

# INTEGRATION OF STUDENTS WITH DIVERSE NEEDS

## Background

All students in the District have a right to an education in the least restrictive setting appropriate for their learning needs. In order to establish the appropriate school environment, a careful assessment must be made of the students' functional levels, including learning strengths, learning needs, and learning styles. Essential to the selection of the educational setting are such factors as age-appropriateness, safety, parental acceptance, support services, physical access, and proximity to the home.

## Procedures

1. Diverse education is an integral part of the District's education program, not a separate component. In keeping with this philosophy, the District believes that every student has the fundamental right to an education in the most appropriate setting for their needs.
2. The education of students with diverse needs, as for all students, is a shared commitment. The Ministry of Education, the District, parents, and community agencies each have prime responsibility for some areas of the students' development while sharing responsibility for other areas. Maximum benefit to students occurs where the efforts and expectations of those involved with them complement each other.
3. The purpose of education for students with diverse needs is the same as that for all students - to provide for their optimal development as skilled and purposeful individuals, able to reach their fullest potential as members of society.
4. Integration means providing the most appropriate education for each student in the least restrictive setting. The process of integration follows a continuum that varies from full-time placement in a regular class to full-time placement in a separate facility. This may take different forms, such as physical, functional, social, academic, and/or societal integration. To the maximum extent appropriate, students with diverse needs are to be educated with age-appropriate peers. Placement of students in separate programs is to occur only when their needs cannot be met in integrated environments, even with the provision of adequate supplementary support.
5. Integration is a long-term process. The District has been supporting the goal of integration for a number of years. This Administrative Procedure for the integration of students with diverse needs is a statement of commitment on the part of the District to continue the process already underway in the District. The implementation will be achieved over time as funds for facilities, personnel, and resources are available.

## 6. Preparation for Integration

- 6.1. Goals for integration will be clearly identified.
- 6.2. The process of integration will be facilitated with the support of, and full consultation with, school administrators, teachers, and District Learning Services.
- 6.3. Support services, such as education assistants, computer equipment, transportation, and materials, will be identified and in place prior to the integration of students into a classroom.
- 6.4. Relevant in-service will be provided to all professionals and support staff in schools prior to the placement in programs for diverse students or prior to and during the integration of individual students in that school.
- 6.5. Both students with diverse needs, and their classmates will be prepared prior to the integration process.
- 6.6. Class size will be adjusted where necessary in mainstreamed situations to ensure the quality of instruction for all students and the provisions of the employee contracts.
- 6.7. Basic safety procedures, as directed by student needs, will be clearly outlined and provided prior to placement for each integrated student.
- 6.8. School facilities will be updated to meet current specifications in order to ensure safe access to all building exits.
- 6.9. Support staff, teachers, and administrators will meet to determine strategies for the attainment of integration goals and designate areas of responsibility for each goal.
- 6.10. The integration process will be monitored by the school-based resource team and adjusted with respect to impact on the integrated student, as well as the effect on the teaching and learning situation in the classroom.

## 7. Physical Facilities

- 7.1. Classroom space will be provided for students with diverse needs in an area of the school that is conducive to interaction with age-appropriate peers.
- 7.2. Prior to placement, basic equipment and facilities will be adapted to the needs of students with diverse needs in the regular classroom and throughout the school.

## 8. Staffing

- 8.1. A pool of trained teachers-on-call will be made available for assignment to diverse education classes.
- 8.2. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the development of their child's individual education plans (IEP's).
- 8.3. Education assistants will be assigned in consultation with the Principal, classroom teacher, and resource staff.
- 8.4. Itinerant teachers and other support staff, such as speech/language pathologists, psychologists, counsellors, and diverse education assistants will be provided within available resources.
- 8.5. Release time will be provided for teachers to consult with other professionals about a student's program.

8.6. Teachers who enrol in diverse classes or support students with diverse needs will have diverse training in the appropriate areas as specified by the District.

## 9. Placement

9.1. Placement of students with diverse needs in regular classes and activities will be decided on an individual basis and related to the goals for integration, as they are outlined in each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

9.2. All placements will be reviewed at least annually or more frequently if necessary.

9.3. Students will be placed in an appropriate setting through the Central Screening process. In the event that the placement is not available, Central Screening will recommend alternate placement. In the event that the implementation of these recommendations is not possible, the students will remain in their current setting with as much resource support as possible.

## 10. Programming

10.1. The classroom teacher, in conjunction with the Principal and other professionals, has primary responsibility for programming for the student with diverse needs who is integrated full-time.

10.2. When a student is integrated part-time, the classroom teacher and diverse class resource teacher will assume joint responsibility for programming.

10.3. Support and training will be available to classroom teachers responsible for students who are integrated.

10.4. Long-term goals developed for each elementary student with diverse needs must include plans for transition to secondary schools.

## 11. Individual Education Plans (IEP's)

11.1. IEP's for all students with diverse needs will be developed by a designated teacher in consultation with the school-based resource team, where appropriate, and/or other relevant professionals.

11.2. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the development of their child's IEP.

11.3. IEP's for each student with diverse needs will include appropriate goals for integration.

## 12. Parents

12.1. Parents have the right to be involved in both the placement and program plans for their child.

12.2. When parents have a concern relating to the educational needs of their child, they are to involve those listed in sequential order:

12.2.1. The classroom teacher and/or counsellor;

12.2.2. The Principal or Vice-Principal;

12.2.3. The Director of Instruction;

12.2.4. The Associate Superintendent.

12.3. If the avenues suggested above have been explored and no resolution has been reached, the parents may invoke the Section 11 Appeal process.

### 13. School Leaving

13.1. School leaving certificates will be awarded to all students upon successful completion of their school program.

Reference: Sections 6, 11, 17, 20, 22, 26, 75, 85, 88, 89, 91 School Act  
School Regulation 265/89  
Individual Education Plan Order M638/95  
Diverse Needs Students Order M150/89  
Support Services for Schools Order 149/89  
Diverse Education Services: A Manual of Policy, Procedures and Guidelines

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