district. Section 12.1 of the Education Act states that the superintendent of a district can deem a pupil to be exceptional “after consulting with qualified persons.” Depending on the nature and extent of the exceptionality, qualified persons may include classroom/subject teacher(s), members of the school-based student services team, appropriate district staff - including psychologists or residents in psychology, medical personnel, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, Early Childhood Intervention personnel and others.

A Special Education Plan (SEP) should be considered when a student is experiencing difficulties over an *extended* period of time and is not making progress even with the additional support that a teacher would typically employ in the classroom. When the classroom teacher or parent suspects that a Special Education Plan may be necessary for a student, he or she should approach the resource teacher for consultation. Initiation of a referral to the school-based team should occur if the teachers believe the extent of the difficulty warrants such intervention. ***It should be noted that planning and interventions for the student by both the classroom and resource teachers can occur even though an exceptionality has not been identified (or “diagnosed”) through formal assessment. However, it is expected that informal and/or formal assessment information be provided with a pupil’s referral to the resource teacher and/or school-based student services team for consideration.***

The flexibility and facility to begin planning and intervention immediately is consistent with the expectation that plans be dynamic and responsive to the student’s needs, strengths and circumstances. In other words, on-going monitoring and adjustments to the plan throughout a school year will occur in order to effectively enable the student to learn and achieve. Teachers are expected to continue implementing suitable interventions while awaiting special planning and services, should such be required.

It should be noted that a Special Education Plan is an indication of exceptionality and applies to those students who may have an underlying behavioural, intellectual, communicational, perceptual/sensory, or physical condition that has resulted in a delay in educational functioning. On-going assessment and monitoring with the assistance of the team(s) will confirm or negate the presence of an exceptionality and the necessity of an on-going SEP. It is expected that all students with an SEP will be on a resource teacher’s student list for monitoring, indirect, or direct service.

Some students (K-2) will arrive in school with previously identified exceptionalities and will immediately require a Special Education Plan. Others will have exceptionalities that are not identified. It is important for classroom teachers, especially in the early years, to be cognizant of those students who are experiencing difficulties beyond what would usually be expected of a student in the primary grades, but who have not previously been identified. Again, in these cases, teachers should consult with their resource teachers, and refer the student(s) to their school-based student services teams. During the early years (K-2), districts may offer intervention programs in addition to traditional, typical student support services. When students are placed in early intervention programs, a record of the intervention should be documented on the accommodations checklist of a Special Education Plan. One must keep in mind that the intervention program may eliminate the need for a long-term Special Education Plan; however, the documentation in these early years is important as it provides information to subsequent educators that the student has been in need of assistance. In this way, the student’s progress can be more carefully monitored.

Students who are in an alternative setting also require a Special Education Plan. Referral for their placement in such a setting usually has a behavioural basis. Students in an alternative placement are receiving the accommodation of alternative placement and may need planning regarding other

accommodations, modifications or individualization of their programs. As with any Special Education Plan, this planning allows for greater flexibility with regard to the outcomes of a particular curriculum, so that a program can be tailored to enable the student to learn and achieve. Placement in an alternative setting should follow the guidelines as documented in the “**Guidelines for New Brunswick Alternative Education Programs and Services.**”

Students served by APSEA have a sensory impairment of hearing and/or vision that has the potential to delay their educational functioning. APSEA personnel need to be included in the Special Education Plan meetings and processes in order to allow them to contribute their expertise to the school-based team.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Section 12.2 of the *Education Act* indicates that the parent of a pupil **must be consulted** during the process of the determination of an exceptionality, and in the process of developing special education programs and services for the pupil.

Parents, as their child’s first educator, have an important role to play in the development and implementation of an educational plan for students with exceptionalities. They also are an integral part of the support mechanism for both the student and the teacher.

Parents are often the first persons to recognize when their child is struggling with schoolwork, and therefore may be key persons to initiate a request for a referral to the school-based team. If the child has not been identified in preschool, the parents may be the first ones to notice that their child is taking extra time on homework, is unhappy when dealing with certain subjects or avoids certain school-related tasks. They may be concerned about the excessive amount of time their child spends on homework compared to the time others spend. Parents often notice behavioural patterns such as a reluctance to go to school, crying spells, physical symptoms, or extended periods of sadness or depression.

Parents are a critical component in the referral and assessment process, and in the planning, implementation, and monitoring that follow. The parent can help to provide information that augments the teacher’s observations of the child in the school setting.

Parents can also provide a background history of the child. A student’s past experiences - for example, premature birth, ear infections, tubes in ears, visual difficulties, delay in acquisition of speech/language - often provide information that may be relevant in determining the presence of an exceptionality.

Parents are essential participants in the development and implementation of a Special Education Plan for their child. In planning for detailed modification or individualization, parents who are present at planning meetings can help to establish goals for the child that can be further developed by them at home. Goals and outcomes will be agreed upon and monitored by both home and school. This way parents can know that they have a legitimate stake in the implementation of the Special Education Plan. They can also agree to undertake activities and responsibilities that can be carried out with specific goals in mind. In the development of a plan for the child, the parents may be assigned sole responsibility for certain parts of the plan - for example, researching their child’s disability and seeking medical advice, obtaining a tutor, enrolling the child in outside social activities, or joining a support group.

Once a collaborative vision for the child has been established, and all persons involved clearly know that they understand and have a part in the planning process, then the welfare of the child is enhanced. The child’s school success is contingent upon parental support and involvement, *although the ultimate decision for placement, programming and services lies with the educators. However, parents may request a formal*

appeal as outlined in the Education Act. If such is the case, it is the school's responsibility to inform them of their right to this process.

Parents (and students when appropriate) should also be part of continuous planning meetings for the student. Goals and outcomes will change from year to year, but the parents (and students when appropriate) should always have a part in helping to identify the learning outcomes and goals. Students should be encouraged to participate in this process particularly as they progress through upper elementary, middle and high school. Parents and teachers together will determine when the student's participation is appropriate.

Parents often will need support during the difficult period of identification, evaluation and implementation. Teachers should be sensitive to the turmoil that the parent(s) may be feeling. Referral to community support groups such as the Learning Disabilities Association of New Brunswick, the New Brunswick Association for Community Living, or the Autism Society of New Brunswick may provide them the support they need. The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons has information related to other support groups throughout the province should parents be interested in pursuing this avenue.
(see contacts section)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A Special Education Plan, **whether it includes planning for accommodation, modification or individualization** is a document that can, and has been called into evidence in a court. As such is the case, school personnel including the principal, classroom or subject teacher(s), and resource teacher(s), need to understand that they may be held accountable in such circumstances, for ensuring that serious efforts are made at implementing the Special Education Plan as part of a collaborative process with students, parents and others, and that the documentation meets provincial and district standards.

Superintendents and Directors of Education

The ultimate responsibility for ensuring that students with exceptionalities receive a quality education with the supports and services they may require lies with the superintendent of a school district as indicated in the *Education Act*.

Student Services Supervisor(s)

It is expected that the director of education of the school district will designate one or more of his or her district staff to assume the responsibility for the district programs and services associated with students with exceptionalities. The Student Services supervisor(s) are responsible for ensuring that planning procedures and the documentation guidelines of the Special Education Plans are followed, including the tracking and storage of SEPs.

District Student Services Team

It is also expected that districts have in place an effective district *Student Services Team* that meets on a regular basis (suggested minimum of twice a month) to discuss issues regarding the programs and services for students with exceptionalities. It is expected that this team would comprise those individuals at the district level who have responsibility for some aspect of the delivery of programs and services to students with exceptionalities. This should include the Student Services supervisor, district consultants, district resource teachers, school psychologists, behaviour mentors, speech-language pathologists, other supervisors, and others who have involvement with programs and services as needed. Each district will choose the composition of the team, depending on local circumstances and needs. The key to the effectiveness of this team is regular contact.

School Principals

The school principal has the ultimate responsibility in his or her school to see that the planning procedures and documentation guidelines are followed. The principal is also responsible to see that an effective school-based Student Services Team is in place ***regardless of the school level***, that is, elementary, middle or high school.

School-based Student Services Team

The school-based Student Services Team should include a school administrator, resource teacher(s), classroom teacher(s), guidance counsellor(s), and/or others that have responsibility in the school for the programs and services for students with exceptionalities. As with the district team, it is expected that this school-based team would meet on a regular basis (suggested once a week, but minimum twice a month) and would keep the principal informed (if he or she is not present at meetings) of discussions and actions in progress. When a Special Education Plan is developed, it will be the responsibility of one of the members of the school-based Student Services Team to direct the planning process, to involve the parents, to monitor the effectiveness of the programs that address the goals and outcomes of the plan, and to report on its effectiveness. The school-based Student Services Team is also important in helping schools to develop toward exemplary practice in inclusion and thus promote the planning, development, implementation and monitoring of Special Education Plans for students that relate to all aspects of their school life.

Resource Teachers

The resource teacher is key to the process of the development and monitoring of a Special Education Plan. He or she works within a school environment that supports the inclusion of students with exceptionalities. Inclusive schools are those where all members accept their fair share of responsibility for all children, including those with disabilities (Fuchs and Fuchs 1994). The processes of consultation, collaboration, and co-teaching are recognized as essential for effective inclusion programs (Dettmer, Dyck and Thurston 1999, 40). The resource teacher operates within a model of collaborative consultation, where he or she plays a role in assessment (informal, curriculum-based and some standardized), in co-planning and co-teaching, and in the provision of resources for the classroom teacher to address the needs of an exceptional student. Inclusion incorporates a continuum of services for students with exceptionalities, in which case the resource teacher may serve students through monitoring, through indirect or through direct service, and with continued consultation and collaboration with the classroom teacher and others involved in the student's program. If direct service is provided, it should NOT be for an extended time throughout the day, and should be continually assessed and monitored, with the intention of including the student within the regular classroom as soon as is feasible considering the needs of the student. The resource teacher is responsible for the tracking and storage of Special Education Plans within his or her school.

RESOURCE MODEL OF COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION

The model of Collaborative Consultation is one involving collaboration, consultation and teamwork. For many school personnel and particularly for the resource teacher, the concept may be an unfamiliar one.

The model of Collaborative Consultation is one that is supported by the New Brunswick Department of Education, as it enhances the philosophy of inclusion and involves all stakeholders in planning, implementing and monitoring programs for students with exceptionalities.

In this role, the resource teacher brings to the situation his or her knowledge of issues in special education, just as the classroom teacher and others bring their knowledge of their areas of expertise. Together, they problem solve and plan for the students with exceptionalities. The resource teacher is seen co-planning and co-teaching with the classroom teachers; finding materials and adapting materials for use by the classroom teacher for a student with exceptionalities; suggesting varied methodologies; assessing students through classroom observation, informal means, curriculum-based measurement, and/or standardized testing; acting as liaison between various outside agencies; training, scheduling and/or supervising teacher assistants; making arrangements for and training teacher assistants, peer tutors or volunteers; or spending some small-group or one-on-one time with a group of exceptional students to address a specific need that requires his or her expertise for specified periods of time.

This model requires innovative thinking in order to create opportunities for consultation, co-planning, and co-teaching. Professional development with regard to the skills and knowledge necessary to implement this approach is the key to ensuring success and seeing the benefits of this model.

TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

The following terms are key to understanding the purposes, process and procedures relevant to the development of a Special Education Plan for a student with exceptionalities.

Special Education Program: The definition of special education program as stated in the *Education Act* is “an education program for an exceptional pupil that is based on the results of continuous assessment and evaluation and which includes a plan containing specific objectives and recommendations for education services that meet the needs of the pupil.”

Exceptional Student: An exceptional student is one who has shown, over an *extended* period of time, behavioural, communicational, intellectual, sensory/perceptual, or physical conditions that have contributed to delayed educational functioning.

Special Education Plan: This is a plan that contains recommended adjustments for educational goals and programs and which identifies supports and services to effectively enable an exceptional student to learn and achieve. Planning can involve accommodation, modification, and/or individualization. One or more types of planning can occur within the Special Education Plan. A Special Education Plan is developed collaboratively among classroom teacher(s), a resource teacher, parent(s), student and other involved parties, for example, a speech language pathologist. Planning is inclusive of all educational settings that relate to the student's program. Special Education Plans need to be reviewed frequently and evaluated yearly to assess their efficacy.

Accommodation: These are the strategies, technologies or adjustments that enable the student to reach prescribed outcomes, whether they are for regular, modified, or individualized programming. Planning with accommodations only, applies to the students in the regular classroom for whom the grade level curriculum outcomes of the subject area have not been changed, but for whom accommodations are required because of processing, physical, and/or emotional difficulties that have been observed and documented over an extended period of time, and without which the student would not be able to access the regular curriculum. The need for a Special Education Plan outlining accommodations will be the responsibility of both the classroom teacher and the resource teacher in consultation with the parent(s), as well as the school-based Student Services Team, should the former feel it necessary to involve the whole team. This type of planning needs to be documented using an accommodations checklist. With planning for accommodations only, specific goals and measurable outcomes will not be stated on the Special Education Planning form as they are articulated in the grade level curriculum documents. Accommodations can apply to one course/subject or to all courses/subjects, depending on the needs of the student. Planning of this type needs to be reviewed at reporting time, and adjusted accordingly. Summative evaluation of the efficacy of the plan should occur at the end of the year.

Modification: With this type of planning, the grade level curriculum outcomes of a subject area have been changed to address the specific needs of the student. With modification, the majority (50% or more) of the outcomes of the grade level curriculum have been altered. These changes could involve simplified tests, exams or assignments; material presented at a lower reading level; or simplified texts and projects. Students' achievement will be assessed on a different basis from that of their peers. Decisions for modification must involve the classroom teacher(s), the resource teacher, the parent(s), as well as be discussed at the regular meetings of the school-based Student Services Team. Special Education Plans reflecting modification **may** be simply described in terms of the type of modification made to the grade level curriculum or **may** include long-term goals, and measurable short-term outcomes, as well as the methods and materials to achieve the goals and outcomes. The district Student Services administrator will choose the level of detail of documentation required for this planning. Planning of this type needs to be reviewed at reporting time, and adjusted accordingly. Summative evaluation of the efficacy of the plan should occur at the end of the year. Modification can occur in one or more courses or subjects and still is based on the regular curriculum.

Individualization: In a minority of cases, the pervasive and significant nature of the disabling condition that a student displays will require planning that deviates from the regular curriculum. The student will not be expected to achieve many, if any, of the outcomes of the grade level curriculum, although he or she will be expected to be included in classroom themes and activities as much as possible. The student's program will be individualized. In the majority of cases, individualization will be pervasive and will involve planning in areas other than educational outcomes, for example speech/language or occupational therapy outcomes, as well as documenting other types of support needed such as a tutor or teacher assistant. Planning of this nature generally follows a person-centred planning process such as the McGill Action Planning System (MAPS) or Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH), and will identify long-term goals as well as

short-term measurable outcomes. There may be cases, few in number, where only one subject area will need to be individualized. For example, a student with a significant physical disability will be able to achieve very few of the grade level outcomes of a physical education program, and therefore would need his or her program individualized in that area. Decisions for individualization must involve the classroom teacher(s), the resource teacher, the parent(s), the school-based Student Services Team, and one member or more of the district Student Services Team. The district Student Services Administrator or designate for the district office will have the main responsibility for approval of these plans. Planning of this type needs to be reviewed at reporting time, and adjusted accordingly. Summative evaluation of the efficacy of the plan should occur at the end of the year. Transition planning is particularly critical for this planning process.

Goal: A goal is the end point of an intervention. It specifies in *general terms* an outcome that the student is expected to achieve over a specified period of time; for example, “John will improve in his identification of sight words.” The annual goals of the Special Education Plan are statements of the most important general outcomes that the plan is designed to meet.

Measurable Outcomes: These are specific, observable and measurable behaviours that assist the student in progressing towards the general goals of his or her SEP. Measurable outcomes are often sequential, outlining a sequence of steps towards a goal. They also indicate a specific mastery level that can be objectively measured or observed to determine mastery. The attainment of any goal requires the mastery of several measurable outcomes. For example, if the goal is to learn to drive a car, one must think of all the many smaller steps taken to obtain this goal (learning the rules of the road in written form, parallel parking, shifting gears, safe braking, backing up, steering, proper distance between cars at various speeds, passing on the highway, etc.).

Goal: To improve reading skills (educational goal)
***Measurable Outcome (possible examples)**

1. Susan will be able to read 220 Dolch Words, by accurately identifying the word within five seconds of exposure at 90% accuracy level.
2. Susan will be able to say a word that begins with the same sound as the consonant shown to her on a letter card, with 90% accuracy.

Goal: To improve social/communication/language skills (speech/language goal)
***Measurable Outcome (possible examples)**

1. John will say “Good morning” to his teacher upon entering class, in response to his teacher’s greeting to him, with a prompt 100% of the time.
2. John will say “good morning” to his teacher upon entering class, in response to his teacher’s greeting to him, no prompt 80% of the time.
3. During free play, John will parallel play within five feet of his peers, with a prompt 100% of the time.
4. During free play, John will parallel play within five feet of his peers, no prompt, 80% of the time.
5. During free play, John will say “Hello” to one of his classmates with a prompt, 100% of the time.
6. During free play, John will say “Hello” to one of his classmates, no prompt, 80% of the time.

Summative Evaluation: It is expected that the goals and outcomes of the Special Education Plan will be reviewed by the development team with respect to how well the program has been successful; that is, how well the goals and outcomes have been met. In review, the order of acquisition of skills or outcomes can be changed or alternative outcomes can be defined. Reviews will need to occur at least three times throughout the year with summation and next-step planning at year's end. In addition SEP status should be indicated on the regular report card and evaluation based on the SEP goals. Students following an SEP whether it contains accommodations, modifications or individualization should receive a report card at reporting time.

Formative Evaluation: It is also expected that both the school-based Student Services Teams and the district Student Services Teams will review and evaluate the process of special education planning, identifying positive aspects as well as problematic aspects of the process in order to make revisions to set goals for revision, professional development, assessment or other aspects of the process. Evaluations of this sort are intended as a basis for improvement of the process and of service.

STORAGE AND TRACKING

Special Education Plans should be stored and tracked. The *Guidelines to Accompany New Brunswick Student Record Folders* articulates the access to Special Education Plans.

As discussed in the previous sections, Special Education Plans are considered to be “working documents” and as such must be reviewed at designated times throughout the year at the regular reporting periods, and at any other time when review is deemed necessary by the school-based Student Services Team. Summative and formative evaluation and review of the efficacy of the plan and of the planning process must occur at the end of the year.

At the school level, a current copy of the Special Education Plan must be filed in the student's cumulative record folder, and stored in accordance with the province's policy as outlined in the *Guidelines to Accompany the New Brunswick Student Record Folder*. The resource teacher must retain a copy of the complete Special Education Plan, and the classroom teacher(s) should have at least the summary form of all information that is pertinent to the teacher's responsibilities for assisting a student to meet outcomes with accommodation or modification, or specific education goals and outcomes as evidenced in an individualized plan. Parents are to receive a signed copy of the Special Education Plan with updates if changes have been made throughout the year. It will be the responsibility of the resource teacher to see that the classroom teacher(s) and other relevant parties have the summary form and that they are familiar with the needs of the student. It is also the responsibility of the resource teacher to see that the document is updated and the information is conveyed to the appropriate individuals for implementation according to the plan throughout the year and at transition times. Transition times occur at the beginning of each school year where a student moves from one grade to another, and also in the transition from preschool to kindergarten, from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school. It will be the responsibility of the school-based Student Services Team, following the guidelines and procedures outlined in the *Resource for the Transition of Students with Exceptionalities from School to Work or Post Secondary Education and Adult Life*, to guide the transition beyond high school. Involvement of the student in the planning process for school to work or post-secondary education and adult life is essential.

It is also the responsibility of the Student Services unit of district offices to track and store Special Education Plan information and to ensure effective transition. Storage and tracking can be achieved by establishing a database. Hard copies of Special Education Plans or summary sheets should be forwarded to the district level to be recorded and filed. A list of students currently served through any type of SEP planning should be maintained in the database.

TRANSITION

Specific planning for the transition of exceptional students from school to adult life should begin by the spring of grade eight. School-based Student Services Teams will use pertinent forms from the “**Resource for the Transition of Students With Exceptionalities From School to Work or Post-Secondary Education and Adult Life**” to include in the Special Education Plan. **Not all students with exceptionalities will require in-depth transition planning.**

Transition planning needs to be future-focussed toward the achievement of the student’s vision. In doing so, planning will identify goals and outcomes, specific strategies, time lines, roles, and responsibilities for members of the transition team. As the transition plan is developed over time, those involved will change as goals and outcomes change. As the student approaches graduation, it is critical to involve outside agencies, community activity organizers, post-secondary institutions, and other sources that could provide support for the student as he or she moves into adult life. Transition planning must identify a continuum of activities and services from which choices can be made, depending on the student’s vision for the future and the significance of his or her disability. The starting point for the student’s transition plan will be the **Linking to the Future: Career and Educational Planning Portfolio**. Initially the transition planning will have a broad focus, but, through the graduation years, the focus will be more specific to courses and strategies to assist the student to fulfil his or her vision for the future. The planning process will work toward facilitating self-determination, self-advocacy, and independent-living skills, and toward developing natural supports for the student in his or her future environment.

EXPECTATIONS

In order to effectively implement consistency with regard to the development, implementation and monitoring of Special Education Planning processes and procedures in the province, each jurisdiction level will have certain responsibilities.

Department of Education

1. Develop a provincial format, guidelines and policy regarding the development, implementation and monitoring of special education programs, services and plans.
2. Provide support for consistency with regard to the development, implementation and monitoring of Special Education Plan processes and procedures through in-service and professional development opportunities.
3. Monitor the consistency of programs and services, planning processes and procedures.

District

1. Assign district personnel with responsibility for the implementation of the planning processes, procedures and documentation guidelines for special education programs, services and plans.
2. Ensure the formation of an effective district Student Services Team.
3. Develop roles and responsibilities for resource teachers at the local level based on provincial guidelines.
4. Provide in-service at the local level to ensure consistent understanding of the process and procedures with regard to the development, implementation and monitoring of Special Education Plans.
5. Conduct formative evaluation yearly on the efficiency of special education planning processes and procedures in the district in order to generate goals toward the improvement of the process for the following year.
6. Ensure the proper storage and tracking of Special Education Plans.

School (Principal) - all levels

1. Ensure the formation of an effective school-based Student Services Team.
2. Ensure that planning procedures, documentation guidelines for, as well as strategies and evaluation methods contained in Special Education Plans are followed.
3. Evaluate the implementation of inclusive practices and outcomes and articulate, if needed, goals related to inclusion in the school improvement plan.
4. Define and clarify for school staff the roles and responsibilities of the resource teacher, regular classroom teacher, or subject teacher in an inclusionary model and as related to the development, implementation and monitoring of Special Education Plans.
5. Encourage resource teachers to share with school staff, at staff meetings or on professional development days, information on issues, procedures and process related to students with exceptionalities.
6. Conduct formative evaluation yearly on the efficiency of special education planning processes and procedures in the school in order to generate goals toward the improvement of the process for the following year.

Resource teacher

1. Work collaboratively with classroom teachers and parents to develop, implement, and monitor Special Education Plans.
2. Provide information and resources to classroom teachers and parents in relation to goals and outcomes stipulated in a Special Education Plan.
3. Develop personal knowledge and experience through professional development related to issues surrounding planning for students with exceptionalities.
4. Take opportunities, at staff meetings or on professional development days, to present to school staff information related to issues surrounding the planning for students with exceptionalities.
5. Ensure proper storage and tracking of Special Education Plans for students within the school.

Classroom teacher

1. Work collaboratively with resource teacher(s) and parents to develop, implement and monitor Special Education Plans for the students with exceptionalities in the classroom.
2. Ensure that the methods, strategies, programming and evaluation documented in the Special Education Plan are implemented in accordance with the documentation.
3. Participate in the evaluation of the outcomes of the Special Education Plan.
4. Use differentiated or multi-level instruction in the classroom to address the needs of diverse learners.
5. Develop knowledge related to issues surrounding the planning for students with exceptionalities.

Parents

1. Work collaboratively with school personnel to develop, implement and monitor the Special Education Plan for your child.
2. Participate in the implementation of the Special Education Plan by taking responsibility for various outcomes that can be worked on at home as well as at school.
3. Develop good communication with your child's classroom and resource teacher.
4. Participate in the evaluation of the outcomes of the Special Education Plan.
5. Continue to increase knowledge of the characteristics of your child's exceptionality and share this with school personnel.
6. Keep a file of all documentation regarding your child's education plan and strategies.

FILLING OUT THE FORMS

Summary Form

The summary form should be completed for every Special Education Plan whether it includes information on accommodations, modification, and/or individualization. The forms for accommodation, modification, and/or individualization, as well as other planning forms such as those for transition, behaviour, or APSEA services should be attached to the summary form, and the number of attachments noted.

The section referring to **pertinent medical information** should be very succinct and contain only information on physical issues (e.g. Cerebral Palsy), names of medications taken (e.g. Ritalin) or chronic health problems (e.g. asthma). Psychological or medical diagnosis describing developmental, learning or behavioural conditions need not be included here. This information would be available either in the Cumulative Record Folder or the Resource teacher's files.

The section on **justification for SEP** should give a reason why the student is on a Special Education Plan, for example, "the student is demonstrating learning difficulties related to the processing of what (s)he hears" or "the student is demonstrating learning difficulties related to his/her visual disability".

When indicating the **type(s) of planning** that are included in the Special Education Plan, be sure to indicate all types of planning that apply. In other words, if there are sections related to accommodations and individualization included, then both of these boxes should be marked.

The **program adjustments** section includes a sampling of some of the courses or subjects that may apply to the student's program, however, the list is not exhaustive. On the e-version of the form, resource teachers will be able to add extra rows to the table to suit the number of courses/subjects that apply to the students program. When using a paper copy, resource teachers may have to add subjects/courses by writing them in.

The space provided in the section **Short-term Remedial Assistance/Intervention** is intended for comments or descriptions of various intervention programs or strategies, for example Reading Recovery, with which the student will be involved. The description should not just have the "name" of the program but should succinctly describe the purpose, outcomes and duration of the program or intervention. This description need not be lengthy.

As the Special Education Plan is intended to be **reviewed at reporting time**, the related section asking for the dates that the resource teacher reviewed and revised (if necessary), the Special Education Plan should closely correspond to the dates that report cards are sent home. Typically the programming at the beginning and at the end of the year would take more time than the intermediate reviews. Depending on the extent of the programming, resource teachers may not need to call formal team meetings for every plan. Collaborative work with teachers and phone conversations with parents may be enough for less extensive plans, such as those related to accommodations only. However, **it is key that parents are included** in the planning process and are aware and included in any planned changes.

Space is given on the summary form to comment on **recommendations for change during review periods**. This section is intended for comments suggesting changes to the plan that have been identified as necessary. These changes should then be reflected in the attachments to the summary form.

The first set of **signatures** referred to on the summary form need only be filled in for those plans that include accommodations (only), or the less detailed modified planning. If the planning involves detailed modification or individualization, the second set of signatures not the first must be filled in on the summary form.

If, for some reason, the parent's signature was not able to be obtained, a note should be added to the bottom of either page two or page three of the summary sheet indicating such, and, if possible, the reason why.

Resource teachers should be sure to indicate the total number of pages, including attachments that are included in the Special Education Plan. As well, the number of attachments including accommodation planning, modification planning, individualized planning, transition planning, APSEA planning, behaviour planning, etc. should be reported.

Special Education Plan: Accommodations

The pages included under this section contain a list of possible accommodations. However, the list is not exhaustive. If teachers use other accommodations under any of the categories, there is room for additions. Space is also provided should teachers wish to make further comments.

Special Education Plan: Modification

This single sheet can be used to indicate modifications to separate subject(s)/courses, or for all subjects or courses. Room is provided for teachers to check listed modifications or to provide a summary of modifications being implemented in certain areas. Summaries should be as descriptive as possible.

Special Education Plan: Individualized/Modified

These forms provide space to detail measurable outcomes related to the annual goals listed on the summary form. Resource teachers are also asked to describe the methods and material used to accomplish the outcome(s), as well as the person responsible.

The evaluation referred to on this form is an indication of whether or not the student was successful in reaching the outcome. Teachers may want to use a straight-forward "achieved" or "not achieved", or they may want to indicate a measure of success such as "strong performance", "acceptable" or "having difficulty". Whatever the code used, it should be clear to the reader of the plan how successful the student was.

The individualized/modified forms are meant to be reproduced as many times as needed to list all applicable goals and accompanying outcomes.

End of Year Evaluation

This section of the Special Education Plan should always be addressed and attached at the end of the year, regardless of the type(s) of planning included. The comments in this section should reflect the year-end summative and formative evaluation and should include suggestions for improvement to the plan or to the process for the next year. Team members will sign off on this portion at the end of the year. Once again, if for some reason the parent(s) signature is not present, some comment as to the reason should be stated at the bottom of this page, and a copy of the year end evaluation form should be sent home to the parent(s) to inform their participation in the planning process in the fall.

FAQ's - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following are frequently asked questions regarding the Special Education Plan.

When is it appropriate to consider an SEP?

A Special Education Plan should be considered when a student is experiencing difficulties over an extended period of time and is not making progress, even with the usual kinds of help that a teacher would normally give in the classroom.

Should APSEA students be on a Special Education Plan in addition to APSEA's Service Plans?

Students served by APSEA have a sensory impairment of hearing and/or vision that has the potential to delay their educational functioning. APSEA personnel need to be included in the Special Education Plan meetings and processes in order to allow them to contribute their expertise to the school-based team.

What is the difference between accommodations and modifications?

Accommodations are changes in the method of presentation, student practice, or evaluation of a particular curriculum that do not alter the curriculum outcomes of the subject area being taught, for example, photocopied notes. If the student is on an SEP with accommodations only, the grade level outcomes for the subject area have not been changed. Modifications mean that the grade level curriculum outcomes of the subject area have been significantly simplified, but the student is able to participate with the class, using modified materials and expectations. In this case, the student is still accessing regular curriculum in some form. Parents should be informed of any impact modification may have to a student's future goals.

Can a student have an SEP in one subject?

Yes, a student can have an SEP developed that covers only one subject area if that is appropriate to addressing the student's needs.

What is the difference between accommodations on an SEP and accommodations that are done in the classroom on a daily basis?

Accommodations that would be documented on an SEP are those that the student has needed continually over an extended period of time and without which the student would be unable to access or respond to the curriculum. These accommodations are recognizable as related to some sort of recognized exceptionality that a student may have - for example, use of a calculator in order to overcome memory difficulties, photocopied notes in response to a difficulty with visual perception or with an inability to write/print without difficulty within a reasonable amount of time. The difficulty and the corresponding accommodations will need to be discussed with the resource teacher and/or the school-based Student Services Team.

If a student is receiving accommodations on a regular basis in the classroom, should the student be entitled to have the same accommodations on the provincial tests and exams?

Any student who is receiving accommodations, modifications, or individualization as documented in a Special Education Plan should be considered for accommodations or exemption for the provincial assessments, as outlined in the *Guidelines for Exemptions and Accommodations* document available from the government website or from the Evaluation Branch of the Department of Education. Decisions of this nature need to be discussed collaboratively between the resource teacher and the classroom teacher.

How is the difference between a modified program and an individualized program distinguished?

With a modified program, students are still able to work to some extent with the regular curriculum outcomes. Individualization requires much more significant and pervasive planning. Some students require a much higher degree of modification of the regular school curriculum such that their individual education goals and outcomes may be markedly different from the goals and outcomes of other students. **The individualized SEP is pervasive in that individualization generally occurs in all subjects.** Students with an individualized SEP participate with their peers in subject activities, but the goals and outcomes for them are individualized. There will be a very few exceptions where only one or two subjects may need to be individualized, but these will be rare.

How much of a course/subject can be simplified before it is considered modified?

If simplification is occurring for more than half of the expected outcomes, then the school-based Student Services Teams and the parents should discuss modification and its implications.

Who is the primary contact person for the student on the SEP?

As the classroom teacher is the person who has primary responsibility for ALL students in his or her classroom, this person should be the first point of contact. However, the resource teacher, acting as a collaborative consultant with the classroom teacher with respect to students on an SEP, should have in-depth knowledge of the student's SEP and is usually the manager of the programs and related services for the student.

Can a subject be modified at certain times and individualized at other times?

As an SEP is a working document, changes are continually being made to the plan. Modification or individualization will change with the needs of the student. For some, there will be little change, but for others, as the SEP is reviewed on a regular basis, there will be change. Parents should be involved and consulted about these changes.

Does a plan have to be developed if accommodations are all that may be required?

Yes. If the accommodations are as stated above, necessary over a long period of time and without which the student would not be able to access or respond to the regular curriculum because of a recognized exceptionality, then a plan does need to be developed for them.

If a private psychologist or other professional recommends that an SEP be developed, is the school required to do it?

The school-based Student Services Team has the responsibility to consider all forms of information on a student. However, the decision for programming for a student is ultimately the decision of the educators based on the needs of the student and the resources available to the school.

How do you facilitate the transfer of information from one level to another (i.e. grade to grade or school to school)?

Concerted effort should be made to have focussed time dedicated to the transfer of information. For example, resource teachers in a district could have a day scheduled where they pass on key programming information to the receiving teachers at the middle and high school levels.

If a student is following an SEP, how will this effect any post-secondary educational opportunities?

The fact that a student may be following a Special Education Plan may not affect entrance to post-secondary institutions. These institutions are generally interested in the transcript of marks. The number of modified courses may influence an institution's decision as to whether or not a student is admitted. However, this is not consistent and individual institutions should be contacted as to their policy in this regard. Also, post-secondary institutions are interested in documented evidence of accommodations that are made for students in school. They use this evidence to assist them in making accommodations for students at the post-secondary level. It should be noted that some institutions require a diagnosis before accommodations are permitted. *It should also be noted that some post-secondary institutions (e.g. UPEI) are willing to modify their entrance criteria to better ensure the inclusion of students with disabilities.*

Will the SEP status on the home report be reflected on the student's transcript?

The Department of Education is currently in discussion with WinSchool (the company that designs the electronic home report) to have the transcript reflect the SEP information; that is, whether or not there have been accommodations, modification or individualization.

What does "Justification for SEP" mean on the Summary form?

It is assumed that if the student is on an SEP there is an educational delay. The "justification" refers to "why" there might be an educational delay. For example, there might be a suspected processing difficulty, or behavioural challenge that has manifested over an extended period of time. The justification needs to be related to one of the characterized conditions listed in the Education Act.

What does "Assessments on File" mean on the Summary Sheet?

This refers to any informal or formal assessments that have been completed with the student. Minimally, there should be some indication of achievement (educational) testing. This can be a curriculum-based measure, or something more standardized.

Will more professional development be provided related to the provincial special education concerns and processes?

A professional development package will be made available to districts with regard to the SEP process. The Department of Education will offer support to districts in this regard as well.

Letter to Parents
(Sample)

Dear Parent,

The Department of Education in consultation with the various school districts has developed a provincial Special Education Plan (SEP) to be used in the program planning for students with exceptionalities. The planning may include accommodations, modification, or individualization.

Legislation requires that parents of students with exceptionalities be consulted during the educational planning process for their child. As such is the case, we would encourage you to be actively involved in the planning process, understand the planning that is documented in the Special Education Plan, and acknowledge your understanding by signing the plan in the appropriate spaces.

Your support is important to ensure your child's success. We welcome your continued collaboration.

Should you have questions regarding the Special Education Plan, please do not hesitate to contact:

Sincerely,

Special Education Plan
 Summary

School Year: _____

Name: _____ District: _____

Medicare #: _____ School: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Grade: _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s): _____ Teacher: _____

Phone: (H) _____ (W) _____ Resource Teacher: _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Pertinent Medical Info: _____

Justification for SEP: _____

Type of Plan: Accommodation Modification Individualization Transition

Resource Support: Direct Indirect Monitor
 Teacher Assistants: Full-time Part-time Shared

Assessments on File: (Give date if possible)

Educational _____ Psychological _____
 Speech and Language _____ Other _____

Program Adjustments

Subject	Regular Curriculum	Reg. Curr. with Acc.	Modified Curriculum	Individualized Curriculum	Teacher Signature
English Lang. Arts					
Math					
Science					
Social Studies					
French					
Music					
Art					
Health					
Personal Development					
Physical Education					
Other					

Name: _____

Date: _____

Reporting Period Reviews _____

Date: _____ Date: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____
(if applicable)

Recommendations for Change: During Review Periods, please indicate any changes needed.

I have read the above document and believe it to be representative of that agreed to in planning sessions. I understand that the above Special Education Plan is designed to meet my child's individual needs and does not necessarily follow the provincial curriculum for my child's grade level.

Total # of Pages: _____

Attachments: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Resource Teacher Signature: _____

Date: _____

Principal Signature: _____

Date: _____

Other Signature: _____

Date: _____

Comments: _____

****Complete this section only for students who have individualized or detailed modified planning****

Individualized

Modified

Name: _____ Date: _____

STUDENT STRENGTHS	STUDENT NEEDS

ANNUAL GOALS	
1.	_____

2.	_____

3.	_____

4.	_____

5.	_____

I have read the above document and believe the goals and outcomes in it to be representative of those agreed to in planning sessions. I understand that the above goals and outcomes are designed to meet my child's individual needs and that they are not necessarily those of the provincial curriculum for my child's grade level.

Total # of Pages: _____ # Attachments: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Resource Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

Other Signature: _____ Date: _____

Special Education Plan Accommodations

Name: _____ Date: _____

Subject(s): _____

Learning Tools and Technology Devices

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manipulatives | <input type="checkbox"/> Dark line paper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Raised line paper | <input type="checkbox"/> Large print materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Braille written materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Calculator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spell checker | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal FM system |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer assisted technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom FM system |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Learning Environment

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative program site | <input type="checkbox"/> Special study area/individual work area
(e.g., resource room, study carrel) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seating arrangement | <input type="checkbox"/> Short-term Intervention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special lighting | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Note Taking

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Near rather than far point copying | <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal notes on tape |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photocopied notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Student note taker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Key words and phrases only | <input type="checkbox"/> Point form notes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Word processor for notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher's copy of notes provided |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mind Map | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Name: _____ Date: _____

Subject(s): _____

Organization

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring of student agenda/teacher initials homework | <input type="checkbox"/> Put homework in separate special organizational binder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colour coding of notebooks | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean desk on regular schedule |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational mentor | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual/personal schedule |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outline provided for all special projects | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra set of texts at home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special homework assignment sheet/contract | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular home contact (e.g., home/school journal; voice mail) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Human Resource Assistance

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peer tutor | <input type="checkbox"/> Peer helper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noon hour or after school tutor | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sign or oral interpreter | <input type="checkbox"/> Scribe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reader | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Teaching and Learning Strategies

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mnemonics (memory prompts) | <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced reading level materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strategy card (step-by-step direction) | <input type="checkbox"/> Simplified directions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emphasize visual presentations | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide tactile/kinesthetic activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor attention (signal systems) | <input type="checkbox"/> Adjusted expectations for length of assignments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent activity breaks | <input type="checkbox"/> Written directions read to student |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taped texts | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Division of long assignments into parts | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Name: _____ Date: _____

Subject(s): _____

Homework/Study Strategies

- Test outline and preview provided
- In-school study program
- Extra time for project completion
- Reader or tutor to review notes
- Prioritize homework assignments
- _____
- Mentor
- Reduced number of assigned questions
- Alternate format to written assignment
- Study broken into several short slots
- _____
- _____

Testing/Evaluation

- Scribe for designated tests
- Adjusted test format (multiple choice, true/false, etc.) in lieu of essay
- Oral testing
- Provincial assessment accommodations (see provincial guidelines)
- Frequent short quizzes in lieu of exam
- Evaluation of daily work only
- Open book
- Evaluation of special projects only
- Written directions read to student
- _____
- Quiet, individual or small group setting
- Access to computer
- Practice test provided or example given on tests
- Blank visual organizer provided with test
- Extra time (usually time and a half/double time)
- Word choices provided for fill-in-the-blank questions
- Teacher selects key questions
- Spelling not counted in daily work or test situations
- Portfolio
- _____

Comments: _____

Special Education Plan Modification

Name: _____

Date: _____

All Subjects: _____

or

Subject: _____

Simplified Instructional Level

language/vocabulary of instruction

level of task requirements

concrete vs. abstract methodology

other _____

Curriculum Content

simplified/abridged text

adjusted reading level

modified curricular outcomes (more than 50%)

other _____

Instructional Strategies

Materials

Evaluations/Assessment Expectations

END OF YEAR EVALUATION
(Complete and attach to SEP in May/June)

Results of Yearly Evaluation: _____

Comments: _____

Recommendations for Change/Next Steps: _____

Team Member Signatures: _____

Date: _____

Comments: _____

If parent/guardian is unable to participate in end of the year evaluation, please ensure a copy is sent home so they may participate and are aware of the recommendations for the Fall.

Special Education Plan

Individualized

Modified

Name: _____

Date: _____

Subject/Skill: _____

Goal: _____

Outcome: _____

Methods/Materials: _____

Responsibility: _____

Date: _____ Evaluation: Achieved Not Achieved _____

Outcome: _____

Methods/Materials: _____

Responsibility: _____

Date: _____ Evaluation: Achieved Not Achieved _____

Outcome: _____

Methods/Materials: _____

Responsibility: _____

Date: _____ Evaluation: Achieved Not Achieved _____

This page should be copied as often as necessary to accommodate all applicable goals and outcomes

CONTACTS

Autism Society of New Brunswick

30 Ealey Crescent
Riverview, N.B.
E1B 1E6
www.abj.nb.ca/autismnb/index.html

Learning Disabilities Association of New Brunswick

100A-403 Regent Street
Fredericton, N.B.
E3B 3X6
1-877-544-9300
www.nald.ca/ldanb

New Brunswick Association for Community Living

2nd Floor, 86 York Street
Fredericton, N.B.
E3B 3N5

Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons

440 King Street, Suite 648
Fredericton, N.B.
E3B 5H8
1-800-442-4412
www.gnb.ca/0048/english/index.htm

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"Resource for the Transition of Students With Exceptionalities From School to Work or Post Secondary Education and Adult Life," Department of Education, Educational Programs and Services Branch, Student Services Unit (Anglophone), May 2001.