CHAPTER 1: AN OVERVIEW OF STUDENT-SPECIFIC PLANNING

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Key Ideas in This Chapter

- Student-specific planning is a collaborative team process that requires the identification of appropriate outcomes, instruction, and assessment.
- A range of options are available for addressing student diversity.
- Student support team membership will vary according to the needs of the student.

Addressing Student Diversity through Student-Specific Planning

Responsibilities and rights related to education in Manitoba are defined in The Public Schools Act and in The Education Administration Act. School boards are required to provide each resident and enrolled pupil access to appropriate educational programming.

Appropriate educational programming for most students consists of the expected learning outcomes in the provincial curriculum.* Some students, however, require student-specific outcomes in addition to, or instead of, the expected learning outcomes. For example, a student who has difficulty controlling his or her disruptive behaviour may be working on the expected learning outcomes in the curriculum and also on a student-specific outcome related to behaviour management. A student with a profound cognitive disability, however, may be working only on functional student-specific outcomes.

For further information, refer to the following Manitoba acts and regulations:


The Education Administration Act, available online at http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/e010e.php.


The Public Schools Act, available online at http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/p250e.php.

* The terms expected learning outcomes and provincial curriculum are used interchangeably throughout this document.
Appropriate educational programming starts in the classroom with the student, the students’ parent(s), and the students’ teacher(s). Student-specific planning is a process that guides educators in identifying student needs, providing programming supports, and monitoring student progress.

The Core Team

Educational planning for all students begins with a core team: the student, the student’s parent(s), and the student’s classroom teacher(s). Planning for all students is a collaborative process in which the core team identifies appropriate educational outcomes and ways of attaining these outcomes (refer to Figure 1.1).

Learning is an interactive process in which learners try to make sense of new information and integrate it into what they already know. Teachers use their knowledge of the curriculum and various classroom assessment processes to determine the starting points for instruction and to monitor each student’s developing understanding and skill as instruction proceeds. When a teacher observes differences in a student’s learning and/or behaviour, focused classroom observation and assessment occur. The teacher then employs variations in the pacing of instruction, materials, or instructional approaches to better enable the student to be successful.

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<td>Expected Learning Outcomes</td>
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<td>Parent(s)</td>
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The In-School Team

Even with skilled classroom instruction, some students continue to demonstrate difficulty in meeting the expected learning outcomes. The core team of the student, parent(s), and teacher(s) may then decide it is appropriate to request the involvement of additional school-based colleagues to form an in-school team. The in-school team will vary according to the needs of the student and the resources available, and may include the resource teacher and/or school counsellor (refer to Figure 1.2). The in-school team continues gathering and sharing information to develop a student profile that describes the unique development of the individual student. This may be done through focused classroom observation and/or additional assessment and will guide the selection of additional classroom intervention strategies and the implementation of those strategies.
The School Support Team

For most students, the collaborative planning of the in-school team and the resulting interventions will successfully address the students’ needs. If this is not the case, however, the in-school team may consult with the school support team for further assistance. The school support team may include clinicians, therapists, mental health professionals, and/or others who work with the in-school team to support student-specific planning and educational programming (refer to Figure 1.3).

The Student Support Team

A core team is the student, the student’s parent(s), and the student’s teacher(s).

An in-school team is the core team and other school staff, such as the resource teacher and/or school counsellor. The in-school team is the key decision maker in the student-specific planning process.

A school support team is the in-school team and additional personnel, such as clinicians and consultants, who consult and collaborate with the in-school team to support student-specific planning and educational programming.
Figure 1.3: The School Support Team

Educational Planning Process

**Curriculum**
- Expected Learning Outcomes
- and/or
- Student-Specific Outcomes (SSOs)

**School Support Team**
- Core Team
  - Student Parent(s)
  - Classroom Teacher(s)
- In-School Team
  - Principal
  - School Counsellor
  - Special Education Teacher
  - Resource Teacher
- Therapists
- Child and/or Adult Support Services Personnel
- Consultants
- Community Resources Personnel

**Assessment**
- Classroom-Based
- Student-Specific
- Specialized

**Instruction**
- Differentiated Instruction
- Adaptation
- Modification
- Individualized Programming

**In-School Team**
- Health Professionals
- Mental Health Professionals
- Clinicians

**Community Resources Personnel**
- Child and/or Adult Support Services Personnel
- Health Professionals

**School Support Team**
- Core Team
- In-School Team
- Assessment
- Instruction
Collaborative Planning

Student-specific planning gives the people who work most closely with students an opportunity to collaborate. It represents a coordinated effort by families, school staff, school division staff, community agencies, and others to develop and implement educational programming to accommodate student needs.

Student-specific planning helps individuals who work with students to

- share information and observations about the student’s learning and behaviour over time and in a variety of settings
- develop a student profile that reflects a common understanding of the student’s strengths, interests, needs, and current level(s) of performance
- identify priorities for educational programming and planning across curriculum areas and/or domains
- monitor and report on student progress and achievement

Instructional Supports for Addressing Student Diversity

Manitoba Education has identified a range of instructional supports for addressing student diversity, including differentiated instruction, adaptation, modification, and individualized programming. This is not a continuum of supports; rather, each instructional support is intended to address specific programming needs in consideration of expected learning outcomes and/or student-specific outcomes.

Definitions

Adaptation means a change in the teaching process, materials, assignments or pupil products to assist a pupil to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

Differentiated instruction means 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 pupils.

Expected learning outcome means the learning outcomes consistent with the curriculum.

Appropriate Educational Programming Regulation 155/2005
Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction (DI) is instruction that acknowledges and responds to the differences among learners. When planning and providing daily instruction, educators use a wide range of intentional strategies and techniques, as well as ongoing formative assessment, to support student learning and to help the broadest student population achieve the expected curricular learning outcomes. Differentiated instruction recognizes that there are many avenues for reaching the expected learning outcomes and that each student requires a complex and unique mix of basic instruction and practice to reach his or her potential. Educators differentiate instruction to offer students options at various stages of the learning process.

Adaptation

Adaptation means a change made in the teaching process, resources, assignments, or pupil products to help a pupil achieve the expected learning outcomes. Adaptation addresses identified student-specific needs. For example, a student with a print disability may require information and directions to be presented verbally as well as in writing, and may need to demonstrate his or her learning in the same ways. A student with an attention disorder may require that instructions and assignments be broken into “chunks,” and may require a checklist to monitor task completion.

Modification

Modification is appropriate for students who have a significant cognitive disability and refers to altering the number, essence, and content of the curricular learning outcomes that the student is expected to meet. In high school, students with significant cognitive disabilities can register for Modified (M) courses. M-designated courses are intended for students who will benefit from department-developed or -approved curricula, providing they have been modified significantly to meet the student’s unique learning requirements. Students receiving modification will have an IEP that details the curriculum modifications and an implementation plan.

For further information, see

Individualized Programming

*Individualized programming* is intended for students whose cognitive disabilities are so significant that they do not benefit from participating in curricula developed or approved by Manitoba Education. Individualized programming identifies highly individualized learning experiences that are functionally appropriate. Students receiving individualized programming will have an IEP that details their student-specific outcomes and implementation plan.

Each member of the student support team has different knowledge, skills, and experiences with the student. Collaborative planning allows the team to identify, coordinate, and make use of a range of resources and strategies that will offer students the best opportunities for developing and achieving in all educational experiences (refer to Figure 1.4).

For further information, see


For further information, see

Figure 1.4  INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS FOR ADDRESSING STUDENT DIVERSITY

Individualized Programming
- highly individualized, functionally appropriate learning experiences
- appropriate for students whose cognitive disabilities are so significant that they are not working to achieve the expected curricular learning outcomes

Modification
- alteration in the number, essence, and content of the expected curricular learning outcomes
- appropriate for students who have a significant cognitive disability

Adaptation
- student-specific changes in teaching process, materials, assignments, or pupil products
- to assist a student to achieve the expected curricular learning outcomes

Differentiated Instruction
- wide range of strategies, techniques, and approaches that acknowledge and respond to the diversity among learners
- to assist each student to achieve the expected curricular learning outcomes

Expected Learning Outcomes from Provincial Curricula
Effective IEPs

*Individual education plans (IEPs)* document the information gathered, decisions made, strategies identified, and ongoing assessment that occurs during the student-specific planning process.

In general, IEPs summarize

- what is known about the student (current level of performance)
- the programming that is being and/or will be provided (outcomes, instructional strategies, activities, and materials)
- the effectiveness of the programming (assessment, evaluation)

A written plan ensures continuity in educational programming by providing

- a record of the educational programming for the student
- a tool for tracking individual student learning in terms of agreed-upon outcomes
- a basis for reporting the student’s progress

The format, length, detail, and comprehensiveness of the IEP will reflect the needs of the student. Most students who require student-specific planning will require supports, such as adaptation, within regular programming and will be working to achieve expected learning outcomes. These supports can often be documented in one or two pages. A smaller number of students with more involved needs will require more detailed and comprehensive plans.

A student’s specific needs and the comprehensiveness of the IEP they require are related. Most students achieve the expected learning outcomes in provincial curricula with the support of differentiated instruction. The teacher plans instruction according to the class profile. Very few students require individualized programming; those who do, have unique needs and require detailed IEPs describing functional outcomes (refer to Figure 1.5).
Figure 1.5  Programming Direction and Related Comprehensiveness of Planning

Programming Direction

- Individualized
- Modified
- Regular with Adaptations
- Regular with Differentiated Instruction

Planning

Outcomes:
- student-specific outcomes
- modified learning outcomes and student-specific outcomes
- expected learning outcomes with documented adaptations, student-specific outcomes, if required
- expected learning outcomes, student-specific outcomes, if required

Assessment:
- student-specific assessments, specialized assessments, and so on
- student-specific assessments, targeted observations, student-specific assessments, and so on
- checklists, targeted observations, student-specific assessments, and so on
- anecdotal records, portfolios, interest inventories, and so on
Chapter Summary

- At its core, the educational planning process is the same for all students.
- Parents and classroom teachers are the first source of information regarding student learning.
- Student-specific planning occurs when a student requires support.
- Collaborative planning allows the student support team to identify, coordinate, and implement resources and strategies to address a student’s unique needs.
- Student-specific planning is a process; an IEP is a written document.