

Glossary

The definitions provided in this glossary are specific to special education.

accommodations. Special teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and/or individualized equipment required to enable a student to learn and to demonstrate learning. The provincial curriculum expectations for the grade are not altered for a student receiving accommodations only.

alternative learning expectations. Statements on the IEP describing expectations developed to help students acquire knowledge and skills that are not represented in the Ontario curriculum expectations. Because they are not part of a subject or course outlined in the provincial curriculum documents, alternative learning expectations are considered to constitute alternative programs or alternative courses (i.e., secondary school courses). Examples of alternative programs/courses include speech remediation, social skills, orientation/mobility training, and personal care programs. Alternative programs/courses are provided in both the elementary and the secondary panels.

alternative report. A report that records student achievement of alternative expectations. Student progress should be reported to parents by means of anecdotal comments on an alternative report. It is not required, nor is it advisable, for grades or marks to be assigned for the achievement of alternative expectations. The anecdotal comments should indicate the student's progress/achievement relative to the expectations identified in the IEP, and should comment on the student's strengths and next steps for improvement. This alternative report should accompany the Provincial

Report Card at the regular reporting periods. (Some school boards include a section for reporting on the achievement of alternative expectations in the IEP itself.)

annual program goals. Statements on the Individual Education Plan (IEP) describing what a student can reasonably be expected to accomplish by the end of the school year in a particular subject, course, or skill area. Annual goals must be developed if the student's learning expectations are modified from the curriculum expectations for a particular subject or course, or if the student's learning expectations are alternative learning expectations.

applied behaviour analysis (ABA). An effective instructional approach that uses methods based on scientific principles of learning and behaviour to build useful repertoires of behaviour and reduce problematic ones. For example, ABA methods can help a student to develop positive behaviours, learn new skills, and transfer a positive behaviour or response from one situation to another.

assessment. The process of gathering information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the curriculum expectations in a subject or course and/or the learning expectations identified in the student's IEP. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning. Assessment for the purpose of improving student learning is seen as both "assessment *for* learning" and "assessment *as* learning". Evaluation of student learning is based on "assessment *of* learning" that provides evidence of student achievement at strategic times throughout the grade/course/program, often at the end of a period of learning.

community agency. An agency that may be not-for-profit or funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services or the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The mandate of such an agency includes the provision of services or support for preschool children with special needs (e.g., the Preschool Speech and Language Program, Infant Hearing Program, Ontario Autism Program).

current (baseline) level of achievement. Information on the IEP summarizing the student's current level of achievement in each of the subjects, courses, or skill areas to which the IEP applies. This information serves as a baseline against which the student's progress towards achievement of his or her learning expectations and annual goals in each subject, course, or skill area will be measured.

Demonstration Schools. Schools operated by the Ministry of Education that provide special residential education programs for students with learning disabilities.

differentiated instruction (DI). A method of teaching that attempts to adapt instruction to suit the differing strengths and needs, interests, learning styles, and readiness to learn of individual students.

equity. A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

exceptional pupil (student). As defined in the Education Act, “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 by a committee [the IPRC], established under subparagraph iii of paragraph 5 of subsection 11 (1), of the board....”

exceptionalities. The Education Act sets out five categories of exceptionalities in the definition of an exceptional pupil including: behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical, and multiple. These broad categories are designed to address the wide range of conditions that will affect a student’s learning needs. For more information see the [Categories of Exceptionalities section](#) in Part A of this guide.

government-approved care and/or treatment, custody, and correctional (CTCC) facilities. Facilities in which school boards offer educational programs for students who cannot attend local schools because of their need for care, treatment, and/or rehabilitation. The education programs provided in these settings are based on a formal agreement between a school board and a CTCC facility. The school board provides the educational programming and the facility provides the care, treatment, and/or rehabilitation services.

health assessment (or medical assessment). An assessment carried out by a medical doctor or other licensed health professional (such as an audiologist or ophthalmologist). A health assessment may be included as a part of the assessment package for a referral to an IPRC. Informed parental consent must be obtained before the assessment can be done.

Individual Education Plan (IEP). A written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student, including a record of the particular accommodations needed to help the student achieve his or her learning expectations. An IEP must be developed for a student who has been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), and may also be developed for a student who has special education needs but has not been identified as exceptional. An IEP is a working document that identifies learning expectations that may be modified from or alternative to the expectations given in the curriculum policy document for the appropriate grade and subject or course. It outlines the specific knowledge and skills to be assessed and evaluated for the purpose of reporting student achievement. See [Part E](#) of this guide for more information on IEPs.

individual educational assessment. An assessment that consists of multiple sources of information and is often conducted by, or under the direction of, the in-school team. Depending on the components of the assessment, parental consent in writing may be required. An individual educational assessment is required by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) to make a decision about the identification of a student as exceptional and the placement of a student in a special education program.

intervention. The provision of assistance to children and students who are at risk or who have special education needs that may affect their development. Intervention can be remedial or preventive and involves strategies that are designed to improve student learning and growth.

Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC). A committee of a school board that decides whether or not a child should be identified as exceptional, identifies the areas of a student's exceptionality according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the ministry, decides an appropriate placement for a student, and reviews the identification and placement at least once in each school year. See [Part D](#) of this guide for more information on the IPRC.

learning expectations. Statements on the IEP describing the specific knowledge and skills that the student should be able to demonstrate within a specified time period during the school year. Learning expectations represent the learning a student needs to acquire in order to progress from his or her current level of achievement to achievement of the related annual goals identified in the IEP.

modifications (modified expectations). Statements on the IEP that reflect the changes made to the grade-level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs. Modifications may include the use of learning expectations at a different grade level and/or an increase or decrease in the number and/or complexity of expectations relative to the curriculum expectations for the regular grade level. At the secondary level, a credit may or may not be granted for a course, depending on the extent to which the expectations in the course have been modified.

Ontario Special Education Tribunal (OSET). A tribunal that hears appeals by parents who disagree with the identification and/or placement decision made following a meeting of the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) and a subsequent meeting of the special education appeal board (SEAB). Parents have the right to appeal to the OSET or to the Tribunal de l'enfance en difficulté de l'Ontario (TEDO). Ontario Special Education Tribunals, created by the Education Amendment Act of 1980 (Bill 82), are mandated to provide final and binding decisions to resolve disputes between a parent and a school board concerning the identification and/or placement of an exceptional student.

Provincial Schools. Schools operated by the Ministry of Education for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, are blind or have low vision, or are deafblind.

psychological assessment. An assessment carried out by a member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario – either a psychologist or psychological associate. A psychological assessment may be included as a part of the assessment package for a referral to an IPRC. Informed parental consent must be obtained before the assessment can be done.

special education appeal board (SEAB). A group of three individuals to which parents have a right to appeal the decision of the IPRC. The three individuals, one of whom is selected by the parents, have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal.

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). A committee of a school board that provides important advice on special education. A SEAC may make recommendations to the board on any matter affecting the establishment, development, and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional students in a board. Each school board in Ontario must establish a SEAC.

Special Education Grant (SEG). One of the special purpose grants allocated by the Grants for Student Needs (GSN). In addition to foundation grants, the ministry provides funding to school boards for students with special education needs through the Special Education Grant. The SEG supports the incremental costs of the additional programs, services, and equipment required to meet the educational needs of students with special education needs and to support positive outcomes for them. In this way, it ensures equity for all students with special education needs.

special education plan. A plan based on province-wide standards that describes the special education programs and services provided by a school board. In accordance with Regulation 306 under the Education Act, each board is required to maintain a special education plan, to review it annually, to amend it from time to time to meet the current needs of its exceptional students, and to submit any amendment(s) to the Minister for review. The plan must also be made available to the public.

special education program. As defined in the Education Act, “an educational program [for an exceptional pupil] that is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation and that includes a plan [the IEP] containing specific objectives and an outline of educational services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil”.

special education services. As defined in the Education Act, “facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program”.

speech and language assessment (or communication assessment). An assessment carried out by a speech-language pathologist registered with the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario. A speech and language assessment may be included as a part of the assessment package for a referral to an IPRC. Informed parental consent must be obtained before the assessment can be done.

the tiered approach. A systematic, sequential instructional approach that uses specific instructional interventions of increasing intensity to address students’ needs. It can be used to address either the academic or the behavioural needs of students who are having difficulty.

transition plan. The school’s written plan to assist the student in making a successful transition. The transition plan is developed as part of the IEP. Under O. Reg. 181/98, the IEP must include a transition plan for

each exceptional student who is 14 years of age or older who is making the transition from secondary school to postsecondary activities, unless the student was identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness. In addition to the requirements under O. Reg. 181/98, ministry policy (Policy/Program Memorandum No. 156) requires that a transition plan be developed for all students who have an IEP, whether or not they have been identified as exceptional by an IPRC and including those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness.

transition planning. The process of coordinating a set of activities that prepare students for change and help them adapt to a variety of settings. The starting point for transition planning should be the student's goals. The transition-planning process itself may assist the student in developing and refining his or her goals.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL). A teaching approach that focuses on creating a learning environment that is open and accessible to all students, regardless of age, skills, or situation. Instruction based on principles of universal design is flexible and supportive, can be adjusted to meet different student needs, and enables all students to access the curriculum as fully as possible.