

Approved by K-12 Board Action #24-30, May 29, 2024

OVERVIEW

Schools with students in specific categories of special needs are eligible to receive special education funding through the Ministry of Education. This document establishes the standard and instruments to be used in designating a student as manifesting a fundable special need and therefore eligible for supplemental education funding.

According to the BC Ministry of Education:

“Students with special needs may require additional support and accommodations to enable them to access and participate in educational programs. The Basic Allocation, a standard amount of money provided per school age student enrolled in a school district, includes funds to support the learning needs of students who are identified as having learning disabilities, mild intellectual disabilities, students requiring moderate behaviour supports and students who are gifted. Additional supplementary funding recognizes the additional cost of providing programs for students with special needs in the following categories: dependent handicapped, deafblind, moderate to profound intellectually disabled, physically disabled or chronic health impaired, visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and intensive behaviour interventions or serious mental illness.”

In order for a student to qualify for Special Needs funding, the student must be appropriately assessed and identified, and have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in place.

Students are identified in one of the following categories:

- Category C (Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities)
- Category H (Intensive Behaviour Intervention or Serious Mental Illness)
- Category A (Physically Dependent – Multiple Needs)
- Category B (Deafblind)
- Category D (Physical Disability/Chronic Health Impairment)
- Category E (Visual Impairment)
- Category F (Deaf or Hard of Hearing)
- Category G (Autism Spectrum Disorder)

Schools reporting students on the 1701 Form as one of the three levels identified below will receive supplemental Special Needs funding and the Basic Allocation. The students must be provided with special needs supports on a regular basis.

Supplemental funding for the following are per the current year's operating [grant manual](#).

Level 1

- Physically Dependent (A)
- Deafblind (B)

Level 2

- Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability (C)
- Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (D)
- Visual Impairment (E)
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing (F)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (G)

Level 3

- Intensive Behaviour Interventions or Serious Mental Illness (H)

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Documentation to support all claims for Level 1, 2 and 3 special needs funding must include all of the following:

- Assessment and identification in relation to the criteria for that category
- Current Individual Education Plan (IEP) containing appropriate goals for category of student
- Support services outlined in the IEP related to the student's needs
- Evidence that a parent has been offered the opportunity to consult on the IEP
- Evidence of learning activities offered in accordance with IEP
- Methods for measuring the student's progress.

Students are not eligible for supplemental government funding in the following Ministry of Education categories. Instead, the Ministry expects services for these students with identified special needs to be provided through the Base Funding Allocation. All SDABC schools shall allocate a minimum of 5% of the base grant funding for student learning assistance.

- Category K (Mild Intellectual Disabilities)
- Category Q (Learning Disabilities)
- Category R (Behaviour Support or Mental Illness)
- Category P (Gifted)

Schools will formally identify students with special education designations as defined by the Ministry of Education through a school-based (SBT) process. The special education coordinator for Seventh-day Adventist schools in British Columbia will participate in an advisory capacity in the identification of students with special education designations.

REFERRAL PROCEDURES

When difficulties in learning interfere with satisfactory educational progress, students may be referred to a special education program. The special education coordinator (either at the school or the Office of Education) will monitor the referral process, in consultation with the appropriate teachers and principal. Schools will identify students who receive school-based support services through a school-based team (SBT) process.

These steps are followed:

1. The regular classroom teacher (and a school's learning support teacher, if on staff) may refer the student to the School-based Team (SBT). A teacher trained in appropriate testing will use tests from a list of approved materials.
2. The SBT will review the information and recommend a course of action. If the course of action includes developing an Individual Education Plan (IEP), a local Case Manager will be chosen from within the team.
3. The student's parents or guardians will be informed of the classroom teacher's initial concerns, invited to provide input into the IEP, and encouraged to participate as part of the school's planning team.
4. Reasonable accommodations for the student, based on identified needs, will be met primarily in a regular classroom setting with age appropriate peers.
5. If further assessment is recommended, the Case Manager, in consultation with the SBT, will work with the Special Education Coordinator to make a referral for psychological services. After the assessment is complete, the SBT will be notified of the results and subsequent recommendations. The range of psychological services includes:

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- Psycho-educational assessments to determine the student's cognitive abilities, perceptual abilities, learning styles, etc.
 - Behavioural assessments to determine the behavioural needs of the student so that appropriate intervention can be planned.
6. Students will be assessed within the scope of available educational instruments and apparent needs of the students.
 7. Before students can be referred for testing by a psychologist or engage with a service provider, the informed written consent of their parents or guardians must be obtained.

PARENTAL RIGHTS

The SDABC K-12 Board recognizes that the involvement of parents or guardians in the educational development of special education students is crucial to the success of the student. Parents or guardians of special education students have the rights and responsibilities to:

- Be informed of the child's referral to the School-based Team
- Participate in meetings involving their child's placement or review of placement
- Examine written documents and reports regarding their child's educational progress
- Receive, at regular intervals, a written report on their child's progress
- Participate in meetings to form and discuss their child's individual educational plan
- Meet with any student services personnel involved with the assessment of their child
- Obtain, if they wish, private accredited consultative or assessment services at their own expense and have the results of assessments considered by the committee.

SCHOOL-BASED TEAM MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the School-based Team shall consist of:

- The classroom teacher making the referral
- Other classroom teachers
- The learning resource teacher (if on staff)
- The principal or vice-principal
- An education assistant (optional)
- Other professionals involved with the child
- The SDABC Special Education Coordinator

The parents of the child being referred should be given written notice of the meeting and invited to participate.

DATA COLLECTION

Teachers will begin by putting into place "Tier 1" Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports in the classroom to assist the student with focus, academic outcomes, and behaviour. These may include supports like visual aids, movement breaks, encouragement, and positive home contact. Data should be collected by the teacher(s) from as many of the following sources as possible:

1. Teacher observation
2. Classroom-based formative and summative assessments
3. Work exemplars
4. Discussions with parents or guardians
5. Norms-based assessments such as DIBELS, CAT4, FSA
6. Teacher collected data from sources like:
 - a) <http://reach.adventisteducation.org/>
 - b) <http://www.pbisworld.com>

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7. Teacher documentation on level of success in Tier 1 interventions

If classroom-based data indicates continuing concerns, the teacher or administrator would then initiate a SBT meeting to consider further assessment, collaborative planning, and the possible development of an IEP. The teacher would share classroom-based data that was collected, and the team would brainstorm for different strategies. At this point, the school may consider supplying support from an education assistant, learning assistance teacher, and/or counselor.

Further data may be collected from the following sources:

1. Level B assessments
2. Vision and hearing tests
3. SLP assessment
4. Behaviour specialist report

Formal identification for special education designations would typically come from the following:

1. Psycho-educational assessments completed by a qualified psychologist, and/or
2. Medical diagnosis by a physician

ADMISSION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

When a student with previous special education identification is entering or transferring to an SDA school, the process should include:

- Obtaining all documentation from the parent/guardian,
- Working with the Office of Education to ensure that finances and supports can be put in place to meet student needs, and
- Working with the SBT and OE Special Education Coordinator (in an advisory role for schools with more than three teachers, and as part of the SBT in schools with 3 or fewer teachers) to determine whether the student is a good fit for the school and to develop the IEP for the student.
- Careful attention to needs for services to ascertain whether the school has the capacity to meet these needs, including the nature of the needs, the possible expenses involved, the availability of a contract services and educational assistants, and the number of special needs students already enrolled in the school.

PERCEPTUAL DISABILITIES

Schools in BC will use the following policy to identify the students who qualify as having perceptual disability for the purpose of determining eligibility to access and use alternative format curricular materials without copyright restrictions, available through ARC-BC:

1. Students are eligible to use alternative format curricular materials when:
 - a) They are defined by medical practitioners as having visual and/or auditory disabilities
 - b) They are identified by a psychoeducational evaluation as having a learning disability
 - c) They receive a recommendation through Level C assessment to use alternative format curricular materials
2. In the absence of an educational psychologist's assessment that shows evidence of a learning disability, students who have NOT yet received a psychoeducational assessment but who are reading two or more grades below their age peers, as determined by a current norms-based test (including CAT4 or another norms-based test – NOT an informal reading inventory) are deemed to have a neurological perceptual disability.

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3. Any student accessing and using alternative-format curricular materials must have the need for alternate format materials identified in their IEP and the specific materials from ARC-BC listed as accommodations.
4. The school must have a physical standard print copy of the textbook or novel available for use for each student who is using alternative format materials.

Alternative format curricular materials are available through ARC-BC. Independent schools must use the application process outlined here:

<http://www.arc-bc.org/Help/download/ARCindependentschoolapplication.pdf>

DELIVERY OF SERVICES

Students who are identified as requiring support services will receive services based upon individual need, as identified by the school-based teams to the capacity available within the school.

The BC Ministry of Education divides special education services into 3 tiers.

Tier 1 refers to universal supports that may be put in place for all students through use of programs like Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction, or Response to Intervention. Ongoing discussion with parents or guardians will also guide supports for students.

Tier 2 refers to targeted supports for individual students or groups of students with additional learning, socio-emotional, or developmental needs. Depending on the success of classroom support, a student may be referred to the school-based team for additional assessment, increased collaborative planning, and/or learning assistance support. Contract services like counseling, OT, and/or SLP may be initiated depending of student need and the capacity available within the school. Either a Student Learning Plan or an Individual Education Plan would be developed at this point. Level B assessments would also be initiated.

Tier 3 refers to intensive supports compatible with MOE designations. Supports would be based upon recommendations from level C and/or medical assessments. Supports will likely involve other agencies like physicians or psychologists, an education assistant would be in the classroom, and contract support personnel may be put into place, possibly including SLP, OT, psychologists or others as recommended by assessments. Students with more severe needs may require Integrated Case Management with regular external services and the involvement of organizations like the Ministry of Health, MCFD, SETBC, POPARD.

SCHOOL COMPLETION CERTIFICATE PROCESS

Planning for a student graduation with a school leaving certificate (Evergreen Diploma) must be aligned with the BC Ministry of Education Educational Standards Order, Section 5.3 and Student Credentials Order, Section 3.

Long-term plans within a Individual Education Plan for a student with a special needs designation graduating with a school leaving certificate (Evergreen Diploma) should include the following:

- Written plan done in consultation with the student, their parents/guardians, and the school based team, including the OE special education coordinator, regarding post-secondary transitions and plans. It is important that students and their parents clearly understand that the Evergreen represents the completion of personal learning goals but does not represent graduation.

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- If possible, during the student's grade 11 and 12 years, the student should have the opportunity to participate in community work experience. This can be facilitated by either the school or the family. The student should have a current resume and sample job application letter in a documentation file. Work experience success should be documented by supervisory reports and self-reports.
- If possible, contact with a key worker in the Ministry of Children and Family Development should be made to facilitate access to community services.
- If the student plans to upgrade their academic skills after graduating with an Evergreen Diploma, the student or family should contact a local public school or community college to discuss the Adult Dogwood program or upgrade programs leading to a GED.