

Policy/Program Memoranda Concerning Special Education

Many policy directives to school boards from the ministry have been issued in the form of numbered policy/program memoranda (PPMs). Some of these PPMs concern special education.

1986 PPM 1 advises that the Provincial Schools for the blind and deaf are mandated to provide appropriate services to school boards.

The Provincial Schools that DSBN students may access include Ernest.C. Drury School in Milton, for the deaf/hard of hearing and W. Ross Macdonald School in Brantford, which supports students who are blind/visually impaired. Services available range from residential placement at the school to program planning support for students, provided in DSBN schools by a Resource Teacher from the Provincial School.

1982 PPM 8 concerns provisions for the education for students with learning disabilities.

The DSBN meets the needs of students with Learning Disabilities (LD) by differentiating instruction and providing appropriate accommodations and/or modifications to meet individual student needs. Assistive technology is one example of an accommodation available to all students, but particularly useful for students with LD. The DSBN has purchased a license for Premier Suites which students may access at school and at home, using programs such as the Talking Word Processor, Talking Dictionary, Talking Calculator and Universal Reader. For some students, specialized software, such as Kurzweil or Dragon Naturally Speaking, is available. Students may also access after school programs with our community partner, the Learning Disability Association of Ontario (LDAO).

1982 PPM 11 concerns the requirement for early identification of children's learning needs.

Teachers use a variety of assessment tools and observations to monitor student progress and differentiate instruction to address individual learning styles, strengths and needs. The In-School-Team (IST), which may include the principal, learning resource teacher (LRT) or special education resource teacher (SERT), youth counsellor (YC), and other school staff, provides a school based team to problem-solve and access specialized supports including Assistive Technology, Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists and Psychological Staff.

1982 PPM 59 concerns psychological testing and assessment of students.

The DSBN has staff that provide psychological assessment of a student's cognitive abilities. The assessment is completed for the purpose of improved educational programming and is only completed with informed consent from a parent/guardian.

1991 PPM 76C concerns alternative educational programs and services for deaf, blind and deaf-blind exceptional pupils.

This PPM is currently under review by the Ministry of Education.

1984 PPM 81 concerns the provision of health support services in school settings.

The DSBN has policy and procedures to address the provision of health supports, such as administration of medication and administering emergency health services to students. We also have protocols with our community partners/organizations such as School Health Support Services and Community Care to provide our students with Speech Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physio-Therapy and Nursing as required.

1986 PPM 85 concerns education programs for pupils in government-approved care and/or treatment facilities.

These are the Section 23 classes, accessed when students cannot attend local schools because of their need for care and/or treatment. Suitable educational programs which recognize the primacy of the treatment programs are provided by DSBN within the facilities. The educational programs for school age students in the facilities are developed jointly by the program staff and school board personnel.

2009 PPM 127 concerns the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test and the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course in English-Language secondary schools – accommodations, deferrals and exemptions. It also addresses the accommodations for students with special needs.

Special needs students who require accommodations on a regular basis, and have them documented in their individual education plan (IEP), may qualify to use the same accommodations for the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test and Literacy Course. Accommodations available to students include: alternate settings, extended time limits, alternate presentation formats and alternative response formats. In some situations, a scribe or prompter may also be permitted.

2007 PPM 140 Incorporating methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into programs for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

School staff are supported in the planning and implementation of ABA strategies by their area Special Education teams and ASD support team. Professional development opportunities are offered and programming resources provided by central Special Education staff as well as community partners, such as Bethesda and Autism Ontario. ABA strategies are included in the IEP template. Direct support in regards to students with high needs is provided through a variety of consultations, such as educational, speech-language and occupational therapy, and by the ASD Wrap Around team.