



Riverside School Board

Policy Name:	Policy Concerning the Organization of Educational Services for Students with Learning, Physical, Social or Emotional Difficulties
Policy Number:	Policy Number EXXX-XXXXXXXXX Replacing Policy Number E36-20030415
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Objective

The objectives of the Policy Concerning the Organization of Educational Services for Students with Learning, Physical, Social or Emotional Difficulties (the “Policy”) are: to define the means of evaluation and identification of students with learning, physical, social or emotional difficulties; to establish the conditions and procedures for integrating students 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 (IEPs).

Definitions

A **student with an at-risk profile** is a student who presents persistent difficulties, who is at risk of failure and who may have trouble to integrate their school environment without intervention or support on a regular basis.

A **student without an at-risk profile** is a student who presents temporary academic, physical, social or emotional difficulties that require temporary support services.

Principles

Riverside School Board is resolved to promote the children’s academic and social development in the least restrictive environment within the school community. For this reason, the school board considers non-specialized classrooms in community schools to be the preferred service delivery model for students with special needs.

If full integration in a non-specialized classroom is not suitable for the specific needs of an at-risk student or imposes excessive constraints or significantly undermines other students’ rights, the school board provides partial integration or other types of services, such as

referrals to specialized classes and programs, specialized schools and, in some cases, other alternative service offers within one of its school settings.

The school board shall work with the school community to determine as early as possible, when possible, whether a student's success appears to be at risk. Educational practices may be introduced to prevent or minimize learning, social or behavioural difficulties.

If a school is made aware of a student's diagnosis or potential difficulties, a screening process shall be set up prior to the student entering the school. Alternative school placements may be recommended at this time. Parents and school personnel shall work together to implement the required educational services that the student requires. Parents' participation in every step of the process is essential and shall be strongly encouraged.

Evaluation Procedures

To enable the school to evaluate a student's needs and to identify and implement the special services required, the following procedures shall apply:

- The school administration shall request from the parents, access to any prior evaluation/diagnosis to determine the best school environment and services required to support the student.
- For students registering in a cycle other than kindergarten with one of our schools for the first time, the receiving school's administration shall request and receive the student's academic and confidential files to determine whether the school has the capacity to provide the appropriate services. The parents' consent shall be required to facilitate the transfer of information from the sending school to the receiving school.
- For students who have transferred from one of our schools to another within the school board, the receiving school's administration shall request and receive the student's academic and confidential files. The parents' consent shall be required to access the student's files. If required, a liaison meeting shall be held between the sending and receiving schools and relevant school board personnel. The said meeting shall be held prior to the student beginning at the new school.

Referral and Identification

It is the classroom teacher's responsibility, in collaboration with the school team, to provide support and assistance to a student who appears to be experiencing difficulties in class. Interventions may be preventative in nature or ongoing. Once measures have been implemented, if the student does not appear to be progressing, the teacher shall report any concerns regarding the student to the school's principal.

A meeting shall be convened by the principal in order to discuss the case and make appropriate recommendations, which may include referrals to specialists for evaluations or for other interventions. The parents must be invited to the meeting, but the meeting can be held without them present, as needed. Based on the meeting and any recommendations made, the school principal shall make the appropriate decisions with respect to identifying the student as being at risk of academic, social or emotional difficulties. Parents shall be required to sign the ad hoc or consent form to authorize services or coding identification. Parents who are unable to sign the document must be provided with an alternative form of written consent, which shall be annexed to the ad hoc form.

Should parents or any other individuals involved in the student's academic life identify areas of concern, they should also report them to the teacher or the school's administration.

The student's progress must be reviewed on a regular basis, and adaptations to the program or special interventions are to be implemented or discontinued, as needed. An ad hoc form shall be used to record every new identification, change of identification or removal of identification.

Evaluation of Students Identified as At-risk

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

The decision to identify a student as having persistent learning, physical, social or emotional difficulties must be based on the identification criteria established by the *Ministère de l'Éducation* (the "MEQ"). Wherever possible, early intervention must be provided to students experiencing learning, physical, social or emotional difficulties.

Referral Process to Resources and Agencies Outside of the School Board

It is the parents' or guardian's responsibility to contact resources or agencies outside of the school board. The school administrator and/or a professional from the Complementary Services team shall facilitate contacts with outside services, as needed.

The school administration may refer parents to the local Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) or any other external resource (e.g., neurologist, pediatrician or psychiatrist) based on the recommendations made by school personnel or the school board professionals. The school administration may call upon the professionals from the school board Complementary Services team to facilitate the process.

Procedures for Integrating Students in Non-specialized Classrooms or Groups

Students who are at risk of learning, physical, social or emotional difficulties shall be integrated in their non-specialized classroom or group when and once it has been established, based on their evaluations, that their integration would facilitate their learning and social development. Individual cases shall be evaluated to ensure that the integrity and rights of any students identified as being at-risk as well as those of any other of the school's students are neither compromised nor significantly undermined.

When integration in a non-specialized classroom does not represent the most appropriate option, the school personnel, in consultation with the parents and any relevant professionals, may recommend an alternative environment that is considered as conducive to maximizing the student's potential for learning and social adaptation. If the appropriate services and support are not available within the community school, an alternate school or an alternative program shall be sought within the school board's territory. Off-territory student placements may be sought if and once all options within the school board have been exhausted. Should a parent not accept the suggested alternative recommended by the school board, the school board shall then support an interboard agreement; however, the school board shall not provide transportation in such a case.

Conditions for Integrating Students in Non-specialized Classrooms or Groups

Before proceeding with the integration of a student, the school's principal, in collaboration with any other people involved with the student, shall ensure to the fullest extent possible that:

- An IEP has been developed in accordance with the school board's policies, procedures and regulations;
- All of the parties concerned (teachers, professionals, parents and the student) have been invited to consult on the plan and have been informed of their various roles and responsibilities;
- The group into which the student is to be integrated has been adequately made aware of the situation and prepared for the student's integration;
- Support services and other school board resources are available;
- Resources have been requested from the CISSS, as needed;
- The required specialized equipment or material is available within the school;
- The number of students identified as being at risk or designated by the MEQ for integration into a particular classroom takes into account:
 - The severity of students' diagnoses or difficulties;
 - Classroom compositions;
 - The other students' needs;
 - The available support or special services;
 - The provisions of the Teachers' Collective Agreement;
- Schools shall be required to implement a procedure to ensure that the terms and conditions of integration are coordinated internally.

Support Services for Students and Teachers

The definitions of the various student profiles are those found within the relevant appendix of the Teachers' Collective Agreement.

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

The support services that may be provided to a student or a teacher are allocated within the parameters of the school board's available financial resources and in the best interests of the said student or teacher.

Assistance or support services may also be provided to students who have not been identified as being at risk (i.e., for preventive purposes).

Weighting Provisions Applicable to Students

Weighting provisions shall be applied in accordance with the Teachers' Collective Agreement.

Procedures for Grouping Students in Specialized Classrooms or Schools

It is the principal's responsibility to request from the school board any and all specialized services that cannot be provided directly by school.

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

- All of the parties, including staff, parents and the student, have been consulted, unless impossible to do so;

- The services currently offered no longer meet the student's needs;
- The recommended environment is intended to meet the student's needs.

Following the needs analysis, the procedure for placement in a regional program or through an interboard agreement is as follows:

- Any student newly or presently enrolled in one of our schools may be placed in a special group (depending on available spaces) and shall receive, to the extent possible, the required services based on the information contained in the said student's file and as described in their IEP.

Group types:

Each year, the school board shall determine its plan for the following year with respect to the organization of special services, on the basis of the characteristics and needs of those students who require them as well as the distribution of services as allocated by the school board.

The school board shall make available to students with special needs a range of placement options which may include non-specialized classroom settings, regional programs as well as specialized schools and centres within the school board.

Reintegration:

Students' progress and achieved goals are reviewed on a regular basis. When a student, through the progress achieved, demonstrates an ability to be reintegrated within their non-specialized setting, the school administrator in charge of the student's program shall begin the reintegration process.

Procedures for Establishing and Evaluating Individualized Education Plans

An individualized education plan (IEP) is a legal document which outlines the support measures included in a student's intervention plan. An IEP must be prepared for each student identified as being at risk. An IEP may also be established for a student in a particularly vulnerable situation or likely to be identified as an at-risk student, even if the said student has not yet been identified as such.

Following an evaluation of the student's needs and abilities, the school's principal, with the assistance of the personnel, the parents and the student (if they are able to do so), shall establish a written IEP that takes into account the student's needs and abilities. The parents have a right and a responsibility to participate in the development of their child's IEP. The parents and/or student shall be invited to participate in developing and revising the IEP, as set up by the school or the school board. They shall receive a copy of the IEP at least twice per year pursuant to the regular reporting procedure. The school's principal may delegate the actual drafting of the IEP to a member of the school's personnel.

The IEP shall be evaluated and revised on a regular basis and remain in effect until the identified need or needs have been met or once the said student is no longer under the school board's jurisdiction.

The IEP shall reflect the requirements of the MEQ.

Confidentiality

The school board and its employees shall respect the confidentiality and ethical considerations that apply to accessing student files. They must adhere to the requirements of the *Commission d'accès à l'information du Québec*. The personnel members identified by the school board may access such student files, including students' permanent record cards (PRCs) and special assistance files (also referred to as confidential files).

Updating and Retention of Files

Students' files shall be updated pursuant to the school board's policies. Students' information retained in special assistance files should be updated (i.e., progress evaluations and IEPs) at the end of each school year.

Files shall be retained in accordance with the school board's retention schedule.