

Policy Statement



Commission scolaire Western Québec
Western Québec School Board

Policy No. C-17

SUBJECT: **Policy Governing the Organization of Educational Services for Students with Special Needs**

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INTRODUCTION

The Western Québec School Board is committed to ensuring that all students achieve success. Furthermore, we support the integration of students with special needs in regular classes whenever possible.

The Policy Governing the Organization of Educational Services for Students with Special Needs (henceforth titled Special Education Policy) is designed to ensure that we achieve our commitment in compliance with Section 235 of the Education Act.

The Québec Education Program (QEP) presents a vision for education that includes three essential components: to impart knowledge, to foster social development to prepare students to live in harmony and to provide qualifications through various pathways. It is the responsibility of the education institutions to provide all students with an education meeting their needs by differentiating instruction and offering a broad range of educational options. These three objectives underlie all the actions schools must take to ensure that students achieve educational success. **Success can mean different things for different students and schools must adapt their actions to the needs of their students to ensure that all have the best possible chance of achieving success in terms of knowledge, social development and qualifications.**

The MEES' *Special Education Policy and Plan of Action: Adapting our Schools to the Needs of all Students* was adopted and launched in January 2000. It emphasizes success in the most inclusive setting possible. Our Policy will respect the intent of these documents and will include procedures for the implementation of the Policy. The Complementary Services Parity Committee (CSPC) will review this policy as required.

OBJECTIVE OF THE POLICY:

In conformity with Article 235 of the Education Act, the policy will address:

- Procedures for the evaluation of students with special needs
- Methods for integrating students
- Conditions for placement of students in special classes or programs and
- Methods for preparing and evaluating the Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

ORIENTATIONS OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY

The Western Québec School Board endorses the six lines of action proposed by the MEES. - "Adapting our Schools to the Needs of All Students", MEQ 2000:

1. Recognizing the importance of early intervention in the prevention of problems.
2. Making the adaptation of educational services a priority for all those working with students with special needs by continuously adjusting or modifying existing methods and by offering various pathways.
3. Placing the organization of educational services at the service of students with special needs by basing it on the individual evaluation of their abilities and needs and by ensuring that these services are provided in the most natural environment for the students (that which is closest to their residence and to their instructional cycle).

4. Creating a true educational community, starting with the child and the parents and continuing with outside partners and community organizations working with young people in order to provide more consistent intervention and better-coordinated services.
5. Devoting particular attention to students with difficulties and especially those with learning disabilities or behavioral difficulties, and determining methods of intervention that better meet their needs and abilities.
6. Developing methods for evaluating students' educational success in terms of knowledge, social development and qualifications, assessing the quality of services and reporting results.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

The school board is responsible for ensuring that within the context of Article 275 of the Education Act, the Special Education Policy is implemented respecting the unique nature of each school and its student population. To this end:

1. The Director General designates an individual responsible for the Special Education Policy.
2. The board will initiate and participate on all committees designated for Special Education by law or by collective agreements.
3. The board will identify the human and financial resources within its means to support special education students.
4. The school board will review the application of this policy and will solicit feedback from The Management Team (in school administrators), The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), and The Western Québec Teachers Association. The review process will be conducted by the Director of Complementary Services.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES DEPARTMENT OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

Complementary Services as outlined in the Basic School Regulations consist of a multidisciplinary group of personnel who provide programs and services designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To provide support for classroom instructional activities
2. To develop autonomy, initiative, creativity and a sense of responsibility and belonging for all students in the school community
3. To work with the school community to help students with special needs overcome any difficulties they may be experiencing
4. To support principals by providing professional development (E.A. 96.20) and in-service training

Complementary services may include the following services which are reviewed annually by the school board.

- Academic and career counseling and information services
- Psycho-educational services
- Speech-language therapy services
- Professional and support personnel services
- Services in spiritual care and guidance and community involvement.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES PARITY COMMITTEE

As defined in the provincial collective agreement this Committee is mandated to:

- Give its view on the policy on the organization of educational services for students with special needs
- Give its view on Special Education services offered by the school board
- Verify all the resources provided to the school board for students with special needs
- Determine the criteria for the allocation of resources to schools in conformity with the WQSB's Policy on Special Education
- Receive and analyze requests from the school with regards to special needs students
- Review the school reports on the use of these resources for special needs students.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL-LEVEL SPECIAL NEEDS COMMITTEE

As defined in the provincial collective agreement the School-Level Special Needs Committee is mandated to:

- Identify the specialized and financial resources needed to support students with special needs and their teachers
- Inform the Complementary Services Parity Committee of the resources needed by the school
- Distribute the resources to support students with special needs and their teachers
- Assess the effectiveness of the procedures for accessing these services
- Report to the Complementary Services Parity Committee on the allocation of the resources which have been used

IDENTIFICATION OF A STUDENT WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Prevention strategies and early intervention must be put into place as soon as difficulties are noted and are not contingent on a student being formally identified.

- The term "identified" refers to the formal recognition of a particular set of needs which correspond to definitions provided by the MEES.
- When a student has been formally identified there must be an active IEP developed. There may, however, already be an active IEP in place prior to formal identification.
- The school administrator and/or the Special Education Consultant(s) shall inform the school board administrator responsible for Special Education of the names of students having I.E.P.s who have been identified according to the MEES definitions.
- Remedial and Supporting Teachers and qualified professionals may assist the school administrator in evaluating the needs of the student, determining the correct identification, and assisting in the development of the IEP.
- Every new identification must first be submitted to the Ad Hoc Committee.
- The school principal is responsible for the process leading to identification of students with special needs and must respect the guidelines outlined by the MEES and the school board.
- Upon request, school board personnel shall provide assistance to schools during this process.

**PROCEDURES FOR THE EVALUATION of
and/ or IDENTIFICATION OF A STUDENT'S
NEEDS**

- Teacher recognizes student's needs through observation and other relevant information
- Teacher intervenes with appropriate strategies.
- Teacher contacts the parents. Teacher writes a report describing actions taken, frequency of observations, summary of existing classroom assessments
- Teacher requests support in writing



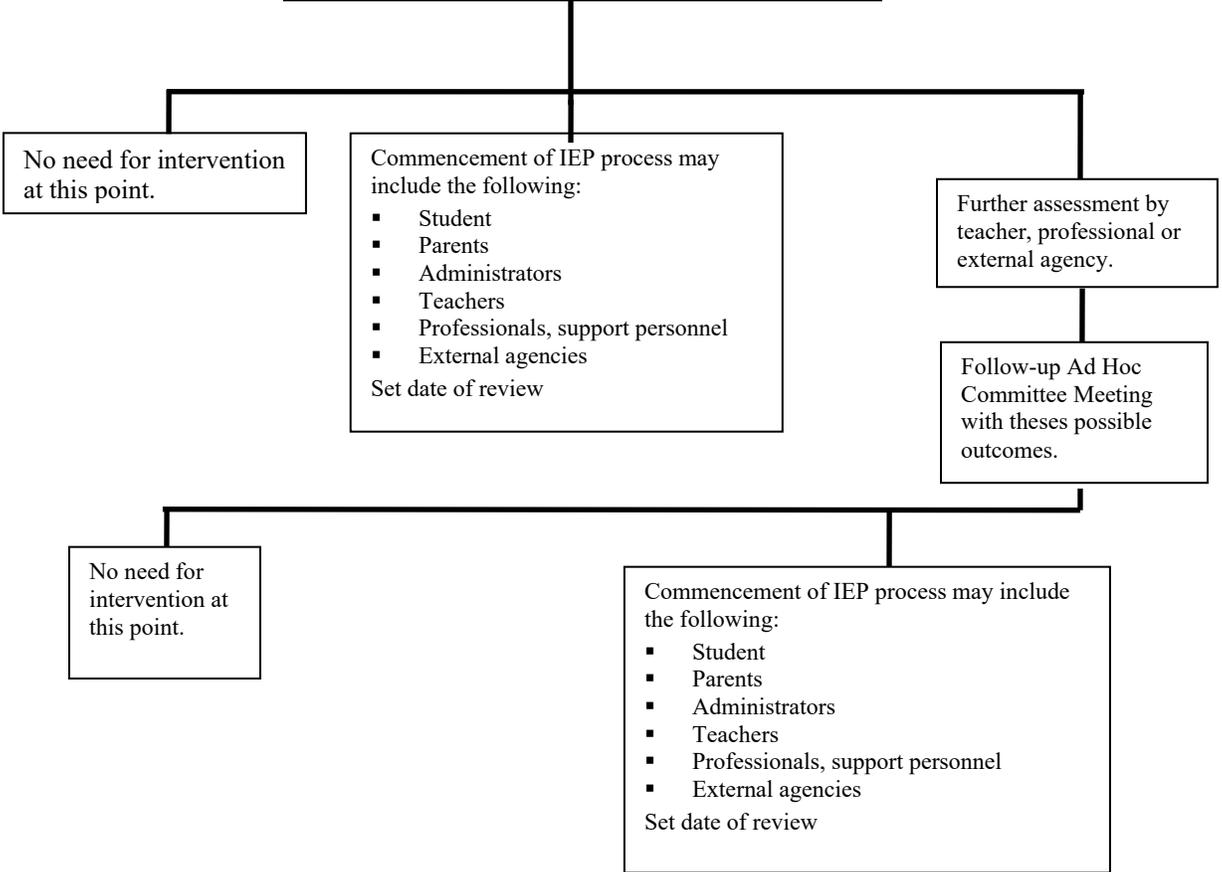
**School
Principal**



School Principal requests additional educational assessment or consultation as needed. Ad hoc may or may not be needed



School principal sets up Ad Hoc Committee meeting with these possible outcomes.



PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IDENTIFIED OUTSIDE THE WESTERN QUÉBEC SCHOOL BOARD

1. If an Intervention Plan has already been established for a student by a partner organization (in the area of daycare, early childhood, health, social services or youth protection etc.) the school administration will ensure the co-ordination of the services provided to the student. The IEP will specify the procedure for co-ordination.
2. If a student with special needs transfers from another school board, the existing IEP may be used on an interim basis.
3. If diagnostic documents are received by the school board, the Complementary Services Department will advise the school of the change of identification and a draft IEP will be implemented.

THE INTEGRATION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Section 235(2) of the Education Act states that the policy must include:

Methods for integrating those students into regular classes or groups and into regular school activities as well as the support services required for their integration and, if need be, the weighting required to determine the maximum number of students per class or group.

Organization of Services

- In accordance with the MEES policy (Policy Concerning the Organization of Educational Services for Students with Handicaps, Social Maladjustments or Learning Disabilities), the Western Québec School Board believes that the preferred placement for students with special needs is the regular classroom. Inclusion for special needs students implies the student working within the educational and social framework with the rest of the class. The student's objectives, however, may be quite different than those of the other students.
- The organization of special education services must serve the best interest of students with special needs.
- The IEP states the student's needs and the school or school board may organize their services, on an annual basis, to include alternative settings or groupings. Integration into the school community and/or the outside community for social and/or work-study purposes may be a component of a student's IEP.
- *When students are integrated into a regular class, the teacher should select methods of instruction corresponding to the requirements and objectives fixed for each group or for each student entrusted to (the teacher's) care. (E.A., s. 19).* Teachers will receive support to adapt their teaching to accommodate this organization of service.

Conditions for Integrating Students with Special Needs into the Regular Class or Group

Integration takes place *if it has been established on the basis of the evaluation of the student's abilities and needs that such integration would facilitate the student's learning and social integration and would not impose an excessive constraint or significantly undermine the rights of the other students (E.A., s. 235).*

- The IEP guides the integration of a student into the regular classroom.

- Annually, in accordance with the decisions made by the School-Level Special Needs Committee, the school principal will outline to the staff and the governing board how special education services are to be delivered.
- The availability of services offered by the school board to students with special needs will vary according to the area, local resources, location and size of the school.
- Students with special needs may receive one or more support services to complement the adaptive teaching methods provided by the teacher.

Transition from Elementary School to the High School

Each year, school principals will facilitate the transition of students with special needs from the elementary to the secondary sector. The secondary school principal is responsible for ensuring the implementation of their IEPs (E.A., s. 96.14). This involves informing teachers which students have IEPs and/or other special needs.

Support Services for Students and Teachers

The school board identifies, within the designated funding, human and financial resources to support students with special needs. These supports may be either direct or indirect and assist both students and teachers simultaneously. The delivery of services will vary according to student needs and will be influenced by the organization of human and/or financial resources.

Support services are determined by the School-Level Special Needs Committee, the Basic School Regulation and the financial and human resources allocated by the school board.

The following are examples of support services to students and teachers:

Human Resources:

Remedial or Supporting Teacher

Guidance Counsellor

Youth Counsellor

Itinerant Services (e.g. Montreal Oral School for the Deaf; Philip Layton School for the Blind)

Consultant: Spiritual Animation, Guidance and Community Involvement Services

Attendant to the Handicapped

Psychologist

Special Education Consultant

Special Education Technician

Speech-Language Pathologist and Counsellor

Specialized Services:

Centres of Excellence for Behavior, Autism, etc. offered through the Inclusive Education

Service of the MEES

Adaptation of physical facilities

Adapted equipment (desks, chairs etc)

Health and Social Services

Interpretation Services

Special transportation services

Supervision Services (bus monitors, etc.)

Adaptive technology

Specialized Programs

Other:

Adapted scheduling
 Behavior intervention plans
 IEP preparation
 Alternative programming
 Homework Clubs
 Academic assessment tools
 Board level interventions: consultations and visits
 Specialized teaching materials
 In-service Training
 Professional Development
 Parent information sessions
 Crisis intervention procedures
 Home Tuition services

THE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)**A. Legal Requirement**

Section 96.14 of the Education Act governs the development, implementation and evaluation of a student's IEP.

In the case of a handicapped student or a student with a social maladjustment or a learning disability, the principal, with the assistance of the student's parents, of the staff providing services to the student, and of the student himself, unless the student is unable to do so, shall establish an individualised education plan adapted to the needs of the student. The plan must be consistent with the school board's policy concerning the organisation of services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities and in keeping with the ability and needs of the student as evaluated by the school board before the student's placement and enrolment at the school.

B. Contents of the IEP

The following elements should be included:

- Nominative information
- The student's profile
- The participants
- The student's strengths (literacy, numeracy, social/emotional)
- The objectives and competencies written as measurable goals
- The strategies to be used to achieve the goals
- The support services needed by the student
- The types of adaptations or interventions recommended
- The manner in which the academic expectations for the student have been modified (if applicable)
- The dates and signators of the plan (student, teacher, parent(s), principal)

C. Evaluation and Monitoring of the IEP:

The principal shall see to the implementation and periodical evaluation of the individual education plan and inform the student's parents on a regular basis (E.A., s. 96.14).

- At least once a year the IEP must be reviewed formally with the student's parents but the IEP may be revisited at any time. Any revision made to the IEP will be dated, signed and given to the parent. Specific issues and queries about a student's IEP should first be addressed to the student's teacher.
- Updates on student progress will be provided monthly. These updates may be in the form of a written report, a phone call, a parent/ teacher meeting or any other format mutually agreed upon.
- The Western Québec School Board will continue to monitor the identification, validation and IEPs of all students.

STUDENT FILES

According to the *Act Respecting Access to Documents Held by Public Bodies and the Protection of Personal Information*, parents are entitled to access information contained in their child's confidential file. In conformity with the Law, parents wishing to access this file must make a written request to the Secretary General of the School Board.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality of information must be respected for all students. With regard to the student with special needs, it is important that information be shared judiciously with the staff members concerned with each student. The Western Québec School Board must advise all persons involved with students in our school system of the rules concerning confidentiality.

MECHANISMS FOR SOLVING THE PROBLEMS RAISED BY THE APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

- Issues should be addressed, as they arise, with the parties most likely to be able to solve the problem.
- When issues cannot be resolved between student, teacher, and parent the principal will assume responsibility in accordance with the Education Act.
- All other problems raised by the application of the policy must first be sent to the principal of the school concerned who must attempt to find appropriate solutions with the assistance, when necessary, of a resource person from the school board.

A student or parents of a student affected by a decision of the Council of Commissioners, the Executive Committee or the Governing Board, or of an officer or employee of the school board may request the Council of Commissioners to reconsider such decision (E.A., s. 9).

DEFINITIONS

In order to promote a clear understanding of the Special Education Policy of the Western Québec School Board, the following definitions are included:

Adaptation:

The term is used to define changes in instructional strategies, presentation of material, format, response, setting, timing or scheduling that do not alter in any significant way the content of the curriculum. Adaptations are made in order to help students with identified needs achieve success. These are all adaptations in the delivery of the services to the student. With the aid of the adaptations, the student is expected to achieve success in meeting the program objectives.

Ad Hoc Committee:

A committee established in conformity with article 8-9.06 of the 2005-2010 teachers' collective agreement. The committee is composed of a representative of the school administration, the teacher or teachers concerned, and at the request of the committee, a professional. The parents will be invited to participate and when appropriate, the student. When parents are unable to attend, they will be informed of any decisions that may have been taken. Others, such as representatives from external agencies and support personnel, may be invited to participate.

Assessment:

Refers to the measurement of the learning and performance of students. Different types of assessment instruments include achievement tests, minimum competency tests, developmental screening tests, aptitude tests, observation instruments, performance tasks, and authentic assessments.

At Risk:

The MEES uses this term to define a category of student who requires special support measures because they exhibit one or more of the following: learning delays, emotional disorders, behavioral disorders or a developmental delay or mild intellectual impairment. (*Students with Handicaps, Social Maladjustments or Learning Difficulties: Definitions M.E.Q. 2000*) (*See Appendix A*).

Case Conference:

An in-school team meeting.

Collective Agreements:

Collective agreements for employees of the Western Québec School Board.

Complementary Services Parity Committee (CSPC)

This committee is comprised of 5 representatives of the teachers' union and 5 representatives of the WQSB management team and senior administration.

EA:

The Education Act (Revised Statutes of Québec, c. 1-13.3)

Evaluation:

The process of determining an individual student's special needs in order to determine the services/support or approaches required to help him/her succeed in a school setting.

Handicapped:

According to Section 1 of the Education Act a student is considered handicapped if his or her situation corresponds to that described in the definition of handicapped person in section 1 of the Act to secure the handicapped in the exercise of their rights (Revised Statutes of Québec chapter E-20.1): "a person limited in the performance of normal activities who is suffering, significantly and permanently, from a physical or mental deficiency or who regularly uses a prosthesis or an orthopedic device or any other means of palliating his handicap".

Handicapé:

Students designated *handicapé*: have been diagnosed by a qualified professional, have disabilities which limit or prevent their participation in educational activities, have support in order to function at school, and have had their special needs status validated by the MEES.

Home Tuition:

In exceptional cases when a student is unable to attend school for an extended period of time due to illness, a specific handicap, or placement at a readaptive facility due to severe behavior difficulties, service may be provided at home on a part-time basis.

Identification:

The formal process of recognizing the student as meeting the MEES criteria for a student with Social Maladjustment or Learning Disability or Handicapé.

Inclusion:

Inclusion refers to the philosophy and practice of ensuring that a student's special needs are respected, planned for and validated in the class in which they have been placed. Inclusion involves reducing exclusion by restructuring the learning environment, policies and practices so that they respond to, accept and embrace the diversity of students' needs. Inclusion does not imply that the student is expected to or is capable of achieving the academic or social goals of the class into which he is placed.

Individualized Educational Plan (IEP):

Any student who has been formally identified must, by law, have an I.E.P. The I.E.P. targets goals and strategies required to help students succeed. It is a process designed for each student with special needs based on the evaluation of the abilities and needs of that student. It must be a living document that guides students, parents and teachers to achieve stated goals. It is developed, implemented, evaluated and reviewed by the team involved with the student.

Individualized Service Intervention Plan:

An individualized plan, written by a health or social services agency, for services for a student with special needs.

Integration:

Refers to the placement of a student with special needs into regular classes or groups and into regular school activities in accordance with the needs determined in a student's **IEP**.

MEES:

Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur.

Modification:

This term refers to changes made to the content of the curriculum. Students with modified programs are following a combination of individualized academic, behavioral and social goals as identified on the student's I.E.P. This term should not be confused with the term "adaptation". Long-term modifications to the student's curriculum ultimately result in the student following an alternative or diversified pathway in secondary school.

Parent:

The word "parent" means the person having parental authority or, unless that person objects, the person having custody de facto of the student. (E.A., s. 13(2))

Professional:

Complementary Services personnel having specialized training, for example: Speech and Language Pathologist, Special Education Consultant, Guidance Counsellor, Psychologist, Spiritual Life Animator.

Program:

A pathway established by an IEP or in concurrence with MEES guidelines, which will meet a student's special needs.

Resource Teacher:

A qualified teacher with specialized certification, specialized training, or relevant experience in working with students with special needs.

School Administrator:

The school principal or his/her representative.

School-Level Special Education Committee:

An in-school committee organized in accordance with article 8.9.03 of the Teacher's Collective Agreement.

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC):

The committee defined in Section 185 of the Education Act. This committee is comprised of parents of students with special needs.

Service:

Service is defined as intervention and/or evaluation. Service includes assistance given to address a student's academic, physical, behavioral, or emotional needs.

Students with Difficulty:

Students with difficulties are grouped into two main categories:

- Students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities
- Students with handicaps

Support Personnel:

Individuals working with students with special needs in the schools. These may be Attendants to the Handicapped or Special Education Technicians.

Teacher:

Every person employed by the board whose occupation is to teach students in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act (Revised Statutes of Québec, c. I-13-3).

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Policy is based, in particular, on the following documents:

- Education Act (E.A.), Revised Statutes of Québec. c. 1-13.3.
- Ministère de l'éducation, Students with Handicaps, Social Maladjustments or Learning Difficulties: Definitions, Direction de l'adaptation scolaire et des services complémentaires, 2000.
- Québec Education Program, current edition.
- Ministère de l'Éducation, Basic School Regulation for Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Education, July 2000.
- The teachers' collective agreement in force.
- Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, Revised Statutes of Québec. c. C-12.
- Act to Secure the Handicapped in the Exercise of the u-Rights Revised Statutes of Québec. c.E-20.1
- Act respecting Access to Documents held by Public Bodies and the Protection of Personal Information, Revised Statutes of Québec., c. A-2.1
- Civil Code of Québec.