



Student-Specific Planning

A Guide for Parents & Guardians



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OUR DIVISIONAL FRAMEWORK

Purpose

To educate students to be inspired, skilled, responsible citizens.

Mission

We provide inclusive, innovative, and engaging educational programming in a safe and caring environment.

Values

At RETSD, we value a culture of:

Integrity: trust, honesty, and accountability

Equity: where everyone has what they need to be successful

Excellence: high expectations in pursuit of continuous improvement

Respect and Responsibility: partnerships and contributions of students, staff, families, and the community



INTRODUCTION

This document will describe the involvement of parents and guardians in the student-specific planning process, the purpose of a Student-Specific Plan (SSP), who requires an SSP, and the team members typically involved in the student-specific planning process.

The Involvement of Parents, Guardians & Students in Student-Specific Planning

Student-specific planning is the process by which families, teachers, and other support personnel work together to meet the needs of students who require accommodations, adaptations, modifications, or individualized programming to achieve their full potential.

The SSP can include one or more of these documents: an Adapted Education Plan (AEP), a Curriculum Modification Plan (CMP), an Individual Education Plan (IEP), and/or a Behaviour Intervention Plan (BIP).

An SSP is a written document developed and implemented by a team that outlines a plan to address the individual needs of a student.

The division believes in a collaborative approach to education involving the student, parents or guardians, professionals, and educational assistants who work together to provide the best opportunities for the learner.

Parents and guardians have unique knowledge about their child that provides an invaluable foundation for the student-specific planning process. Parents and guardians who understand the school's philosophy, know the school staff, and participate in school activities are more likely to be satisfied with the education their child or youth is receiving. Parents and guardians want meaningful opportunities to participate in all facets of schooling. They want to be part of the decision-making process and have access to information and ideas on a continual basis.

Parents, guardians, and students are valuable members of the student-specific planning process. They all have hopes and dreams and provide a different perspective of past experience, goals, interests, and responses. The work they do at home is important in meeting the goals set through the student-specific planning process.



Who Needs an SSP?

When a school team has identified that a student has additional learning and/or social/emotional needs and requires support to meet curricular or individual outcomes, the student-specific planning process is initiated.

An AEP may exist when:

- Assessments and recommendations from clinicians or other professionals indicate the student requires a change in the teaching process, materials, assignments, or products to assist them to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

A CMP may exist when:

- A student is diagnosed with a severe or profound intellectual development disorder by a certified clinician and is unable to gain an understanding of enough of the expected provincial curricular outcomes to attain at least a 1 on the ordinal grade scale or a passing mark on the percentage grade scale, even with ongoing support during instruction and assessment activities.

An IEP may exist when:

- A student is diagnosed with a severe or profound intellectual development disorder by a certified clinician and is unable to meet or approximate the expected provincial curricular learning outcomes, even with specific ongoing support during instruction and assessment activities. The plan assists them to achieve individualized learning outcomes.

A BIP may exist when:

- A student whose social, emotional, and/or behavioural needs require additional support to assist them to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

The Purpose of an SSP

The purpose of an SSP is to provide a plan to help a student meet individual outcomes or goals beyond their current level of performance. For this reason, an understanding of what a student can and cannot do is essential to the student-specific planning process. Each SSP is individualized to the student for whom it is designed.

The student-specific planning process:

- Identifies the student's strengths (social, emotional, physical, developmental, and academic)
- Determines priorities for the student's individual educational needs (social, emotional, physical, developmental, and academic)
- Provides a process for planning
- Outlines information to measure growth
- Assists in the co-ordination of services involved
- Facilitates communication
- Supplies information for decision-making regarding allocation of resources

All information gathered in the planning process is then documented in one of the following plans:

- An AEP, which consists of adaptations required for a student to be successful.
- A CMP, which reflects changes made to the number, essence, or content of grade-level expected learning outcomes (ELOs) in a subject or course to meet the learning needs of the student.
- An IEP, which contains goals in one or more of the following domains: communication (verbal and non-verbal), cognitive/academics, recreation/leisure, self-help (dressing and feeding), community functioning, vocational, physical (mobility, gross, and fine motor), independent living (money and time management), social skills/relationships (play skills, sensitivity to others, and responsibility taking), and transition.
- A BIP, which includes proactive and responsive strategies to support a student's social/emotional learning and success.

The Components of an SSP

All SSPs, regardless of the individual needs of a student, contain essential components:

- Student identification and strength-based student profile information
- Current levels of performance that reflect team consensus on the student's abilities and needs
- Student-specific outcomes
- Performance objectives
- Teaching methods, materials, and strategies
- The names of team members who will implement the SSP and the setting(s) where it will be implemented
- Plans and timelines for evaluation and review

Collaborative Planning Team

A team is formed for a student who has learning needs that require support. For students who have many learning needs, a variety of support people may be involved. The number of people on a student's team will depend on the needs of the student and the expertise required to develop and implement an education plan. As well as parents and guardians, the planning team may include:

School personnel: These team members consist of people who may be involved with the child at school on a daily basis, such as the classroom teacher, resource teacher, school counsellor, or administrator. Students are included in SSP meetings, as student-centred planning is the key to success.

Division and community personnel: These team members consult with the school personnel and provide expertise in the areas of planning, assessment, and programming.

Please see the visual on the following page from the RETSD Continuum of Supports and Services that includes a list of school, division, and community personnel who may be involved in the student-specific planning process.

SCHOOL

- Administrators
- Counsellors
- Educational assistants/
youth care workers
- Reading Recovery™
teachers
- Resource teachers
- Teachers

DIVISION

- Assistant manager—student services
- Assistant superintendents
- Attendance officer
- Community school networker
- Consultants
- Early years behaviour coach
- English as an additional language teachers
- Inclusion teachers
- Indigenous Academic Achievement initiatives team
- Manager—student services
- Occupational therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Positive Behavioural Interventions & Supports team
- Psychologists
- Reading clinicians
- Reading Recovery teacher leaders
- Reading tutors
- Social workers
- Speech-language educational assistants
- Superintendent

COMMUNITY

- Audiologists
- Business partners
- Child daycares
- Child Development Clinic
- Child & Family Services
- Children's disABILITY Services
- CNIB Foundation
- Community Living disABILITY Services
- Elders
- Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities
- HSC Child & Adolescent Mental Health Program
- International Centre of Winnipeg
- Jordan's Principle
- Knowles Centre Inc.
- Macdonald Youth Services
- Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre
- Manitoba Education & Early Childhood Learning
- Manitoba FASD Centre
- Manitoba Métis Federation
- Manitoba Possible
- Mental Health & Addictions—Shared Health
- Mobile Crisis Service
- Police/RCMP
- Post-secondary institutions
- Provincial justice department
- Rainbow Resource Centre
- Rehabilitation Centre for Children—Specialized Services for Children & Youth
- School resource officers
- Welcome Place
- Winnipeg & Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authorities
- Youth Addictions Centralized Intake
- Youth Emergency Crisis Stabilization System

PERSONNEL

River East Transcona School Division supports collaboration among educators and other professionals.



BEFORE STUDENT-SPECIFIC PLANNING

Before going to the student-specific planning meeting, parents and guardians may want to:

- Think about goals and hopes for their child or youth.
- Reflect on career and community goals beyond graduation.
- Give some thought to the *Helpful Questions to Consider* located on page 9.
- Discuss the progress made since the last student-specific planning meeting.
- Decide if their child or youth would benefit from participating in the meeting (or part of it).
- Ask their child or youth questions, such as the following (if their child or youth attends the meeting, they may be able to give this input directly):
 - What do you like best about school?
 - What do you feel are your successes?
 - What are some changes that would improve your learning at school?
 - What goals do you have for yourself?
- Consider questions and concerns such as the following:
 - Who is my contact person at school (case manager)?
 - How often will the SSP be reviewed?

- What changes in our home do the school need to know about?
- Consider arranging for a support person—their spouse, a relative, a friend, or another person—to accompany them to the meeting. This may help them feel more comfortable and this person could offer a different perspective, hear important points they may miss, or take notes.

An agenda will be provided prior to the meeting, which will involve a discussion of strengths, challenges, and next steps.

DURING STUDENT-SPECIFIC PLANNING

Stages of Developing an SSP

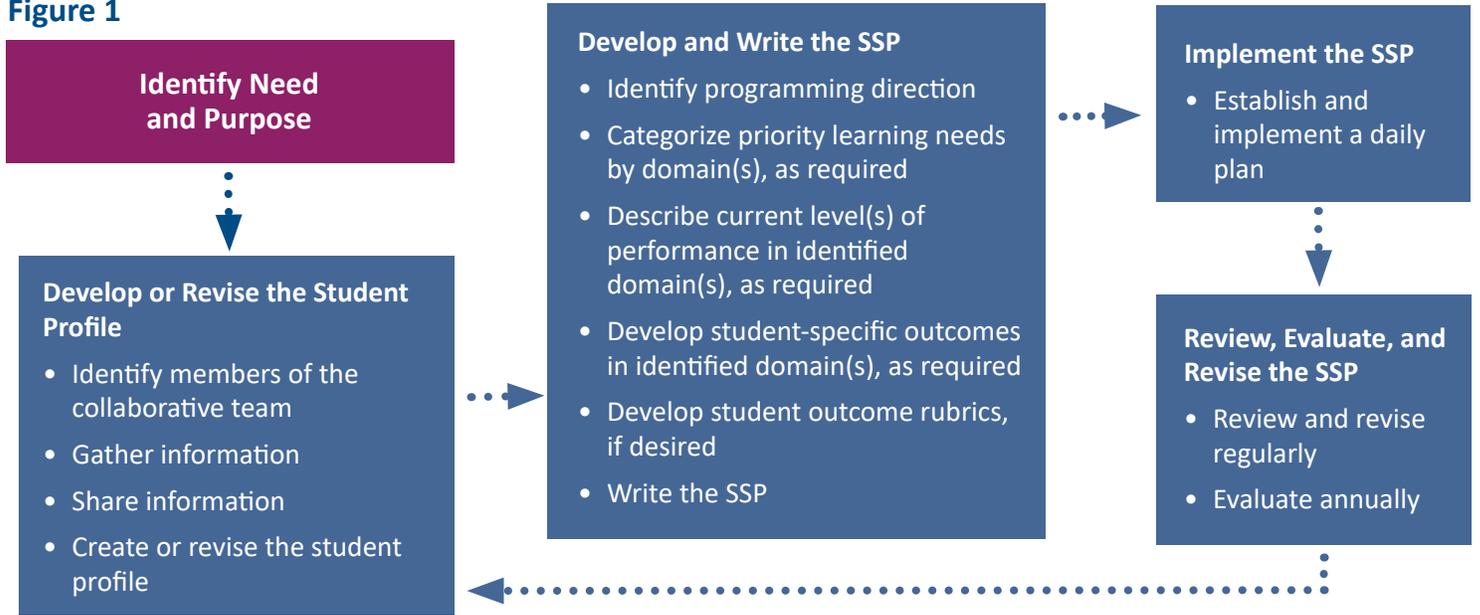
Developing an SSP involves the following four stages:

1. Develop or revise the student profile
2. Develop and write the SSP
3. Implement the SSP
4. Consider the questions located on page 9, under *Helpful Questions to Consider*.

These stages may occur in different sequences or may be worked on simultaneously, depending on the individual needs of the student. As a member of the team, parents or guardians can be actively involved in all stages of the SSP development process, which is illustrated in the flowchart below.

THE STUDENT-SPECIFIC PLANNING PROCESS

Figure 1



Stage 1: Develop or Revise the Student Profile

- Identify members of the collaborative team
- Gather information
- Share information
- Create or revise the student profile

Parents and guardians are a source of valuable information in the initial stages of developing and setting the direction of the SSP. When working as a team, all members participate in making decisions and share information with each other.

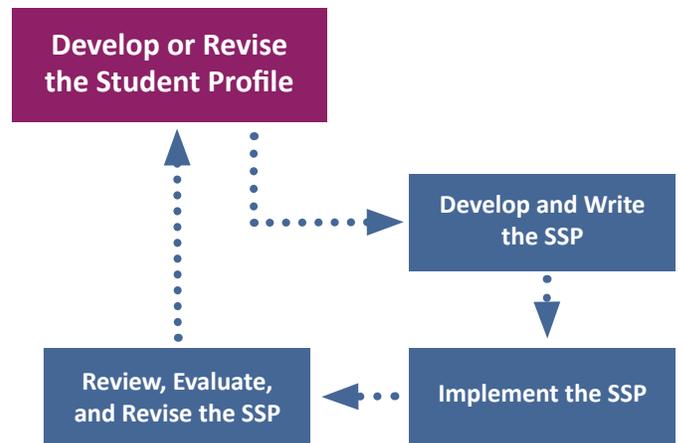
A Parent or Guardian May Want to Share:

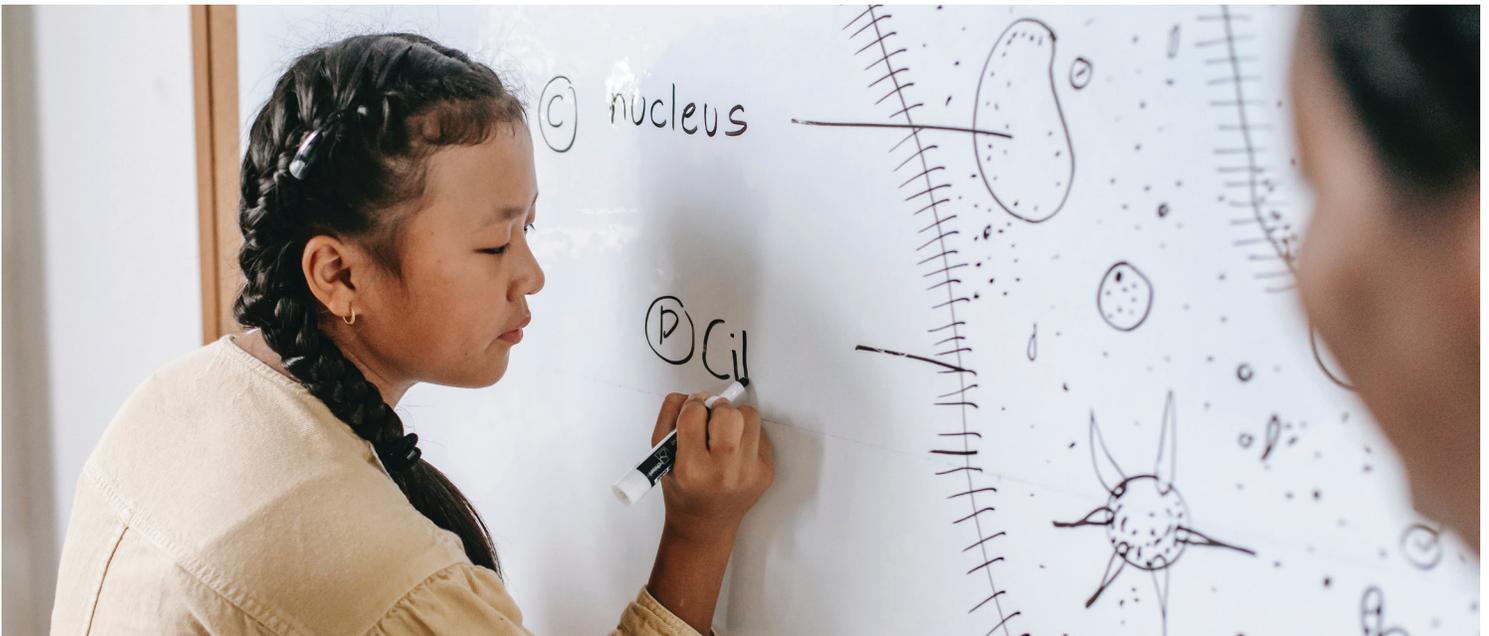
- Any specific concerns they have about their child or youth
- Changes in the home setting that may cause emotional responses
- Samples of their child or youth’s work completed at home, if they think this can contribute to a better understanding of the child or youth (teachers often have samples of student work to share, as well—parents and guardians should feel free to inquire about this)

A Parent or Guardian May Want to Ask About:

- The role of support staff with their child or youth
- Other services available that may support their child or youth’s learning
- Resources available, such as articles, upcoming conferences or workshops, and websites

Figure 2





Stage 2: Develop and Write the SSP

- Identify programming direction
- Categorize priority learning needs by domain(s), as required
- Describe current level(s) of performance in identified domain(s), as required
- Develop student-specific outcomes in identified domain(s), as required
- Develop performance objectives for each student-specific outcome
- Develop student outcome rubrics, if desired
- Write the SSP

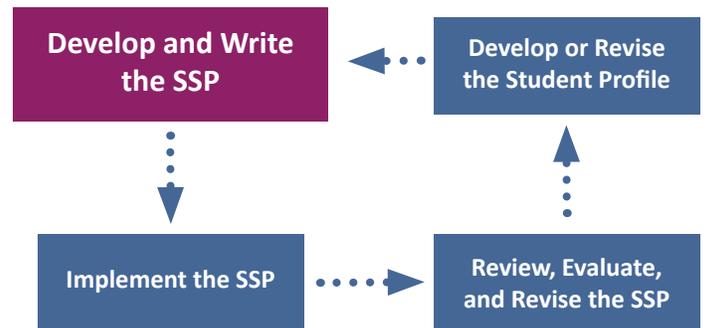
A Parent or Guardian May Want to Share:

- Aspirations and goals for their child or youth
- Personality traits
- Interests, talents, and desires
- Strengths and needs
- Family and school history that affects their child or youth's present learning situation
- Current medical history and health-care needs
- Information about how their child or youth learns and behaves outside school
- Successful learning and behaviour techniques they are using at home

A Parent or Guardian May Want to Ask About:

- Any new assessments, observations, or reports
- Their child or youth's strengths, interests, areas of growth, and areas of need
- Clarification of the scores or marks on report cards or IEP reports
- Supports and strategies that are helpful to their child or youth's learning
- Attendance and completion of work
- Their child or youth's relationships with peers and friends

Figure 3



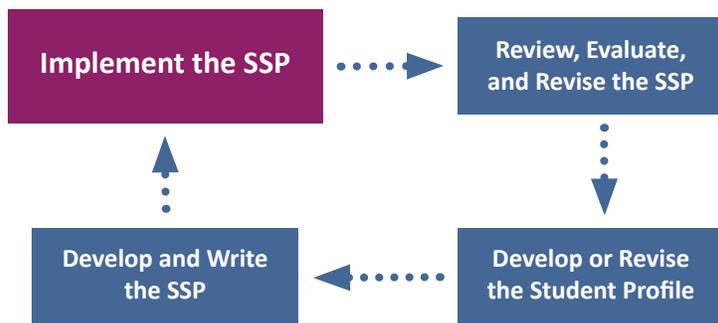
AFTER STUDENT-SPECIFIC PLANNING

Stage 3: Implementing the SSP

After meetings, parents and guardians can help by:

- Discussing the meeting with their child or youth
- Keeping in touch with the teacher and/or case manager through phone calls, journals, agendas, or email, and telling them of any change in the home that may affect work at school
- Implementing appropriate parts of the plan at home
- Monitoring and recording progress
- Establishing and implementing a daily plan

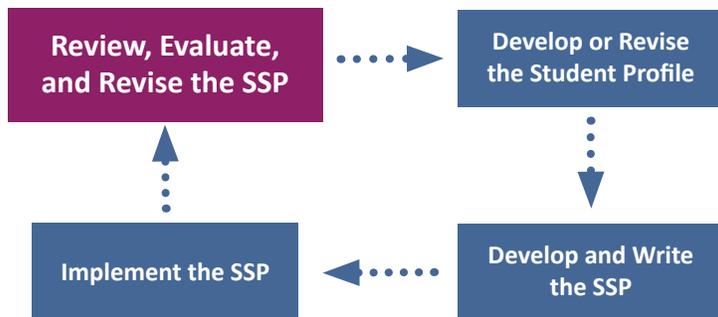
Figure 4



Stage 4: Review, Evaluate, and Revise the SSP

- Review and revise regularly
- Evaluate annually

Figure 5



SSPs are reviewed annually and reported on at regular reporting times (with the report card). After the SSP meeting, parents and guardians may wish to reflect on these questions:

- How does the SSP build on strengths?
- Does the SSP focus on the individual needs of their child or youth?
- Does the SSP focus on key goals?

- If goals or objectives were met, were new ones set?
- Are supports tailored to the strengths and needs of their child or youth?
- Have social/behavioural needs been addressed by the SSP?
- Is there a plan for measuring and communicating progress?
- If their child or youth is not demonstrating progress, does the team review the program and make changes?
- If there are several teachers responsible for the education program, are there procedures for all of them to have access to the SSP, so they can use it to plan instruction, monitor progress, and contribute to evaluating and changing goals and objectives?
- Does the SSP outline transition plans (if appropriate)?

If parents or guardians have questions or concerns after reflecting on these questions and/or the SSP process or document, they should contact the classroom teacher (or resource teacher), as per the Concern Protocol (see retsd.mb.ca > Parents & Students). To help direct your questions, a list of suggested contacts is on the following page.

The Provincial Report Card and the IEP-R

All students in RETSD, including those who have an SSP, will receive a provincial report card at each reporting period. The progress for students with an AEP or CMP is documented in these report cards, whereas students with an IEP and/or BIP will receive an additional IEP report (IEP-R).

Transition Planning

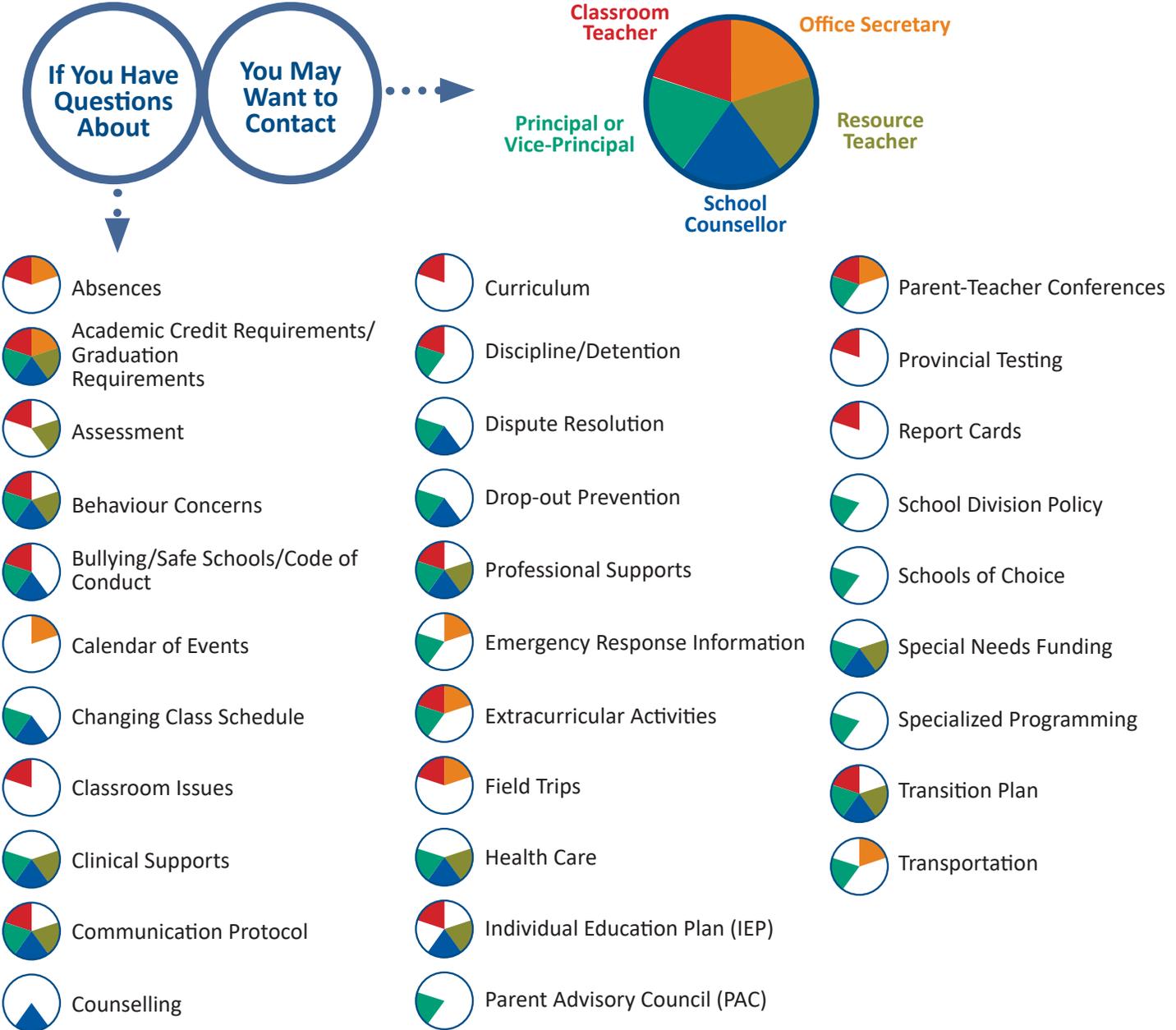
Transition planning involves identifying the skills that need to be in place for students to be successful in future settings and developing a plan of action to ensure students acquire these skills and attitudes.

As a consistent presence in the student's life, parents and guardians play an essential role in planning for and dealing with transitions. In particular, parents and guardians may be involved in determining opportunities and supports that are available to the student in the community as they gain increased independence. The transition plan will be included in the transition domain of the student's SSP.



SUGGESTED CONTACT LIST

Your child or youth's classroom teacher should be your first point of contact.



HELPFUL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

The following questions are designed to help your child or youth's learning team begin the student-specific planning process. We value your input and would like to invite you to think about these questions in preparation for the SSP meeting.

- 1. What are your child or youth's strengths and interests?**
- 2. Describe any fears or concerns your child or youth has about school.**
- 3. What are your child or youth's learning needs for this school year? (These could be skills that they need to acquire or improve on.)**
- 4. What type of learner is your child or youth? How do they learn best? (e.g., by listening to directions, by doing the task, by watching someone do the task)**
- 5. Does your child or youth display any behaviours that are of concern to you? If so, please explain.**
- 6. What are your goals and hopes for your child or youth this year?**
- 7. Is there any other information that could help us gain a better understanding of your child or youth?**
- 8. Are there any specific concerns you would like us to address at this meeting? If so, please explain.**

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and ideas.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The terms listed in this glossary may or may not be used during the SSP meeting. They are, however, used regularly within the school system.

Accessibility: Removing physical or other barriers or obstacles to ensure access to buildings, facilities, media, materials, electronic systems, and environments, and to ensure equality for all individuals.

Accommodation: A means of identifying, preventing, and removing barriers that impede students with disabilities from participating fully in the educational environment in a way that is responsive to their own unique circumstances. The principles of accommodation involve three factors—dignity, individualization, and inclusion.

Adaptation: A change made in the teaching process, materials, assignments, or pupil products to help a student achieve the expected learning outcomes.

Adapted Education Plan (AEP): Specialized assessments and recommendations from clinicians or other clinical professionals indicate that the student requires a change in the teaching process, materials, assignments, or pupil products to assist them in achieving the expected learning outcomes.

Appropriate Educational Programming: A collaborative school-family-community process in which school communities create learning environments and provide resources and services that are responsive to the lifelong learning and social/emotional needs of all students.

Assessment: The systematic process of gathering information about what a student knows, is able to do, and is learning to do.

Assistive Technology: Any item, piece of equipment, product, or system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capability of individuals with disabilities.

Behaviour Intervention Plan (BIP): An intervention plan developed by a team to meet a student’s social/emotional and behavioural needs.

Catchment or Home School: The school students would usually attend with their siblings and neighbours.

Clinician: An individual trained in the provision of support services within the school setting for students with disabilities, as well as consultative services for school personnel, parents, and guardians.

Curriculum: The curriculum prescribed or approved by the minister of education, outlining expected learning outcomes.

Curriculum Modification Plan (CMP): A student-specific plan for students with modified subjects or courses.

Differentiated Instruction: A method of instruction or assessment that alters the presentation of the curriculum for the purpose of responding to the learning diversity, interests, and strengths of students.



Domain: The specific area of development that may be targeted in the IEP. Examples of domains include communication (verbal and non-verbal), cognitive/academics, recreation/leisure, self-help (dressing and feeding), community functioning, vocational, physical (mobility and gross/fine motor), independent living (money and time management), social skills/relationships (play skills, sensitivity to others, and responsibility taking), and transition.

Educational Assistant: A person hired by the school division to provide support for students while supervised by a teacher.

Inclusion: A way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued, and safe.

Inclusive Education: Providing all students with the supports and opportunities they need to become participating members of their school communities.

Individual Education Plan (IEP): A type of Student-Specific Plan that documents student-specific outcomes (SSOs) that are in domains outside of the provincial curriculum.

Individual Transition Plan (ITP): A formal plan developed at the age of 16 to help a student with additional learning needs as they prepare to exit the school system. The plan is developed by the student's SSP team. A transition domain is added to the SSP and reviewed annually.

Individualized Programming: Programming designed to meet the needs of students with intellectual disabilities who require programming outside the regular curriculum in the areas of exceptional learning, social/emotional, behavioural, sensory, physical, cognitive/intellectual, communication, academic, or special health-care needs. Individualized programming is accessed through an application process.

Informed Consent: An individual's voluntary consent to participate in an activity (assessment, intervention, or program) after first being fully advised of the benefits and risks. It can be withdrawn at any time.

Intersectoral Services: Services provided for students with exceptional learning needs that involve the collaboration of a variety of government departments, agencies, and local organizations.

Level of Performance: A specific description of a student's skills, needs, and strengths in each domain or subject area.

Modification: Changes in the number, essence, or content of the learning outcomes a student is expected to meet in the provincial curriculum, made by the teacher or school team through an application process.

Most Enabling Environment: An environment in which the student has the opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of an education (academic and social/emotional).

PATH: A planning process often used at transitions to identify goals for the student.

Performance Objectives: Student-specific outcomes broken down into small, manageable components or steps.

Pupil File: A collection of written information about a student's education, stored in a file in the school or school division office in paper, electronic, or other form.

Resource Teacher: A teacher whose principal duties are to assist in determining appropriate instructional strategies when a mismatch in instruction and student needs occurs, to give direct assistance to teachers and students when required, and to provide school personnel, parents, and guardians with consultative services.

School-Based Team: The people who may be involved with a student on a daily basis at school—key decision-makers in the SSP process who may include the student, parents or guardians, teacher, resource teacher, counsellor, educational assistant, and principal.

School Counsellor: Teachers who provide support for activities that involve providing students with personal, career, social development, and referral assistance, and working with other staff members in planning and conducting guidance programs for students.



Specialized Assessment: An individual student assessment completed by divisional personnel or community professionals that extends the information acquired by the in-school planning team through school-based assessment. The purpose of a specialized assessment is to collect specific information regarding the exceptional learning needs of students across a variety of domains and contexts. Specialized assessment areas may include exceptional learning, social/emotional, sensory, behavioural, physical, cognitive/intellectual, adaptive, communication, academic or health-care needs, and other factors relevant to student performance and learning. A specialized assessment identifies other methods of differentiated instruction and assessment, as well as adaptations and/or modifications that can be used to assist the student in meeting grade-level or student-specific outcomes.

Student Services: Staff and services provided by the school division to meet the needs of students who have exceptional learning, social/emotional, behavioural, sensory, physical, cognitive/intellectual, communication, academic, or health-care needs.

Student-Specific Outcome: Another term currently used for “goal” in an SSP—states what the student will learn and when this will be accomplished.

Student-Specific Plan (SSP): The written documentation of a specific plan to support a student’s exceptional learning needs. It may range in length from one page documenting student-specific adaptations (AEP) to a lengthier documentation of a student’s programming, outlining student-specific outcomes developed by a larger team.

Student with Additional Learning Needs: A student who requires specialized services or programming, when deemed necessary by the in-school team, because of exceptional learning, social/emotional, behavioural, sensory, physical, cognitive/intellectual, communication, academic, or health-care needs that affect their ability to meet learning outcomes.

Transition: Moving a student from one environment to another at key points in their development from childhood to adulthood (i.e., entry into the kindergarten or nursery school years, transition from early to middle years, from one grade to the next, or from high school to post-secondary education or employment).

Universal Design: The process of creating systems, environments, materials, and devices that are directly and repeatedly usable by people with the widest range of abilities operating within the largest variety of situations.



REFERENCES

Portions of this document have been adapted with permission from Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning:

Student-Specific Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Individual Education Plans (IEPs)
https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/iep/pdf/planning/student_specific_planning.pdf

Supporting Inclusion: Modification and Individualized Programming in Manitoba Schools
https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/pdf/supporting_inclusion_m_i.pdf

Working Together: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs in School
<https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/parent/pdf/workingtogether.pdf>



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