

# **Student-Specific Planning**

A Handbook for Developing  
and Implementing Individual  
Education Plans (IEPs)





# STUDENT-SPECIFIC PLANNING

A Handbook for Developing and Implementing  
Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

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This resource is available on the Manitoba Education website at  
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	Brent Epp Consultant	Student Services Unit Program and Student Services Branch
	Ricki Hall Educational Supervisor	Manitoba School for the Deaf
	Audrey North Consultant	Student Services Unit Program and Student Services Branch
	Linda Thorlakson Consultant	Assessment Unit Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment Branch
	Bette-Ann Turner Consultant/ Project Leader	Student Services Unit Program and Student Services Branch
<b>External Reviewers</b>	Doug Anderson	Manitoba Association of School Superintendents
	Carolyn Duhamel	Manitoba School Boards Association (formerly Manitoba Association of School Trustees)
	Pat Hamm	Manitoba Teachers' Society
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**Manitoba Education  
School Programs  
Division Staff**

Joanna Blais Director	Program and Student Services Branch
Lee-Ila Bothe Coordinator	Document Production Services Unit Educational Resources Branch
Lynn Harrison Desktop Publisher	Document Production Services Unit Educational Resources Branch
Susan Letkemann Publications Editor	Document Production Services Unit Educational Resources Branch
Marilyn Taylor Coordinator	Student Services Unit Program and Student Services Branch
Tim Thorne-Tjomsland Project Manager	Student Services Unit Program and Student Services Branch
Bette-Ann Turner Project Leader	Student Services Unit Program and Student Services Branch

# P R E F A C E

## Philosophy of Inclusion

Manitoba Education is committed to fostering inclusion for all people.

Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued, and safe. An inclusive community consciously evolves to meet the changing needs of its members. Through recognition and support, an inclusive community provides meaningful involvement and equal access to the benefits of citizenship.

In Manitoba, we embrace inclusion as a means of enhancing the well-being of every member of the community. By working together, we strengthen our capacity to provide the foundation for a richer future for all of us.

## Purpose

This support document provides student support teams\* with a foundational student-specific planning process to address the wide range of exceptional learning needs of students throughout their school careers.

## Background

Educators in Manitoba are committed to helping all students reach their individual learning potential. Core beliefs that provide the foundation for education in Manitoba are that all students

- can learn
- have individual abilities and needs
- learn in different ways and at different rates
- learn in different places
- come from diverse backgrounds
- need their differences to be respected
- need to feel that they belong and are valued
- have the right to appropriate educational programming

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\* For the purpose of this document, a *student support team* includes those individuals who support students to achieve appropriate learning outcomes.

Individual education planning is an established part of educational practice in Manitoba. Since the publication in 1998 of *Individual Education Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing IEPs, Early to Senior Years* (Manitoba Education and Training), major provincial legislative and regulatory changes have occurred, as have changes in pedagogical philosophy and practice. *Student-Specific Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Individual Education Plans (IEPs)* is a support document that provides a revised description of the student-specific planning process and of individual education plans.

## Using This Document

This document is intended to be a practical resource for guiding a student-specific planning process and developing individual education plans (IEPs). It is organized into three chapters, each of which begins by drawing the reader's attention to key ideas that will be addressed in the chapter and ends with a summary of those ideas.

This handbook contains the following sections:

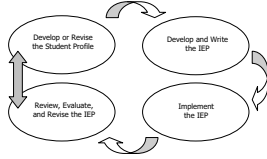
- The **Preface** identifies Manitoba's philosophy of inclusion and briefly describes the background, purpose, and content of this document.
- The **Introduction** provides a brief overview of the following processes: appropriate educational programming, student-specific planning, and individual education planning.
- **Chapter 1: An Overview of Student-Specific Planning** describes an educational planning process that starts in the classroom with the student, parent(s),\* and teacher(s), and develops and increases in complexity according to the unique needs of the student.
- **Chapter 2: Documenting Student-Specific Planning: The IEP** summarizes who must have an IEP, according to provincial legislation and regulations and departmental standards, policies, and guidelines.
- **Chapter 3: A Student-Specific Planning Process** describes four steps to guide student support teams as they develop, write, implement, and review IEPs to address a student's specific educational needs.
- The **Glossary** defines terms related to student-specific planning as they are used throughout this document.
- The **Appendices** provide information, references, forms, and tools to support the student-specific planning process.
- The **References** consist of related resources consulted and cited in the development of this document.

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\* The term *parent* is used throughout this document to refer to parents, legal guardians, or others who have responsibility for caring for students.

## Graphics and Sidebars

This document uses a variety of graphics and sidebars to guide the reader’s attention to the following:

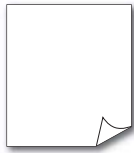


The student-specific planning process



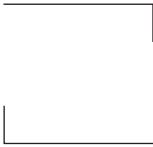
References to

- Manitoba acts and regulations
- Manitoba Education resources



Citations from

- *Appropriate Educational Programming Regulation 155/2005* (Manitoba)
- *Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba: Standards for Student Services* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth)



Clarification and emphasis of concepts and terms



# INTRODUCTION

## Appropriate Educational Programming

*Appropriate educational programming* is a collaborative process through which school communities create learning environments and provide resources and services that are responsive to the lifelong learning, social, and emotional needs of all students. In Manitoba, all students have the right to appropriate educational programming.

Most students achieve the expected learning outcomes of provincial curricula with the support of classroom and/or subject area teachers who use a variety of instructional and assessment strategies and materials. For some students, teachers will be the first to identify that they are experiencing learning challenges. A small number of students enter school with previously diagnosed conditions and/or identified learning needs.



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Resources related to appropriate educational programming in Manitoba are available on the Manitoba Education website at [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/documents.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/documents.html).

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## Student-Specific Planning

*Student-specific planning* is the process through which members of student support teams, including educators and parents, collaborate to meet the unique needs of individual students. The purpose of student-specific planning is to help students attain the skills and knowledge that are the next logical step beyond their current levels of performance.



Through the student-specific planning process the student support team works to identify a student's unique learning needs and to determine, implement, and evaluate appropriate educational interventions. These interventions may range from short-term strategies applied in the classroom to comprehensive, individualized programming. The student-specific planning process is sufficiently broad-based to address, in a systematic way, a wide range of exceptional learning needs.

The effort and time invested in student-specific planning results in improved outcomes for students. If the planning process is not dynamic and ongoing, and if the IEP that is developed is not referred to regularly, it is unlikely that there will be any impact on the day-to-day performance of the student or on his or her long-term progress and achievement.

Student-specific planning and IEPs are most effective when

- the process is collaborative and genuinely inclusive of all team members
- all members of the student support team are involved in sharing information, assessing student performance, and providing recommendations, all within their area of expertise
- planning is based on a current student profile
- programming suggestions and decisions are clearly linked to the student's current level(s) of performance
- programming suggestions and decisions are reflected in daily instruction
- responsibilities are identified
- student progress is continuously monitored
- programming is revised as a student's circumstances and progress indicate

## Individual Education Plans

*Individual education plans (IEPs)* document the student-specific planning process. IEPs are not legal documents; they function as planning, record-keeping, and communication tools. While school divisions may use different terms and acronyms to describe student-specific planning processes and written plans, in this document *IEP* is a global term referring to a written document developed and implemented by a team, outlining a plan to address the unique learning needs of students.



Because a wide range of students with very different strengths and needs can be served through student-specific planning, each resulting IEP is specific to the student for whom it is designed. The format, length, and content of the IEP will reflect the needs of the student. IEPs for students who require adaptations within regular programming can often be completed in one or two pages. A smaller number of students with more involved needs will require more detailed and comprehensive IEPs.

Students with carefully developed and implemented IEPs are more likely to attain their educational outcomes and reach their potential as learners.