

Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
90 Mulberry Street, P.O. Box 2012, Hamilton, Ontario L8N 3R9



PARENTS' GUIDE
TO
SPECIAL EDUCATION
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Revised August, 2011

HAMILTON-WENTWORTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MISSION

The mission of Catholic Education in Hamilton-Wentworth, in union with our Bishop, is to enable all learners to realize the fullness of humanity of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the model.

The Catholic Community of Hamilton-Wentworth believes the learner will realize the fullness of humanity:

If the learning process:

- begins at home and is part of family life
- is nurtured within the Parish
- is anchored in the Catholic Faith
- takes place within the context of worship, sacraments, and the life of the Church
- is enhanced by the school community
- is embraced by the learner as a personal responsibility for life.

If learning takes place in an appropriate and challenging environment:

- in which members of the school community exemplify the teachings of Jesus Christ
- which reflects Gospel values and responsible use of human, financial and natural resources
- which promotes academic excellence and clear indicators of achievement.

VISION

Learners from Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Schools will demonstrate:

- knowledge and practice of their Catholic faith
- the capability of nurturing a strong family unit
- esteem, respect and responsibility for self and others
- academic competence
- the ability to listen accurately and express knowledge clearly
- independence, critical thinking and effective problem solving
- proficiency with technology in order to adapt to a changing world
- the values, attitudes and skills for effective partnerships
- the ability to transform our society.

To enable learners to achieve this Vision, the faith community of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board will reflect:

- the centrality of Jesus Christ in our lives
- the teachings of the Catholic Church
- exemplary role models
- social justice, respect and fairness for all
- a dedicated staff
- a curriculum that is dynamic, practical and relevant
- high standards
- an environment conducive to learning
- effective partnerships
- accountability at all levels.

PHILOSOPHY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

“Each Belongs”

The philosophy of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board is to meet the needs of all children and to help them develop fullness of humanity in a Catholic Community. All students, regardless of special talents or challenging needs, can grow and they can grow best by attending their neighbourhood schools along with their brothers and sisters.

Every child with challenging needs requires a sense of belonging, reasonable and realistic success and concern for his or her dignity as a person. The child is not served by sympathy or sentimentality. Exceptional pupils share with their fellow pupils the responsibility to demonstrate acceptable behaviour and to strive for total growth and development.

It is the responsibility of each individual who instructs children to foster growth. No handicap, however severe, and no learning deficit, however persistent, should discourage our efforts. No special gift is to be neglected. All human and material resources must be used to meet the needs of the pupil. Provision of programs and services in our schools is governed by inclusion, normalization and personalization.

(June 17, 1969 Board report to the Education Committee)



Believing, Achieving, Serving

MEETING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF EXCEPTIONAL PUPILS

The Education Act requires that school boards provide, or purchase from another board, special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils. The purpose of this parents' guide is to provide you with information about the Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) and to outline for you the procedures involved in identifying a pupil as "exceptional", deciding the pupil's placement and appealing such decisions if you do not agree with the IPRC.

If, after reading this guide, you require more information, please see the board contact list at the end of the document.

What is an IPRC?

Regulation 181/98 requires that all school boards set up IPRCs. An IPRC is composed of at least three persons, one of whom must be a Principal or Supervisory Officer of the board.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board has two types of IPRCs:

- System IPRC which is composed of the Superintendent responsible for Special Education or designate and the Principals of the Schools in which the System Special Programs are situated;
- School IPRC which is composed of the Principal, the Special Education Resource Teacher, the Classroom Teacher and any other staff as designated by the Principal.

What is the role of the IPRC?

The IPRC will:

- decide whether or not your child should be identified as exceptional;
- identify the areas of your child's exceptionality, according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education;
- decide an appropriate placement for your child - four placement options are available:
 - *Regular Classroom with Indirect Support* - the exceptional pupil is placed in the regular classroom setting for the entire school day. The exceptional pupil's special education program is provided by the Classroom Teacher who receives specialized consultative services;

Notes:

1. **If you wish to receive this Parents' Guide in a Braille, a large print or an audio-cassette format, please contact the Board at the address or telephone number shown on the last page of this Guide.**
2. **When used in this Guide, the word "parent" includes guardian.**

- *Regular Classroom with Resource Assistance* - the exceptional pupil is placed in the regular classroom setting for the entire school day and receives additional special education assistance from a Resource Teacher and/or a Special Education Resource Teacher within the regular classroom. An Educational Assistant may also be assigned to provide additional support;
- *Regular Classroom with Withdrawal Assistance* - the exceptional pupil is placed in the regular classroom for more than fifty (50) percent of the school day and is withdrawn from the regular classroom to a resource room to receive additional special education assistance from a Special Education Resource Teacher. An Educational Assistant may also be assigned to provide additional support;
- *System Special Education Program* - there are two types of System Special Education Programs:
 - *Primary Speech and Language Centre* - a program situated at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Elementary School designed to provide ongoing assessment and remediation for the equivalent of one school year for pupils in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3 who have a severe speech and/or language impairment;
 - *Junior Learning Disability Centre* – A program situated at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Elementary School designed to provide ongoing assessment and remediation for the equivalent of one school year for pupils in Grades four to six who have severe specific learning disabilities;
 - *Assistive Technology Learning Centre* – a program situated at St. Ann Catholic Elementary School (Hamilton) designed to provide ongoing assessment and remediation through the use of a personal laptop for up to six week period for pupils in Grades four to six who have severe specific learning disability and who are deemed best able to learn through the use of technology.

- review the identification.

Who is identified as an exceptional pupil?

The Education Act defines an exceptional pupil as “*a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a special education program....*” Students are identified according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education.

What is a special education program?

A special education program is defined in the Education Act as an educational program that:

- is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation; and

- includes a plan (called an Individual Education Plan or IEP) containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil.

What are special education services?

Special education services are defined in the Education Act as the facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.

What is an I.E.P.?

“Pursuant to the board’s commitment to accommodating the disability-related needs of students to the point of undue hardship, the Individual Educational Plan (I.E.P.) will be developed.”

The IEP must be developed for your child in consultation with you. It must include:

- specific educational expectations;
- an outline of the special education program and services that will be received;
- a statement about the methods by which your child’s progress will be reviewed; and
- for students 14 years and older (except those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness), a plan for transition to appropriate post-secondary school activities, such as work, further education and community living.

The IEP must be completed within 30 days after your child has been placed in the special education program and the Principal must ensure that you receive a copy of the IEP.

How is an IPRC meeting requested?

The Principal of your child’s school:

- must request an IPRC meeting for your child, upon receiving your written request;
- may, with written notice to you, refer your child to an IPRC when the Principal and the child’s Teacher or Teachers believe that your child may benefit from a special education program.

Within 15 days of receiving your request, or giving you notice, the Principal must provide you with a copy of this Guide and a written statement of approximately when the IPRC will meet.

May parents attend an IPRC meeting?

Regulation 181/98 entitles parents and pupils 16 years or older:

- to be present at and participate in all committee discussions about your child; and
- to be present when the committee’s identification and placement decision is made.

Who else may attend an IPRC meeting?

Other individuals who may attend include:

- the Principal of your child's school;
- other resource people such as your child's Teacher, special education staff, board support staff, or the representative of an agency, who may provide further information or clarification;
- your representative - that is, a person(s) who may support you or speak on behalf of you or your child; and
- an interpreter, if one is required. You may request the services of an interpreter through the Principal of your child's school. The board provides interpreters for fifteen (15) languages, including sign language.

Who may request that others attend?

Either you or the Principal of your child's school may make a request for the attendance of others at the IPRC meeting.

What information will parents receive about the IPRC meeting?

At least 10 days in advance of the meeting, the chairperson of the IPRC will provide you with written notification of the meeting and an invitation to attend the meeting as an important partner in considering your child's placement. This letter will notify you of the date, time and place of the meeting and it will ask you to indicate whether you will attend.

Before the IPRC meeting begins, you will receive a written copy of any information about your child that the chair of the IPRC has received. This may include the results of assessments or a summary of information.

What if parents are unable to attend the scheduled meeting?

If you are unable to make the scheduled meeting, you may:

- contact the school Principal to arrange an alternative date or time; or
- let the school Principal know you will not be attending and, as soon as possible after the meeting, the Principal will forward to you, for your consideration and signature, the IPRC's written statement of decision, noting the decision of identification and placement and any recommendations regarding special education programs and services.

What happens at an IPRC meeting?

- The chair introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting.
- The IPRC will review all available information about your child. They will:
 - consider an educational assessment of your child;
 - consider, subject to the provisions of the Health Care Consent Act 1996, a health or psychological assessment of your child conducted by a qualified practitioner if they feel that such an assessment is required to make a correct identification or placement decision;
 - interview your child, with your consent if your child is less than 16 years of age, if they feel it would be useful to do so; and
 - consider any information that you submit about your child or that your child submits if he or she is 16 years of age or older.
- The committee may discuss any proposal that has been made about a special education program or special education services for the child. Committee members will discuss any such proposal at your request, or at the request of your child if the child is 16 years of age or older.
- You are encouraged to ask questions and join in the discussion.
- Following the discussion and after all the information has been presented and considered, the committee will make its decision.

What will the IPRC consider in making its placement decision?

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

- meet your child's needs; and
- be consistent with your preferences.

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

If the committee decides that your child should be placed in a special education class, it must state the reasons for that decision in its written statement of decision.

What will the IPRC's written statement of decision include?

The IPRC's written statement of decision will state:

- whether the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional;
- where the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional,
 - the categories and definitions of any exceptionalities identified, as they are defined by the Ministry of Education, (i.e., behaviour, communication, intellectual, physical, multiple);
 - the IPRC's description of your child's strengths and needs;
 - the IPRC's placement decision; and
 - the IPRC's recommendations regarding a special education program and special education services;
- where the IPRC has decided that your child should be placed in a special education class, the reasons for that decision.

What happens after the IPRC has made its decision?

- If you **agree** with the IPRC decision, you will be asked to indicate, by signing your name, that you agree with the identification and placement decisions made by the IPRC. The statement of decision may be signed at the IPRC meeting or taken home and returned.
- If the IPRC has identified your child as an exceptional pupil and you **have agreed** with the IPRC identification and placement decision, the board will promptly notify the Principal of the school at which the special education program is to be provided of the need to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child.

Once a child has been placed in a special education program, can the placement be reviewed?

- A review IPRC meeting will be held if a change in either the identification or the special education placement is being recommended by the Principal.
- You may request a review IPRC meeting any time after your child has been in a special education program for 3 months.

What does a review IPRC consider and decide?

- The review IPRC considers the same type of information that was originally considered.
- With your written permission, the IPRC conducting the review will consider the progress your child has made in relation to the IEP.

- The IPRC will review the placement and identification decisions and decide whether they should be continued or whether a different decision should now be made.

What can parents do if they disagree with an IPRC decision?

- If you **do not agree** with either the identification or placement decision made by the IPRC, you may:
 - within 15 days of receipt of the decision, request that the IPRC hold a second meeting to discuss your concerns;
 - if you **do not agree** with the decision after the second meeting, you may file a written notice of appeal within 15 days of your receipt of the decision; or,
 - within 30 days of receipt of the decision, if no second meeting has taken place, file a written notice of appeal with the Director of Education and Secretary of the Board, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, 90 Mulberry Street, P.O. Box 2012, Hamilton, Ontario, L8N 3R9.
- Your child's identification and placement cannot change until the appeal process is completed.

If you do not consent to the IPRC decision and you do not appeal it, the board will instruct the Principal to implement the IPRC decision.

How do I appeal an IPRC decision?

If you disagree with the IPRC's identification of your child as exceptional or with the placement decision of the IPRC, you may, within 30 days of receipt of the original decision or within 15 days of receipt of the decision from the second meeting described above, give written notification of your intention to appeal the decision to the Director of Education and Secretary of the Board, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, 90 Mulberry Street, P.O. Box 2012, Hamilton, Ontario, L8N 3R9.

What happens in the appeal process?

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- The board will establish a special education appeal board to hear your appeal. The appeal board will be comprised of three persons (one of whom is to be selected by you, the parent; one selected by the board; a third selected jointly by the board and the parent/guardian) who have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal.
- The chairperson of the appeal board will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but no later than 30 days after he or she has been selected (unless parents and board both provide written consent to a later date).
- The appeal board will receive the material reviewed by the IPRC and may interview any persons who may be able to contribute information about the matter under appeal.

- You, the parent, and your child, if he or she is 16 years old or over, are entitled to be present at and to participate in all discussions.
- The appeal board must make its recommendation within 3 days of the date of the meeting. It may:
 - agree with the IPRC and recommend that the decision be implemented; or
 - disagree with the IPRC and make a recommendation to the board about your child's identification, placement or both.
- The appeal board will report its recommendations in writing to you and to the school board, providing the reasons for its recommendations.
- Within 30 days of receiving the appeal board's written statement, the school board will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations. Boards are not required to follow the appeal board recommendation.
- You may accept the decision of the school board or you may appeal to a Special Education Tribunal. You may request a hearing by writing to the secretary of the Special Education Tribunal. Information about making an application to the tribunal will be included with the appeal board's decision.

What special education programs and services are provided by the Board?

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board provides special education programs and services for pupils with the following exceptionalities:

- **BEHAVIOUR EXCEPTIONALITY**
- **COMMUNICATION EXCEPTIONALITIES**
 - Autism
 - Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 - Language Impairment
 - Learning Disability
 - Speech Impairment
- **INTELLECTUAL EXCEPTIONALITIES**
 - Mild Intellectual Disability
 - Developmental Disability
 - Giftedness

● **PHYSICAL EXCEPTIONALITIES**

- Physical Disability
- Blind or Low Vision

● **MULTIPLE EXCEPTIONALITIES**

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board emphasizes the inclusion of exceptional pupils in its schools. This means that the majority of exceptional pupils are placed in the regular classroom setting where they receive their special education programs and services. A smaller number of exceptional pupils receive a part of their special education program and some of their special education services outside of the regular classroom. Frequently this occurs in the school's Resource Room. An even smaller number of students attend the Primary Speech and Language Centre at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Elementary School, the Junior Learning Disability Centre at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Elementary School or the Assistive Technology Learning Centre at St. Ann Catholic Elementary School (Hamilton).

Special education programs and services are provided within the schools by Classroom Teachers, Literacy Teachers and/or Special Education Resource Teachers.

The Board also provides an array of support services for exceptional pupils, their parents/guardians and the school staffs, including:

- Audiologist
- Educational Assistants
- Job Coaches
- Assistant Superintendent: Special Education
- Psychologist
- Resource Teachers – Autism Spectrum Disorders, Behaviour, Deaf/Blind, Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Developmental & Physical Disabilities, Gifted, Learning Disabilities, Visual Impairments
- Social Workers
- Speech-Language Pathologists

If a parent of an exceptional pupil wishes their child to be placed in a special education program offered by another school board, the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board will investigate the placement option.

What organizations are available to assist parents?

Many parent organizations are available to provide information and support to parents of exceptional pupils. The following organizations are members of the Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC):

- Autism Ontario -Hamilton Chapter
- Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Foundation
- Community Living Hamilton
- Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton
- There are several Members-at-Large representing other community interests.
- Hamilton Family Network
- Hamilton-Wentworth Association for Bright Children
- Learning Disabilities Association - Hamilton-Wentworth Chapter

The Special Education Advisory Committee is a Board Committee which has been established to further the interests and well-being of exceptional pupils. One of its responsibilities is to monitor the educational needs of exceptional pupils and to make recommendations to the Board of Trustees on any matter affecting special education programs and services.

SEAC meets on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Meetings are generally held at the Catholic Education Centre, 90 Mulberry Street, Hamilton, Ontario, and are open to the public. Please call the Assistant Superintendent: Special Education (905-525-2930) to verify location.

What are the Ministry's provincial and demonstration schools?

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

Demonstration schools for English-speaking students with ADHD and severe learning disabilities:

- Amethyst School
1090 Highbury Avenue
London, Ontario N5Y 4V9
Telephone: 519-453-4408
- Sagonaska School
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, Ontario K8P 1B2
Telephone: 613-967-2830
- Trillium School
347 Ontario Street South
Milton, Ontario L9T 3X9
Telephone: 905-878-8428

School for the blind and deaf-blind:

- W. Ross Macdonald School
350 Brant Avenue
Brantford, Ontario N3T 3J9
Telephone: 519-759-0730

Schools for the deaf:

- Ernest C. Drury School
255 Ontario Street South
Milton, Ontario L9T 2M5
Telephone: 905-878-2851
TTY: 905-878-7195
- Robarts School
1090 Highbury Avenue
P.O. Box 7360, Station E
London, Ontario N5Y 4V9
Telephone and TTY:
519-453-4400
- Sir James Whitney School
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, Ontario K8P 1B2
Telephone and TTY:
613-967-2823

Francophone school for the deaf and for those with learning disabilities:

- Centre Jules-Léger
281 rue Lanark
Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 6R8
Telephone: 613-761-9300
TTY: 613-761-9302 and 613-761-9304

Where can parents obtain additional information?

Additional information can be obtained from:

- a member of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC);
- a school Principal; and/or
- a staff member of Student Services.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2011-2012 Membership

PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

● **COMMUNITY LIVING HAMILTON**

(Intellectual Exceptionalities - Developmental Disabilities and Mild Intellectual Disabilities)

- Patricia Santucci (Representative)
404 Aberdeen Avenue, Unit 1
Hamilton, ON L8P 2R5
289-396-4115 (H)
- Don Burroughs (Alternate)
123 Remo Avenue
Hamilton, ON L8T 2S6
905-287-2411

● **DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION OF HAMILTON**

(Intellectual Exceptionalities - Developmental Disabilities and Mild Intellectual Disabilities)

- James Cain (Representative)
56 Hopkins Court
Dundas, ON L9H 5M5
905-627-7153 (H)
- Jay Nelligan (Alternate)
76 Claudette Gate
Hamilton, ON L9B 2S3
(905) 318-8950 (H)

● **HAMILTON FAMILY NETWORK**

(All Exceptional Pupils)

- Mary Vasilak (Representative)
53 McGregor Court
Ancaster, ON L9G 1B3
905-648-7680 (H)

● **HAMILTON-WENTWORTH ASSOCIATION FOR BRIGHT CHILDREN**

(Intellectual Exceptionalities - Giftedness)

- Gloria Petitti (Representative)
62 Springbreeze Heights
Stoney Creek, ON L8E 0B3
905 643 8243 (H)
- Deborah Crowe (Alternate)
81143 Fiddlers Green
Ancaster, ON L9G 4X1
905.304.8016 (H)

MEMBERS AT LARGE

- Dr. William Mahoney
17 Pinetree Court
Dundas, ON L9H 6V5
905-627-5131 (H)
905-521-2100, ext. 77605 (O)
- Donna Taylor
69 Provident Way
Mount Hope, ON L0R 1W0
905-679-6847 (H)
- Paula Grond
258 StoneChurch Rd. W.
Hamilton, ON L9B 1A4
905-383-7998 (H)

TRUSTEES

- Ralph Agostino (Trustee)
905-387-3094 (H)
- Sam Agostino (Trustee)
905-536-0789 (H)
- John Valvasori (Alternate)
905-679-6523 (H)

STAFF

- Jackie Bajus
Superintendent of Education (Special Education)
905-525-2930
- Des Brennan
Manager, Social Work Services
905-525-2930
- Domenica Leone
Assistant Superintendent: Special Education
905-525-2930
- Julie Byrne
Manager, Speech/Language & Hearing Services
905-525-2930