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## SECTION 9: SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES – SPECIAL EDUCATION PLACEMENTS PROVIDED BY THE BOARD

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The RCDSB continuously reviews its Special Education programs and services. Input is received from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), support staff, principals, teachers and parents. With the full support of SEAC, the Board recognizes that the regular classroom remains the most desirable placement for the student and will continue to support the philosophy of inclusion. Special education programs are designed for individuals and many of the programs will be carried out in the regular classroom setting with specialized services brought to the student. The Board also recognizes that highly specialized programs may be offered, either within the Board or through access agreements with the Provincial Schools.

### **Special Education Program**

A Special Education program is a program based on and modified by continuous assessment and evaluation and includes a plan containing specific outcomes and an outline of educational services that meet the needs of the exceptional student.

If a concern is expressed by a parent/guardian or a staff member regarding a student, the following steps will be taken:

- Discussion with the parent/guardian concerning the student's needs
- An educational assessment/behaviour assessment will be completed by the school support staff (Special Education Resource Teacher, School Support Counsellor), with permission from the parent
- Vision or hearing assessment if required
- Occupation, Physiotherapy or Speech/Language assessment if required
- Psycho-educational assessment if required
- Other reports/documents deemed necessary
- A case conference with the parent/guardian and/or student, if the student is 16 years of age or older, to review and discuss assessment information, prior to notification of IPRC
- Notification in writing to the parent/guardian or the student if the student is 16 years of age or older of the IPRC meeting date

## **Identification and Placement**

Identification and Placement decisions are made through the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC).

Identification of the student means the pupil's exceptionality falls into one or more of the following categories:

- Behaviour
- Communication
- Intellectual
- Physical
- Multiple

Students identified with any of these exceptionalities will receive assistance through programs or services provided by the Renfrew County District School Board.

The IPRC committee will outline the student's strengths, needs and expectations and will recommend an appropriate placement consistent with the parental preference.

The parent/guardian or student, if the student is 18 years of age or older, will be asked to sign the recommendations of the IPRC to indicate agreement with the Identification and Placement.

On the rare occasion where the needs of the student cannot be met within the Board's range of placement options, applications to Provincial Schools, as well as facilities that provide necessary care or treatment, may be recommended as an alternative placement.

The statement of decision will be established. This statement may be signed at the IPRC or taken home and the signed copy returned to the principal of the school.

Follow up meetings may be held at the request of the school, parent/guardian, or student, if the student is 16 years of age or older. The Chair of the IPRC meeting will inform the necessary people of any changes to the IPRC decision and a revised statement of decision and written reasons for the changes will be provided. Consent is also required for the revised decision.

## Placement Options

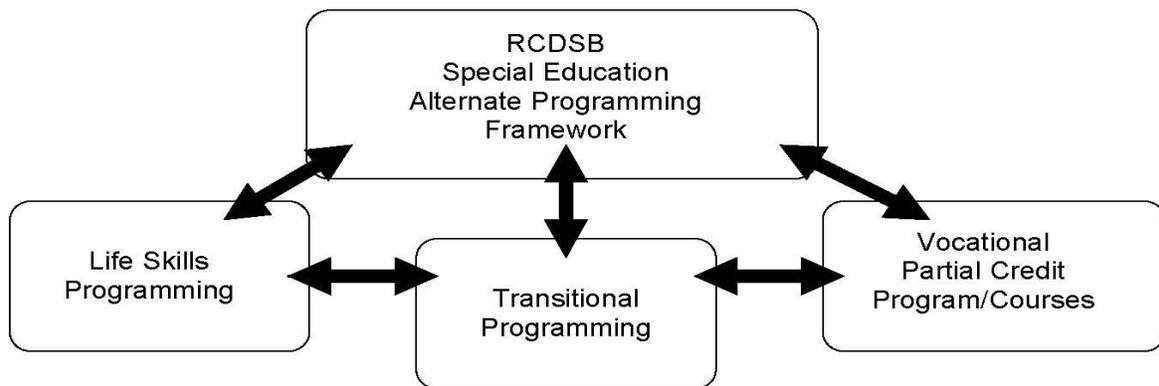
Students with special needs are educated with their peers in the regular classroom to the fullest extent possible. Special Education classroom placement remains an option where extended individual assistance is required and where parents are in agreement with the placement. A continuum of alternative placement at both the elementary and secondary levels in the RCDSB is outlined below.

<b>PLACEMENT</b>	<b>MINISTRY DEFINITION</b>
<b>REGULAR CLASS:</b>	
Resource Assistance	The student is placed in a regular class for most or all of the day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified special education teacher.
Withdrawal Assistance	The student is placed in a regular class and receives instruction outside the classroom for less than 50 percent of the school day, from a qualified special education teacher.
Indirect Service	The student is placed in the regular class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialized consultative services.
<b>SPECIAL ED CLASS:</b>	
Partial Integration	The student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class in which the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for at least 50 percent of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.
Fully Self-Contained	The student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class, where the student-ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for the entire school day.

### Alternative Programs

The Renfrew County District School Board provides alternative program options for students that require programming beyond that which is provided within the regular secondary curriculum. These alternate programs are offered through Special Education and are designed to address the learning needs of individual students as determined by the Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process.

These alternative program options consist of a focus that draws upon five main areas: Literacy skills, Numeracy skills, Physical / Sensory development, Life / Social Skills, and the development of Employability skills relative to the capacity and capabilities of each student. While these five areas inform the program design for teaching and learning within each classroom, the emphasis on each component may be varied in order to respond to the particular learning needs of students at each site. In addition, our alternative Special Education programs feature partial integration with regular classes as defined by each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Our focus on employability skills can be enhanced through short-term workplace experiences or co-op placements, depending on student readiness, ability level, and the availability of suitable placements in the community.



RCDSB has a three tiered alternative program design. The tiered approach is an effective approach to assessment and intervention which allows for varied levels of supports for a student requiring special education programs and services. Placement into programs is done through an Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meeting. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is designed for each student according to their individual learning needs and strengths. Programming is based on the learning expectations outlined in the IEP, which is developed and coordinated by the special education teacher in consultation with parent(s)/guardian(s) and other subject area teachers. This plan is revised and updated based on the results of ongoing assessment and evaluation. An alternate report card is used to summarize student achievement within the alternate program. All alternative levels are instructed by staff with Special Education qualifications.

### Maximum Class Sizes

(as per Regulation 298 s.31 of the Education Act)

**“31.** The maximum enrolment in a special education class shall depend upon the extent of the exceptionalities of the pupils in the class and the special education services that are available to the teacher, but in no case shall the enrolment in a self-contained class exceed,

- (a) in a class for pupils who are emotionally disturbed or socially maladjusted, for pupils who have severe learning disabilities, or for pupils who are younger than compulsory school age and have impaired hearing, eight pupils;
- (b) in a class for pupils who are blind, for pupils who are deaf, for pupils who are trainable retarded, or for pupils with speech and language disorders, ten pupils.
- (c) in a class for pupils who are hard of hearing, for pupils with limited vision, or for pupils with orthopaedic or other physical handicaps, twelve pupils;
- (d) in a class for pupils who are educable retarded children, twelve pupils in the primary division and sixteen pupils in the junior and intermediate divisions;
- (e) in an elementary school class for pupils who are gifted, twenty-five pupils;
- (f) in a class for aphasic or autistic pupils, or for pupils with multiple handicaps for whom no one handicap is dominant, six pupils; and

on and after the 1<sup>st</sup> day of September, 1982, in a class for exceptional pupils consisting of pupils with different exceptionalities, sixteen pupils.”

## Special Education Programs and Services Provided by the Board

### Service Options

	Beh	Communication					Intellectual			Physical		Multiple
	Behaviour	Autism	Deaf / Hard of Hearing	Language Impairment	Speech Impairment	Learning Disability	Gifted	Mild Intellectual Disability	Developmental Disability	Physical Disability	Blind / Low Vision	
Regular Class with Resource Assistance (with SERT, OT, PT, SLP, SSC, Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Low Vision)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regular class with Withdrawal Assistance (SERT)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elementary Special Education Class		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Secondary Alternative Special Education Program		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Speech and Language Program (Speech Language Pathologist, Communicative Disorders Assistant)		✓	✓	✓	✓							✓
School Support Counsellor	✓	✓										✓

### Behaviour

School Support Counsellors have been assigned to elementary and secondary schools to provide programs for students who demonstrate significant behaviour problems. The special education teachers (elementary and secondary) may provide academic support to pupils with behaviour difficulties when required and assistance to regular classroom teachers in modifying instructional strategies.

These programs serve the needs of pupils whose difficulties require counselling (individual and/or group), behaviour management and skills based programs to enhance the pupil's academic, behaviour and social functioning within the school environment.

Placement in the program for individual programming is on a withdrawal basis. Social skills programs are offered within the regular class or in small groups.

## Autism

Students identified with an Autism exceptionality are generally placed in the regular class program at the elementary level. Students may also be considered for a special class placement for alternate programming where appropriate. At the secondary level placement in a special education program is considered in consultation with the student's parent/guardian. Typically students are assigned support staff based on documented student needs. Support staff may include direct /indirect support of the ASD Transitions Coordinator, Speech Language Pathologist or Communicative Disorders Assistant, School Support Counsellor, Special Education Resource Teacher, Special Education Teacher Assistant. Other staff may include central special education staff on a consultative basis.

These programs serve the needs of pupils whose difficulties often require specific language interventions, behaviour management and social skills as well as academic support.

## Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Currently, an itinerant program for pupils with hearing loss is provided throughout the county. The specialist teacher assigned to this program provides direct services to the pupil as well as assistance to the regular classroom teachers in modifying classroom materials, content, instructional techniques, and evaluation support for these exceptional pupils. Consultation from staff at Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf is available upon request.

## Learning Disability

The Renfrew County District School Board provides programs for students with diagnosed Learning Disabilities.

There is a variety of delivery models available within the county at the elementary and secondary levels, and are based on the students' individual needs. These delivery models range from an IEP with accommodations within the regular class, to partial integration in a special education class for intensive intervention support for a period of time.

## Speech Language

Speech-Language Pathologists are either employed or contracted by the Renfrew County District School Board for the purpose of:

- Providing assessments for pupils with speech and/or language exceptionalities;
- Providing supervision of Communicative Disorders Assistants' program delivery;
- Providing a consultative service to special education teachers and educational assistants involved in the provision of speech-language programs;
- Providing information and recommendations to parents for home speech language programs;
- Providing direct programming as time constraints permit.

## Gifted

Depending on the student's strengths and needs, placement can range from regular class with indirect support to regular class with withdrawal assistance. Classroom teachers provide differentiated programming designed to address the student's individual characteristics, needs, abilities and interests. Resource teachers can support classroom teachers through collaborative planning, advice regarding modifications to the curriculum, and suggested materials and strategies.

Secondary students that have been identified as Gifted will be made aware of the range of additional course options available through the e-Learning strategy which may provide access to courses of interest not currently offered in their school. They will also be made aware of the opportunities for challenge for credit available through the Prior Learning and Recognition (PLAR) Challenge for Credit option.

The school principal, working in cooperation with school staff and other community members, should consider additional strategies such as enrichment activities, Small Learning Communities (SLCs), Communities of Practice (COPs), school clubs, and mentors, to take into account the needs, abilities and interests of the gifted student.

Students identified as gifted may also be nominated to attend the Enrichment Mini-Course programs offered by universities in Ottawa and Kingston, as well as the Ontario Educational Leadership Centre's program for Gifted and Intellectually Curious students.

## Mild Intellectual Disability

Programs are provided within the regular classroom or in a special class to meet the needs of students whose disabilities require a modified curriculum and instruction.

There are two delivery models available within the County. For students with a mild to moderate disability, a modified program within the regular classroom supported by the Special Education Resource Teacher may meet their needs. For students with a moderate to severe disability, special class programs are located in strategically centered schools throughout the County. Students are placed in special class programs by a County Identification, Placement and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.).

## Developmental Disability

There are two delivery models available within the county. Programs for pupils integrated in the regular class will be developed by the school special education staff in consultation with the central special education staff. Students with occupational and physiotherapy needs will be referred to the appropriate staff at the Community Care Access Centre for assessment. For a few students placement in a special education class is provided. Developmental classes currently exist in two elementary schools and in four secondary schools within the county. Students are placed in special class programs by a County Identification, Placement and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.).

## Blind and Low Vision

A Teacher for Students who are Blind/Low Vision provides programs for pupils who have been assessed as legally blind. A specialist teacher may be assigned to work with the student for 25% or more of the day depending on the student's needs. Specialized instruction in the reading and writing of braille can be provided. Pupils are integrated in regular classrooms with in-service and consultation provided by the specialist teacher.

A Teacher for Students who are Blind/Low Vision provides itinerant services for pupils whose visual impairment allows them to function within a regular class setting and who do not require Braille. The teacher assigned to these programs also provides regular classroom teachers with assistance in modifying classroom materials, content, instructional techniques, in the use of specialized equipment, and in the evaluation of these exceptional pupils. Specialized materials and media developed at the provincial school are available upon request to school boards.

On-going consultation with educational specialists from the W. Ross Macdonald School for the Blind may be requested through the Special Education Department.

## Physical Disability

Pupils with physical disabilities may require a range of services and/or special equipment in order to function within the school environment. Alterations to the school may be necessary to allow the pupil with physical disabilities to have access to school facilities.

Some pupils with physical disabilities who are placed in regular class settings may also require placement in resource programs. Some students may require special class placement due to additional educational needs.

### ***School Health Support Services Provided By Community Care Access Centre:***

The Community Care Access Centre (C.C.A.C.) of Renfrew County can provide assessment services, for pupils who require physio or occupational therapy. C.C.A.C. staff provides assessment, consultation, and program direction and training for physio and occupational therapy as well as for postural drainage. Specialized equipment may also be recommended by the Physio or Occupational Therapist. For further information, see the handbook prepared by Community Care Access Centre available in your respective schools.

Some students with physical disabilities may require catheterization. Staff from Para-Med will train and monitor staff in this procedure and provide certification of staff.

In order to obtain these services in the school setting, the pupil's parent/guardian or the school administrator makes a referral to C.C.A.C. Once the referral has been made, personnel will conduct an assessment and arrange a case conference with the parent/guardian, principal, and teacher. At this case conference, the specific services C.C.A.C. will provide for the pupil are determined.

Recommendations for on-going support within the school setting may also be made at this case conference. School administration in consultation with the Supervising Principal for Special Services will determine the support available within the school setting.

### ***Intensive Support***

Some students' needs may require intensive support because of their physical disability. Educational assistants may be provided to carry out some aspects of the pupil's program. Medical reports must be provided to substantiate the needs of the pupil with a physical disability.

### ***Specialized Equipment***

Pupils with physical disabilities may require specialized equipment, such as standing frames, specialized seats or desks, or technical equipment.

Requests for some specialized equipment should be made to the Supervising Principal for Special Services and be accompanied by a written recommendation from an appropriate regulated qualified practitioner stating the cost and supplier of such equipment.

### ***Special Transportation***

Where pupils with disabilities require the use of taxis or specially equipped buses or vans an assessment for this service will be required.

### ***Alterations To School Structures***

Alterations to the school may be necessary to allow the pupil with physical disabilities to have access to school facilities. In such cases, requests should be channelled through the Accessibility Working Committee

## **Medication**

Medication provided to a student in the school setting will be in accordance with the Renfrew County District School Board's policy and procedures, and in accordance with Policy/Program Memorandum 81.

## Psycho-Educational Assessment

As noted in Section 2 of this plan, the referral for a formal assessment will follow a multi-tiered approach rather than the referral serving as a first response. This approach will require the involvement of the SERT, in conjunction with one or more of the following: the In-School Team, the Special Education Consultant, or other Special Education Department staff.

The Special Education Department's resource staff provides consultation and psycho-educational assessments for pupils referred to the Special Education Department. If after consultation, a decision has been made to conduct a psycho-educational assessment this assessment may include testing in cognitive ability, learning process, learning style and academic achievement.

Resource staff may make recommendations concerning appropriate programming expectations and discuss possible program alternatives with the school administration and the teaching personnel.

The Special Education Department's resource staff will complete an individual assessment and complete an interpretive report outlining appropriate educational recommendations. Our personnel will meet with those teachers concerned with the student's program in order to discuss specific modifications, strategies, and materials related to the outcomes outlined in the report.

A case conference must be provided to the parents/guardians to review and discuss the results of the assessment with the qualified staff person who completed the assessment. **School staff must be present at this case conference.**

## Section 23 Care & Treatment Program New Horizons Day Treatment Program

A Section 23 agreement between Phoenix Centre for Children and Families and Renfrew County District School Board maintains a class (New Horizons) situated at 390 Bell Street, Pembroke, Ontario.

A Section 23 agreement between Family & Children's Services and the Renfrew County District School Board maintains a Day Treatment Class situated at Madawaska Valley District High School, 341 John Street, Barry's Bay, Ontario.

Admission of pupils to the classes is through the Renfrew County Coordinated Access Committee.

The Renfrew County District School Board provides one teacher and one education assistant in each class, and regular teacher resources including: administration supervision, professional development, curriculum support and budget for materials and other resources. The school year follows the Renfrew County District School Board's approved schedule.

Pupils in the program work on an individual educational program as developed by the teacher, the student's home school administration and approved by the Supervising Principal for Special Services of the Renfrew County District School Board.