

**JAMES BAY LOWLANDS
SECONDARY SCHOOL BOARD**

**BOARD GOVERNANCE POLICY
NO. GOV-19**

Date Adopted	October 24, 2018
Last Revised	
Board Motion	5598-10-18

SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. PURPOSE

The James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board believes that all students, including students with special education needs, require programs that provide them with the best possible opportunities to learn and to maximize their potential. They require knowledge and skills that will help them to succeed in school and in life.

The Board believes that early recognition of learning needs and early intervention is the most effective way to ensure that students remain confident about their abilities and engaged in learning throughout the school program. When some students are identified as having special learning needs, the Board provides effective special education supports.

2. DEFINITIONS

Exceptional Student: An exceptional student is one whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical, or multiple exceptionalities are such that the student is considered to need placement in a special education program by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee of the Board.

Special Education Program: This program, in respect of an exceptional student, is an educational program that is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation and that includes a plan [Individual Education Plan] containing specific objectives and an outline of educational services that meet the needs of the exceptional student.

Special Education Services: These services refer to facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3.1 The James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board is committed to the following guiding principles of education set out by the Ministry of Education:

- a) All students can succeed.
- b) Each student has his or her own unique patterns of learning.

- c) Successful instructional practices are founded on evidence-based research, tempered by experience.
- d) Universal design and differentiated instruction are effective and interconnected means of meeting the learning or productivity needs of any group of students. [Universal design involves broad principles for planning instruction and designing learning environments for a diverse group of students. Differentiated instruction allows educators to address specific skills and difficulties within a classroom setting.]
- e) Classroom teachers are the key educators for a student's literacy and numeracy development.
- f) Classroom teachers need the support of the larger community to create a learning environment that supports all students.
- g) Fairness is not sameness.

[Ontario Ministry of Education (2013). *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12*. p. 7 and p. 12]

4. POLICY

- 4.1 It is the policy of the Board to provide appropriate education for all exceptional students, to the limit of its human and financial resources, in an environment that best suits the needs of the individual exceptional student.
- 4.2 All teachers share responsibility for the education of exceptional students.
- 4.3 Exceptional students will be educated in an environment that allows them to develop to their full potential. The educational program, while recognizing their special needs, should approximate, as near as possible, the regular classroom experience.
- 4.4 Education for exceptional students should respond to each student's individual and changing level of physical, communication, intellectual, social, and emotional development.
- 4.5 Parents or guardians of exceptional students shall be consulted with regard to the assessment, identification, placement, and program of these students.
- 4.6 Where possible, program planning for exceptional students should be in coordination with community service providers.

BOARD EXPECTATIONS

5. Board Goals

Board staff, students, parents, and community partners, with the resources available, will collectively strive to ensure that:

- effective communication and collaboration promote a team approach to meeting student needs;

- assessment data is used to meet individual student needs;
- all information gathered about a student is carefully documented and stored in a secure place to ensure that confidentiality is maintained;
- appropriate resources are provided and supported for students and staff;
- appropriately qualified staff are assigned to teach special education classes;
- professional development opportunities are provided and supported for the staff; and
- structures are in place to continuously review and revise current practices and efforts to promote student achievement and well-being.

6. Special Education Identification

- 6.1. The James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board recognizes that some students have special needs that require supports beyond those ordinarily received in the school setting.
- 6.2. Special learning needs may be met through accommodations, and/or an educational program that is modified above or below the age-appropriate grade level expectations for a particular subject. The ministry sets out definitions of exceptionalities that must be used by school boards after determining that a student is an “exceptional pupil”.
- 6.3. All students brought to an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.) are identified using the Ministry of Education categories of exceptionalities. These include:
- behaviour;
 - communication (autism, deaf and hard of hearing, language impairment, speech impairment, learning disability);
 - intellectual (giftedness, mild intellectual disability, developmental disability, intellectual disability);
 - physical (physical disability, blind and low vision); and
 - multiple (multiple exceptionalities).
- 6.4. The Board will ensure that the identification and placement of exceptional students, through an IPRC, is done according to the procedures outlined in the *Education Act* and regulations. [See the References section of this policy.]
- 6.5. Board staff will prepare an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for every exceptional student.

7. Transition Plans

- 7.1. Program/Policy Memorandum No. 156 Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs (2014) requires all students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), whether or not they have been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee, to have an up-to-date transition plan at every stage of their journey through school.
- 7.2. The key transitions in the life of a student include the following:

- entry to school
- a change from one school to another
- the move from elementary to secondary school
- the transition from secondary school to postsecondary activities

7.3. The development of a coordinated and detailed plan for each transition will help ensure that the staff are prepared to meet the needs of the student, contributing to smooth transitions and paving the way for the student's future success.

8. Board Special Education Plan

8.1. In accordance with Regulation 306 Special Education Programs and Services, each school board in Ontario is required, every two years, to prepare and approve a report on the special education programs and special education services provided by the Board, and to submit it to the ministry.

8.2. 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.

8.3. The Special Education Plan is prepared by Board staff, in consultation with the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). This plan is reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees before submission to the Ministry of Education.

8.4. Detailed requirements for the Special Education Plan are set out in the Ministry document, *Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans 2000*.

8.5. The Board's Special Education Plan informs the Ministry of Education and the public about special education programs and services that are provided by the Board in accordance with legislation and ministry policy on special education.

9. The Special Education Advisory Committee

9.1. The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) supports the James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board in protecting the rights of students with special learning needs. Under Ontario's *Education Act*, all students are entitled to programming which best meets their needs.

9.2. The Special Education Advisory Committee provides and makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees in respect to any matter affecting the establishment, development, and ongoing review of special education programs and services of the Board.

9.3. The Special Education Advisory Committee is advisory in nature only. The effectiveness or performance of employees of the Board shall not be subject to discussion by the SEAC.

- 9.4. The Committee reports to the Board, in writing, at least once each calendar year, and more frequently if desired, or at the request of the Board.
- 9.5. The Special Education Advisory Committee participates in the Board's annual review of its special education plan, and participates in the Board's budget process as it relates to special education.
- 9.6. More detailed information about the membership and meetings of the Special Education Advisory Committee is set out in the Board Governance By-Laws.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Legal References:

Education Act, paragraph 170 (1) 7: Duties of Boards: Provide Special Education
Education Act: Section 57.1 Special Education Advisory Committees
Ontario Regulation 181/98 Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils
Ontario Regulation 298 Operation of Schools, Section 30-31 Special Education Programs and Services
Ontario Regulation 306 Special Education Programs and Services
Ontario Regulation 464/97 Special Education Advisory Committees
Ontario Ministry of Education. (2000) Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans
Ontario Ministry of Education (2000) Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation
Ontario Ministry of Education. (2010) Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools.
Ontario Ministry of Education. (2013) Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12
Ontario Ministry of Education. (2013) Creating Pathways to Success: An Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Ontario Schools—Policy and Program Requirements, Kindergarten to Grade 12
Ontario Ministry of Education. (2017) Special Education in Ontario: Kindergarten to Grade 12. Policy and Resource Guide
Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014) Program/Policy Memorandum No. 156 Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Board References:

Board Policy GOV-01 Values, Vision, and Mission
Board Policy GOV-02 Role of the Corporate Board
Board Policy GOV-03 Role of the Supervisory Officer
Board Policy GOV-05 Multi-Year Strategic Plan
Board Policy GOV-09 Board Communications
Board Policy GOV-13 Equity and Inclusion
Board Policy GOV-14 Indigenous Education
Board Policy GOV-15 Accessibility Standards
Administrative Procedure 290 Placement of Non-Promoted Students
Board Governance By-Laws

Resource:

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2004) The Individual Education Plan (IEP): A Resource Guide