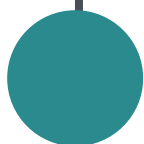


SPECIAL EDUCATION IN ONTARIO

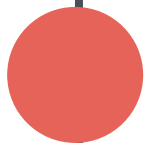
A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS AND CAREGIVERS



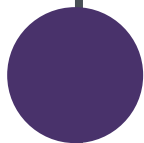
**Introduction to Special
Education in Ontario**



**The Identification,
Placement, and Review
Committee (IPRC)**



**Appealing the IPRC
Decision**



**The Individual Education
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Glossary & Resources



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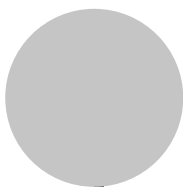
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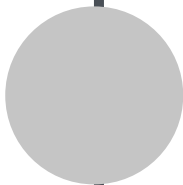
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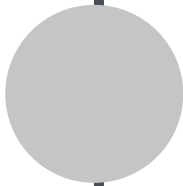
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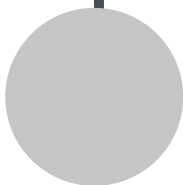
**The Identification,
Placement, and Review
Committee (IPRC)**



**Appealing the IPRC
Decision**



**The Individual
Education Plan (IEP)**



Glossary & Resources

The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)

The IPRC is made up of at least three (3) school board staff, including the Principal and/or Superintendent (sometimes called Supervisory Officer)

Parents and students over 16 years of age have a right to attend the meeting

What is the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)?

The **Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)** is a formal group of school board staff that meet to make a decision about the identification and placement of the student.

I = Identification Deciding if the student is "exceptional"

P = Placement Deciding the best placement for the student

R = Review Review on whether the Identification & Placement are still appropriate

C = Committee The Principal (or Superintendent) & two other school staff

Once the IPRC has determined that a student is exceptional, they will make recommendations for the types of special education programs and services to meet the student's needs.

All publicly funded school boards in Ontario must have at least one designated IPRC.

After the student has been identified as exceptional, the school board has 30 days to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)

All students with demonstrable learning needs may access special education services; exceptionalities are meant to be broad categories that do not exclude any medical condition that can lead to learning difficulties

Identification and Placement

IDENTIFICATION

The IPRC will decide whether a student has an exceptionality. There are five categories of exceptionality:

1. Behaviour
2. Communication
3. Intellectual
4. Physical
5. Multiple (of the above)

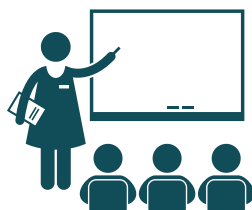


Students can still access special education services if they are not identified as having an exceptionality by the IPRC

PLACEMENT

If a student has been found to be exceptional, they can be placed in:

- A regular class with **indirect support**
- A regular class with **resource assistance**
- A regular class with **withdrawal assistance**
- A special education class with **partial integration**, or
- A **full-time** special education class



The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)

IPRC Flowchart

IPRC PROCESS

START

Learning Need Identified

Noticing that there is a learning need to be met, by a teacher, student, or parent



Collect and Share Information

Examples may include: psychoeducational assessments (when possible), medical reports, report cards, and parent and/or student logs

Share in advance, if possible and appropriate



IPRC Request

Make a written request to the Principal

Within 15 days, written notice of approximate date of the IPRC meeting *and* the school board's guide to special education must be provided



IPRC Meeting

Review of information and discussion about needs

People at the meeting:

- Three or more school staff, including Principal and/or Superintendent
- Parent, student 16+
- Family support (optional)



IPRC Decision

Identification

Categories of exceptionalities:

- Behaviour
- Communication
- Intellectual
- Physical
- Multiple (of the above)



Placement

- Regular class with either indirect support, resource assistance, or withdrawal assistance, *or*
- Special education class with partial integration *or*
- Full-time special education class

There is an annual IPRC review, to ensure that the identification/ placement are still appropriate

Students can access special education services without going through the IPRC process, or while waiting for an IPRC meeting

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Developed within 30 days of IPRC decision. Includes:

- Learning goals and expectations
- Accommodations
- Modifications



If you disagree with the IPRC decision, you can appeal

The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)

All communication about the IPRC meeting must be available in Braille, large-print, or audio format, upon request

The IPRC decision must be reviewed annually

You can also ask for a review after a student has been placed for 3 months

Requesting an IPRC meeting

The role of the IPRC is to meet the needs of a student, once a unique learning need is identified.

Learning needs can be identified by the student, their parent/caregiver, a teacher, the Principal, or other professionals who may support the student in their school career.

When a student is enrolled in an Ontario public school, parents and students 16+ have the right to request- in writing- an IPRC meeting. **The principal and board cannot refuse an IPRC request.**

15
days

The Principal has 15 days to respond to a written request for an IPRC

Within 15 days of receiving a written request, or of the principal calling an IPRC, the principal must provide the following to the parent and student 16+:

- acknowledgement of the request
- a copy of the school board's guide to special education
- an approximate date of when the IPRC will meet

10
days

The Principal must provide at least 10 days notice of the meeting date

The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)

The guide to special education for parents may differ depending on the school board

Guide to special education

Once a request for an IPRC meeting has been made, the principal must give the parent and student 16+ a copy of the school board's guide to special education for parents, within 15 days.

The guide is meant to support parents and students in understanding the IPRC process, special education, and what to expect.

If you have not received a copy of your school board's guide to special education, you can contact your Principal directly. The school board must also have it on their website.

It is your legal right to be given a guide to special education prepared by your school board

What does the Guide include?

- ✓ The IPRC & appeals processes
- ✓ Exceptionalities and placement types
- ✓ Special education programs and services that are available through the school board
- ✓ Contact information for Provincial and Demonstration Schools
- ✓ Information for the school board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and which local organizations are eligible to take part
- ✓ Explanation of if a parent does not sign the consent form but does not appeal within the timelines, the IPRC decision can still be implemented

The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)

Waiting for the IPRC meeting or IPRC final decision?

Special education programs or services that meet the needs of the student must be provided, even while waiting for the IPRC meeting or final decision

Who will be at the IPRC meeting?

There are always a minimum of three school staff present at the IPRC meeting, including either the Principal or Superintendent.

Other school staff that may be there include:

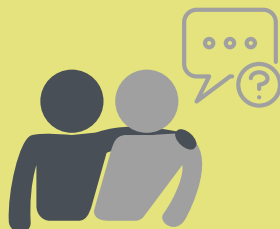
- Resource teacher
- Classroom teacher
- Special education staff
- Social Worker
- School Psychologist
- Other school board professionals who provide support, or who may be able to provide further information

Other people who may attend include:

- Parent/caregiver(s)
- Student if 16+
- Representative of the parent(s) and/or of a student 16+ (to advocate, speak on behalf of, take notes for, etc.)
- Interpreter (including sign language)

Who can I bring to the IPRC meeting?

Parents/guardians and students 16+ have the right to bring a support person of their choosing to the IPRC meeting



Bring a trusted adult

This may be a friend, partner, family member, or community support

The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)

Preparing for the IPRC meeting

Not all needs are immediately visible, and some may take years to be identified.

It is important to be prepared to prove a need for supports. Collect documents and information about the student's needs. Helpful information may include doctor reports, prior IPRC decisions, past/current Individual Education Plans, psychoeducational assessments, strengths and needs of the student, teacher observations, report cards, parent notes/logs, and student stories and descriptions.

Other helpful tips

- Attend and take notes at parent-teacher meetings
- Respond to the notice of an IPRC meeting and request a different date if you cannot attend
- Ask for a copy of the school board's guide to special education
- Read any documents provided by the school and ask questions if you do not understand any part of it
- Ask the Principal who will be part of the meeting and what their role is with the student
- Arrange for a support person to come with you, even if it's only to help you take notes
- Write down any questions or concerns you may have beforehand, and bring them with you to the meeting

The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)

What is province-wide testing?

Province-wide testing is led by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), to monitor the quality of education and increase accountability of the publicly funded education system

Tests are administered in grades 3, 6, 9, and 10 in the subjects of Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Literacy

www.eqao.com

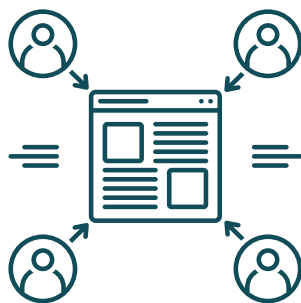
What is the Individual Educational Assessment for the IPRC?

When a school makes the decision to refer a student to an IPRC, the school will put together what is called the **Individual Educational Assessment**.

The assessment takes information from many sources, including direct observation, tests, projects, performance tasks, self-and peer assessment, and teacher notes.

The decision to identify a student as exceptional should never come only from province-wide testing.

It must include assessment strategies and tools that have been used in the classroom to help provide a complete picture of a student's strengths and needs.



How is this different than a psychoeducational assessment?

The psychoeducational assessment is a standardized assessment, completed by a registered Psychologist

The decision made by the IPRC is identifying that a student fits within a special educational category. It is NOT a diagnosis.

The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)

Long-term impact of decisions

When making decisions about a student's education, it is important to consider the potential long-term impact on career pathways and graduation

What to expect at the IPRC meeting?

The meeting should begin with the host or "chair" of the meeting (often the Principal) introducing everyone at the table, explaining their roles, and the purpose for the meeting.

The chair should make sure that everyone has all of the information that will be considered.

If you do not understand something, ask all the questions you need to be sure you understand. Talk about any concerns you have. Ask for clarification anytime it is needed.

It can be very helpful to prepare your thoughts, expectations, and requests ahead of time, to help you make sure that your needs are addressed and that you cover what is most important.

Having a support person to take notes will allow you to listen and participate instead of having to write things down.

At the end of the meeting, you may be asked to sign the Statement of Decision, for the identification and placement of the student. Or, the decision may be made following the meeting.

You do not have to sign the form at the meeting. You should only sign if you are satisfied with all of the decisions.

It is best to take some time to think about the decision and recommendations and to ask any further questions that you may have, so that you can make an informed decision.



The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)

Disagree with the decision?



You have **15 days** to request a second IPRC meeting, or



30 days to file an appeal with the Special Education Appeal Board (SEAB)

The IPRC Statement of Decision

As soon as possible after a decision is made, the IPRC must provide a written statement of their decision to the parent/caregiver and student 16+.

If the committee identifies the student as exceptional, the decision must include:

- The category and definition of the exceptionality
- Strengths and needs of the student
- Placement decision, including reasons if the placement is in a special education class
- Recommendations for special education program and/or services

Once you receive the IPRC Statement of Decision, you can:

- **Agree with the decision, or**
- **Disagree with the decision and:**
 - **Choose not to appeal.** The student will be placed after 30 days
 - **Request a second IPRC meeting** to review your concerns, within 15 days,
 - **File an appeal** with the Special Education Appeal Board (SEAB), within 30 days



Justice for Children and Youth (JFCY) is a non-profit legal aid clinic that provides select legal representation to low-income children and youth in Ontario.

If you have a legal problem or have questions, contact us:
416-960-1633 or 1-866-999-5329 (toll-free in Ontario)
www.jfcy.org

Enhancing Access to Special Education (EASE)

A project by JFCY, designed to support students and families of students with special education needs to understand and navigate special education processes

 [@jfcy.ease](https://www.instagram.com/jfcy.ease)

JFCY would like to thank the numerous students, parents, caregivers, community supports, educators, and advocates that met with us and shared their experiences and expertise.

EASE was generously funded
by the Ontario Ministry of Education