



Riverside School Board -Policy
Resolution E36 -20030415

***Policy Concerning the Organization of Educational Services
for Students with Handicaps and Students with Social
Maladjustments or Learning Disabilities***

Objective

The objective of the Policy is, among other things, to define the means of evaluation and identification of students with special needs, to establish the conditions and procedures for integration into regular classes or groups, and if need be, the weighting procedure and the integration of support services, to establish the terms and conditions for specialized placement and to provide for the preparation and evaluation of individualized education plans (IEP's).

Definitions

This document, entitled "Policy Concerning the Organization of Educational Services for Students with Handicaps and Students with Social Maladjustments or Learning Disabilities", will hereafter be referred to as this Policy or the Special Education Policy.

Student with special needs: For purposes of this policy, the term "student with special needs" covers the term "student with handicaps or social maladjustments or learning disabilities".

Community school: Is defined by the enrolment criteria of Riverside School Board's Three-Year Plan of Allocation and Destination.

The Board: Is defined as Riverside School Board and all of the schools within its jurisdiction.

Legal Framework

This Policy is adopted by Riverside School Board in accordance with article 235 of the Education Act:

Every school board shall adopt, after consultation with the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities, a policy concerning the organization of educational services for such students to ensure the harmonious integration of each such student into a regular class or group and into school activities if it has been established on the basis of the evaluation of the student's abilities and needs that such integration would facilitate the student's learning and social integration and would not impose an excessive constraint or significantly undermine the rights of the other students.

Specialized schools referred to in subparagraph 3 of the second paragraph are not schools established under section 240.

The legal framework encompasses, among others:

- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- The Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, R.S.Q., c. C-12;
- The Education Act, R.S.Q., cI-13.3;
- The Act Respecting Access to Documents Held by Public Bodies and the Protection of Personal Information, R.S.Q., c.A-2.1;
- The Basic School Regulations – pre-school, elementary, and secondary education, 2000 G.O.II, 3429;
- The Youth Protection Act, R.S.Q.,c. P-34.1.
- The Collective Agreements in force
- The Civil Code of Quebec
- "Adapting Our Schools to the Needs of All Students, Policy on Special Education, Ministère de l'éducation, 1999".
- Students with Handicaps, Social Maladjustments or Learning Difficulties : Définitions, Direction de l'adaptation scolaire et des services complémentaires, Ministère de l'Éducation 2000.
- Act to Secure the Handicapped in the Exercise of their Rights, R.S.Q., c. E-20.1.

Procedures for Developing, Adopting, Disseminating, Implementing and Revising the Policy

Development

This Policy has been developed by members of the management of Riverside School Board and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) set up pursuant to clause 8-9.03 of the Teachers' Collective Agreement.

Consultation

The Management Advisory Committee, The Advisory Committee on Services for Students with Special Needs (E.A. section 187) and the Advisory Committee (8-9.03) of the Teachers' Collective Agreement along with the Educational Policies Committee have been consulted on its content, and recommendations for its implementation.

It has been distributed widely to all schools, governing boards and the central parents committee to allow for board consultation within the Riverside community.

Adoption

Following the consultation process, it is adopted by resolution by the Council of Commissioners.

Dissemination and Implementation

The Policy, once adopted, is disseminated to all schools and centers, and the board office of the Board.

It is important to note that all partners are responsible for ensuring the educational success of students. The Board and its schools understand that success can mean different things for different students.

Evaluation of the Results

- The school board is responsible for evaluating the results achieved in its education of students with special needs at all levels within its organization.

- The school board is responsible for providing the resources required to plan and organize evaluations, in order to obtain all information needed to gain an overall view of the situation.

Revision

The policy is reviewed periodically by the school board, following the same procedure as when the policy is adopted (participation, consultation).

Principles

The fundamental right of the child to a quality education is one which promotes the full development of the child's intellectual, social and emotional potential. Riverside School Board is committed to providing appropriate educational services to all of its students residing within its boundaries and to the greatest extent possible, in the community school.

The Board is resolved to promote the child's educational and social development, in the least restrictive environment, within the school community. For this reason, the Board considers the regular classroom in the community school to be the preferred model of service delivery for students with special needs, when it has been established on the evaluation of the student's abilities and needs that such integration would facilitate the student's learning and social integration and does not impose any excessive constraints or significantly undermine the rights of other students. The Board undertakes to provide appropriate support and adequate resources to the teacher and to the student. An emphasis is placed on early intervention.

Should integration in a regular class not be the most appropriate placement option, the school staff, in consultation with parents and other professionals, may recommend an alternative placement for the student which will maximize the student's potential for learning and social adaptation. If the appropriate services and support are not available within the community school, then an alternate school or an alternative program will be sought. (See Appendix 1: Models of Service Delivery).

The Board shall work with the school community to determine early in their students' education, whether or not the students' success appear to be at risk, so that educational practices may be introduced in order to prevent or minimize learning difficulties or social behaviours which may have occurred otherwise.

To this end, there shall be a screening process prior to a student entering a school. Parents and school personnel will work together on the implementation of required educational services provided to the student. The emphasis will be placed on early intervention. Parents' participation in every step of the process is essential and will be strongly encouraged.

Procedures for Evaluation

To enable the school to evaluate the student's needs, and to identify and put in place the special services required, these procedures are to be followed:

- The school administration shall request of the parents an evaluation/diagnosis prior to a student with identified special needs starting school.

- For kindergarten registrations, some screening procedures will be followed, e.g. speech and language checklist as well as an observation period in the classroom, prior to starting school.
- For students registering in a cycle other than kindergarten in one of our schools for the first time, the administration of the receiving school shall request and receive the student's academic and confidential files, in order to determine whether appropriate services can be provided in the school.
- For students who have transferred from one of our schools to another, the administration of the receiving school shall request and receive the student's academic and confidential files. If required, a liaison meeting shall take place between the sending and receiving schools and relevant Board personnel, prior to a student beginning at the new school.

Referral and Identification

It is the classroom teacher's responsibility, along with the assistance of the school team, to provide support and assistance to a student as soon as the student appears to be experiencing difficulties in class. Such interventions can be preventative in nature or may be ongoing.

Once measures have been put into place and the student does not appear to be progressing, the teacher reports concerns regarding the student to the school principal. Should parents or others involved with the student's school life identify areas of concern, they too should report them to the teacher or the school administration.

An Ad Hoc Committee shall be convened by the principal in order to discuss the case and make appropriate recommendations, which may include referral to a specialist for evaluation or for other interventions. The work of the Ad Hoc committee is coordinated by the school principal. The parents must be invited to the Ad Hoc committee, but the meeting can be held without their presence. As a result of the Ad Hoc meeting and recommendations made, the school principal makes the appropriate decisions concerning the identification of a student with special needs.

The child's progress must be reviewed on a regular basis, and adaptations to the program or special interventions are implemented or discontinued as needed. Students with special needs remain identified until the Ad Hoc committee has reviewed each case. Every new identification, change or removal of identification must first be submitted to the Ad Hoc committee.

Evaluation of Students who are At-Risk

The evaluation of the needs of at-risk students must be carried out primarily to determine the preventive or corrective measures to be provided.

When a student is experiencing difficulties that could place him or her in a particularly vulnerable situation unless there is immediate intervention, or, when there is a student likely to be identified as being at-risk, the decision made by the school administration to identify a student with special needs must be based on the criteria for identification set by the Ministry of Education, and must target wherever possible, early intervention.

The Referral Process to Resources and Agencies outside the Board

It is the parents' or guardian's responsibility to make contact with resources or agencies outside the Board.

The school administration may recommend to the parents a referral to the local CLSC or other outside resource (e.g. neurologist, pediatrician and psychiatrist) based on a recommendation of school personnel or professionals in Complementary Services. The school administration may call upon the professionals from the Board's Educational Services to facilitate the process.

Procedures for Integrating Students with Special Needs in Regular Classes or Groups

Students with special needs are integrated in regular classes or groups when it has been established on the basis of their evaluations that their integration would facilitate their learning and social development and would not impose excessive constraints or significantly undermine the rights of other students.

In the event that full integration in a regular class is not suitable for the specific needs of a student with special needs or imposes excessive constraints or significantly undermines the rights of other students, the Board provides partial integration or other types of services, such as referral to special classes in a regular school, special programs, or specialized school.

Conditions for Integrating Students in Regular Classes or Groups

Before proceeding with integration of a student with special needs, the school principal, in collaboration with others involved with the student, shall ensure, in as much as possible, that:

- An IEP has been developed in accordance with the policies, procedures and regulations of the Board;
- All parties concerned (teachers, professionals, parents and student) have been invited to consult on the plan and are informed about their various roles and responsibilities;
- An in-service plan has been developed for the staff concerned and appropriate training has begun and is in progress.
- The group into which the student is to be included has been sensitized and prepared;
- Support services and other resources from the Board are available.
- Resources from the Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux have been requested, as needed.
- Physical adaptations, or any other modifications, are effected in order to make the school accessible to the student with handicaps and permit him/her to participate in a full range of regular school activities;
- Specialized equipment or materials necessary are available in the school;
- The number of students with special needs integrated into a particular class takes into account:
 - The severity of the student's handicap or difficulty;
 - The composition of the class;

- The needs of the other students;
 - The support or special services available;
 - The provisions of the Teachers' Collective Agreement.
- A student with handicaps assigned to a class, the nature and composition of, which are different from the student's handicap, be provided with support and educational services as determined by his needs.
 - In schools, a procedure shall be put into place to ensure that the terms and conditions of integration are coordinated within the school.

Support Services for Students and Teachers

The definitions of the various disabilities, handicaps and social and emotional maladjustments are those found in the relevant Appendix of the Teachers' Collective Agreement.

Support services for students and support services for teachers are interrelated. Those services are not mutually exclusive and certain student support services also constitute teacher support services, and vice versa.

The support services which may be provided to a student or a teacher are allocated within the parameters of the financial resources available to the school board and in the best interests of the students and the teachers.

Assistance or support services can also be provided to students who have not been identified as students with special needs, whether or not under an individualized education plan. This can be for prevention purposes, where the students are experiencing difficulties that would make them vulnerable without early intervention.

The support services which may be provided to a student or teacher are determined by the school principal, in accordance with the assessment of the student's needs, and in conformity with the collective agreement and basic school regulations in force.

The following are examples of supports available to students and teachers. While not an exhaustive list, these include:

<u>Support Services to Students with Learning Disabilities</u>	<u>Support Services to Teachers of students with Learning Disabilities</u>
<p>Student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resource Teacher ▪ IEP ▪ Technician and/or Attendant for Students with Handicaps ▪ Small group instruction ▪ Adaptation of goals, strategies and programs ▪ Adaptation of evaluation (including examinations) ▪ Special class placement 	<p>Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resource Teacher ▪ IEP ▪ Curriculum and Complementary Services Professionals, e.g. classroom visits ▪ Adapted materials including software ▪ Team teaching ▪ Technician and/or Attendant for Students with Handicaps ▪ Professional development

Support Services to Students
With Social Maladjustments

Support Services to Teachers of Students
with Social Maladjustments

Student	Teacher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Behaviour Technician ▪ IEP ▪ Social Work intervention ▪ Special class or program ▪ Offsite tutoring ▪ Guidance Counselor ▪ Itinerant Counselors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Behaviour Technician ▪ IEP ▪ Resource Teacher ▪ Complementary Services Professional ▪ Crisis intervention plan ▪ Release time for psychiatric consultation for students ▪ Resources from the Center of Excellence for Behaviour Management ▪ Professional development

Services to Students with Handicaps

Services to Teachers with Handicaps

Student	Teacher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resource Teacher ▪ IEP ▪ Adapted equipment ▪ Technician and/or Attendant <u>for</u> Students with Handicaps ▪ Small group instruction ▪ Adaptation of goals, strategies and programs ▪ Adaptation of evaluation (including examinations) ▪ Special class or program ▪ Special school – offsite tutoring ▪ Adaptations to physical plant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resource Teacher ▪ IEP ▪ Adapted equipment ▪ Technician and/or Attendant <u>for</u> Students with Handicaps ▪ Team teacher ▪ Complementary Services Professional ▪ Adapted materials including software ▪ Oral interpreter ▪ Itinerant Teacher ▪ Crisis intervention plan ▪ Professional development

Weighting Provisions for Students

Weighting provisions will be applied in accordance with the Teachers’ Collective Agreement.

Procedures for Grouping Students with Special Needs in Specialized Groups, Classes or Schools

It is the responsibility of the principal, following the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee to request of the Board specialized services required by the student which cannot be provided within the school.

Before recommending that a student with special needs be assigned to a special placement, the principal shall ensure:

- That all parties, including the staff, the parents and the student, unless unable to do so, are consulted;

- That the services currently offered do not or no longer respond to the needs of the student;
- That placement in a special class is intended to satisfy the student's needs.

Following analysis of need, the procedures for placement in a regional program or through an interboard agreement are:

- Any student newly enrolled in a school of the Board may be placed in a special group (depending on the availability of space) and will receive, to the extent possible, the services required based on the information contained in the student's files and as described in the IEP.
- Any student already enrolled in a regular class in one of the schools of the Board may be placed in a special group (depending on the availability of space), based on the information in the student's files, and will receive, to the extent possible, the services described in the IEP;
- Any student newly registered at the Board who suffers from behavioural difficulties will receive, to the extent possible, the services outlined in the IEP, which may include placement in a special group (depending on the availability of space).

Types of groups:

Each year, the Board will determine, for the following year, its plan for the organization of special services. This will be done on the basis of the characteristics and special needs of those students who require them, as well as on the distribution of services, as allocated by the Board.

The Board will make available to students with special needs:

- A range of placement options which may include a regular class setting, special programs, special classes or a specialized school or center either within the Board or endeavor to do so outside its territory.

Reintegration

A student's progress and achieved goals are reviewed on a regular basis. When the student, through the progress he/she is making, demonstrates an ability to be reintegrated into a regular classroom program, with or without adaptations to the program, the school administrator in charge of the student's program begins a process of reintegration. The steps in Article 4.1 of this Policy are put into effect in order to support transition into the new placement.

Procedures for Establishing and Evaluating Individualized Education Plans for Handicapped Students and Students with Social maladjustments and/or Students with Learning Disabilities

The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is the legal document which permits the modification of a student's program from the regular course of study. It is a tool for the planning and co-ordination of the process intended to respond to the particular adaptations a student with special needs requires. An IEP must be prepared for each student identified with special needs whose requirements cannot be met through the regular school program.

An IEP may also be established for a student in a particularly vulnerable situation or likely to be identified as a student at-risk, even if the student has not yet been identified.

Following an evaluation of the needs and abilities of the student, the school principal, with the help of the Ad Hoc committee, the staff, parents and student if he is able to do so will establish a written IEP adapted to the needs and abilities of the student. Parents have a right and a responsibility to participate in the development of the IEP. They may be invited to attend IEP meetings organized by the school or Board to discuss the development and modifications to the IEP. They receive a copy of the IEP at least once per year as part of the regular reporting procedure. Following the discussion of the plan for the student, the school principal may delegate the actual writing of the IEP to a staff member.

This IEP is evaluated and revised on a regular basis and remains in effect until the identified need is satisfied, or the student concerned is no longer under the jurisdiction of the Board.

The IEP may contain documentation or information regarding the following items:

- The student's abilities;
- The strengths and the difficulties or limitations of the student;
- The student's needs;
- The objectives to pursue and the results to attain;
- The means to be implemented;
- The responsibilities of the different parties;
- The timelines for success and review;
- The procedures for communicating with the parents.

The evaluation of the IEP shall include:

- Identification of the student's progress in terms of the objectives chosen;
- Re-evaluation of the needs, and adjustment of the means and objectives where necessary;
- The maintenance or the modification of the resources identified in the IEP;
- The maintenance or the modification of the classification;
- The new timeline.

The objectives and strategies set in the IEP should be specific, limited and measurable, and must be reviewed frequently.

Miscellaneous Confidentiality

The Board and its employees shall respect the confidentiality and ethical considerations that are concomitant with access to student files. Those staff members identified by the Board to the Commission d'accès à l'information du Québec may have access to these student files. Within the school, they include administrators, teachers, technicians, and guidance counselors, other professionals and secretaries who work directly with the student.

These include the student's Permanent Record Card (PRC) and the Special Assistance File (also known as the Confidential File).

Updating and Conservation of Files

The student files are updated according to the Board's policies. For students with special needs, information kept in the Special Assistance File should be updated at the end of each school year, i.e. evaluation of progress and IEP.

The files are conserved according to the Board's retention schedule as established in the Archives Act. The Special Assistance File for a student is destroyed once it has been inactive for five years.

Interboard Agreements

For students requiring specialized services, which the Board deems that it cannot provide, the designated person from the Board's Educational Services Department shall attempt to make the appropriate arrangements for the student to attend a program outside the Board. (Article 213 of the Education Act).

Mechanism for the Appeal of Decisions Reached in the Application of the Policy

A student or the parents of a student affected by a decision of the Council of Commissioners, the Executive Committee, the Governing Board or of an officer or employee under the authority of the School Board may ask the Council of Commissioners to reconsider the decision, in accordance with Articles 9-12 of the Education Act.

Final Provision

The present Policy shall come into force on the date of its adoption by the Council of Commissioners of Riverside School Board.