



The Northwest Catholic
District School Board
SCHOOLS OF HOPE

Parents' Guide To Special Education

A Resource for Parents

Alternate formats of this guide such as large print, Braille, audio cassette may be made available upon request by contacting the Special Education Coordinator of The Northwest Catholic District School Board at 807-223-4663 or 1-877-235-4663.

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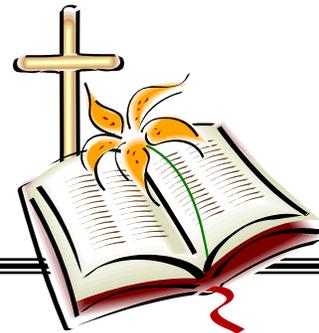
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Mission Statement

We provide excellence in Catholic education to our students. Based on Gospel values and in partnership with home, Church and Community we develop responsible, confident, life-long learners who contribute positively to society.



Our Vision

We will be the system of choice, instilling Gospel values and educating students to be responsible citizens and life-long learners with a positive vision.

Our Values

- † Providing excellence in education and a love of learning through quality programs based on Catholic values and provincial directives in a safe and positive environment.
- † Building a community of home, school and church that lives the values of the love of God, self and others, the respect for life, service, integrity, and fairness, responsibility, tolerance, compassion, forgiveness and caring.
- † Governing the organization in a responsible, efficient and effective manner consistent with our priorities and goals.
- † Responding to internal and external influences in a manner reflecting our Catholic Beliefs.



The Education Act requires that school boards provide, or purchase from another board, special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils. The purpose of this parents' guide is to provide you with information about the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), and to set out for you the procedures involved in identifying a pupil as "exceptional", deciding the pupil's placement, or appealing such decisions if you do not agree with the IPRC.

Note: The word "parent" when used includes guardian.

If, after reading this guide, you require more information, please see the board contact list at the end of the document.

What is an IPRC?

[Regulation 181/98](#) requires that all school boards set up an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC). An IPRC is composed of at least three persons, one of whom must be a principal or supervisory officer of the board.

1. Principal
2. Special Education Teacher
3. Classroom Teacher

Parents are invited and encouraged to attend the meeting.

What is the role of the IPRC?

The IPRC will:

- decide whether or not the your child should be identified as exceptional;
- identify the areas of your child's exceptionality, according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education;
- decide an appropriate placement for your child (**Appendix 1**); and
- review the identification and placement at least once in each school year.

Who is identified as an exceptional pupil?

The Education Act defines an exceptional pupil as "a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a special education program...." Students are identified according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education. (**Appendix 2**)

What is a special education program?

A special education program is defined in the Education Act as an educational program that:

- is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation; and
- includes a plan (called an Individual Education Plan or IEP) containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil.

What are special education services?

Special education services are defined in the Education Act as the facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.

What is an IEP?

An IEP is a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student. It identifies learning expectations that are modified from or alternative to the expectations given in the curriculum policy document for appropriate grade and subject or course, and/or any accommodations and special education services needed to assist the student in achieving his or her learning expectations. The IEPs of students who have no modified or alternative expectations will focus only on accommodations and services. The IEP is not a daily lesson plan itemizing every detail of the student's education.

The IEP also helps teachers monitor the student's progress and provides a framework for communicating information about the student's progress to parents and to the student. The IEP is updated periodically to record any changes in the student's special education program and services that are found to be necessary as a result of continuous assessment and evaluation of the student's achievement of annual goals and learning expectations.

The IEP reflects the school board's and the principal's commitment to provide the special education program and services, within the resources available to the school board, needed to meet the identified strengths and needs of the student.

The IEP must be developed for your child, in consultation with you. It must include:

- specific educational expectations;
- an outline of the special education program and services that will be received;
- a statement about the methods by which your child's progress will be reviewed; and
- for students 14 years and older (except those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness), a plan for transition to appropriate postsecondary school activities, such as work, further education, and community living.

The IEP must be completed within 30 school days after your child has been placed in the program, and the principal must ensure that you receive a copy of it.

How is an IPRC meeting requested?

The principal of your child's school:

- must request an IPRC meeting for your child, upon receiving your written request;
- may, with written notice to you, refer your child to an IPRC when the principal and the child's teacher or teachers believe that your child may benefit from a special education program.

Within 15 days of receiving your written request, or giving you notice, the principal must provide you with a copy of this guide and a written statement of approximately when the IPRC will meet.

May parents attend the IPRC meeting?

Regulation 181/98 entitles parents and pupils 16 years of age or older:

- to be present at and participate in all committee discussions about the your child; and
- to be present when the committee's identification and placement decision is made.

Who else may attend an IPRC meeting?

- the principal of your child's school;
- other resource people such as your child's teacher, special education staff, board support staff, or the representative of an agency, who may provide further information or clarification;
- your representative - that is, a person who may support you or speak on behalf of you or your child; and
- an interpreter, if one is required. (You may request the services of an interpreter through the principal of your child's school.)

Who may request that they attend?

Either you or the principal of your child's school may make a request for the attendance of others at the IPRC meeting.

What information will parents receive about the IPRC meeting?

At least 10 days in advance of the meeting, the chair of the IPRC will provide you with written notification of the meeting and an invitation to attend as an important partner in considering your child's placement. This letter will notify you of the date, time, and place of the meeting, and it will ask you to indicate whether you will attend.

Before the IPRC meeting occurs, you will receive a written copy of any information about your child that the chair of the IPRC has received. This may include the results of assessments or a summary of information.

What if parents are unable to make the scheduled meeting?

If the parent is unable to make the scheduled meeting, you may:

- contact the school principal to arrange an alternative date or time; or
- let the school principal know you will not be attending. As soon as possible after the meeting, the principal will forward to you, for your consideration and signature, the IPRC's written statement of decision noting the decision of identification and placement and any recommendations regarding special education programs and services.

What happens at an IPRC meeting?

- The chair introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting.
- The IPRC will review all available information about your child. The members will:
 - consider an educational assessment of your child;
 - consider, subject to the provisions of the [Health Care Consent Act, 1996](#), a health or psychological assessment of your child conducted by a qualified practitioner, if they feel that such an assessment is required to make a correct identification or placement decision;
 - interview your child, with your consent if your child is less than 16 years of age, if they feel it would be useful to do so; and
 - consider any information that you submit about your child or that the child submits if he or she is 16 years of age or older.
- The committee may discuss any proposal that has been made about a special education program or special education services for the child. Committee members will discuss any such proposal at your request, or at the request of your child if the child is 16 years of age or older.
- You are encouraged to ask questions and join in the discussion.
- Following the discussion, after all the information has been presented and considered, the committee will make its decision.

What will the IPRC consider in making its placement decision?

Before the IPRC can consider placing your child in a special education class, it must consider whether placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services will:

- meet your child's needs; and
- be consistent with your preferences.

If, after considering all of the information presented to it, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a regular class will meet your child's needs and that such a decision is consistent with your preferences, the committee will decide in favor of placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services.

If the committee decides that your child should be placed in a special education class, it must state the reasons for that decision in its written statement of decision.

What will the IPRC's written statement of decision include?

The IPRC's written statement of decision will state:

- whether the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional;
- where the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional,
 - the categories and definitions of any exceptionalities identified, as they are defined by the Ministry of Education;
 - the IPRC's description of your child's strengths and needs;
 - the IPRC's placement decision; and
 - the IPRC's recommendations regarding a special education program and special education services;
- where the IPRC has decided that your child should be placed in a special education class, the reasons for that decision.

What happens after the IPRC has made its decision?

- If you **agree** with the IPRC decision, you will be asked to indicate, by signing your name, that you agree with the identification and placement decisions made by the IPRC. The statement of decision may be signed at the IPRC meeting or taken home and promptly returned.
- If the IPRC has identified your child as an exceptional pupil and you **agree** with the IPRC identification and placement decisions, the board will promptly notify the principal of the school at which the special education program is to be provided of the need to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child.

Once a child has been placed in a special education program, can the placement be reviewed?

- A review IPRC meeting will be held within the school year, unless the principal of the school at which the special education program is being provided receives written notice from you, the parent, dispensing with the annual review.
- You may request a review IPRC meeting any time after your child has been in a special education program for 3 months.

What does a review IPRC consider and decide?

- The review IPRC considers the same type of information that was originally considered, as well as any new information.
- With your written permission, the IPRC conducting the review will consider the progress your child has made in relation to the IEP.
- The IPRC will review the placement and identification decisions and decide whether they should be continued or whether a different decision should now be made.

What can parents do if they disagree with the IPRC decision?

- If you **do not agree** with either the identification or placement decision made by the IPRC, you may:
 - within 15 days of receipt of the decision, request that the IPRC hold a second meeting to discuss your concerns; or
 - within 30 days of receipt of the decision, file a notice of appeal with the:
Director of Education
555 Flinders Avenue
Fort Frances, ON P9A 3L2
- If you **do not agree** with the decision after the second meeting, you may file a notice of appeal within 15 days of your receipt of the decision.

If you do not consent to the IPRC decision and you do not appeal it, the board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

How do I appeal an IPRC decision?

If you disagree with the IPRC's identification of your child as exceptional or with the placement decision of the IPRC, you may, within 30 days of receipt of the original decision or within 15 days of receipt of the decision from the second meeting described above, give written notification of your intention to appeal the decision to the:

Director of Education
555 Flinders Avenue
Fort Frances, ON P9A 3L2

The notice of appeal must:

- indicate the decision with which you disagree; and
- include a statement that sets out your reasons for disagreeing.

What happens in the appeal process?

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- The board will establish a special education appeal board to hear your appeal. The appeal board will be composed of three persons who have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal, one of whom is to be selected by you, the parent.
- The chair of the appeal board will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but no later than 30 days after he or she has been selected (unless parents and board provide written consent to a later date).

- The appeal board will receive the material reviewed by the IPRC and may interview any persons who may be able to contribute information about the matter under appeal.
- You, the parent, and your child, if he or she is 16 years old or over, are entitled to be present at, and to participate in, all discussions.
- The appeal board must make its recommendation within 3 days of the meeting's ending. It may:
 - agree with the IPRC and recommend that the decision be implemented; or disagree with the IPRC and make a recommendation to the board about your child's identification or placement, or both.
- The appeal board will report its recommendations in writing, to you and to the school board, providing the reasons for its recommendations.
 - Within 30 days of receiving the appeal board's written statement, the school board will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations (boards are not required to follow the appeal board recommendation).
- You may accept the decision of the school board or you may appeal to a Special Education Tribunal. You may request a hearing by writing to the secretary of the Special Education Tribunal. Information about making an application to the tribunal will be included with the appeal board's decision.

What special education programs and services are provided by the board?

The Northwest Catholic District School Board endeavours to provide the necessary services for its exceptional children. Our focus is to integrate exceptional children as fully as possible. In our on-site approach to Special Education we currently provide the following as outlined in **Appendix 1** of this guide.

Methods of service delivery:

- Regular classroom
- Regular classroom with program modifications
- Regular classroom with support
- Regular classroom with resource withdrawal

Access to special programs and services for students with special needs is through an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC). Should the need for further services be identified, the board will investigate the possibility of services being purchased from another school.

All schools have Special Education Resource Teachers to provide support to the classroom teachers and to assist them with any program modifications for students with special needs. They also provide direct instruction to individual students and small groups of students based on identified needs. Special Education Assistants are assigned to students with demonstrated and documented high needs. Funding is provided by Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA) and Special Equipment Amount (SEA) grants from the Ministry of Education. Personal special education equipment is funded by the board and the Ministry of Education. Specialized equipment may be provided for students with demonstrated and documented high needs. (Special Equipment Amount – SEA)

Speech and Language Services

The Northwest Catholic District School Board obtains qualified Speech-Language Pathologist services on a contract basis from within the communities it serves. The speech-language pathologists work directly with students and as consultants to the board's communication assistants.

All schools then have a speech/language program, which is delivered by communication assistants under the guidance and direction of a Speech/Language Pathologist.

Firefly

Firefly provides assessments and programming recommendations for all students referred to them by parents and school personnel to facilitate integration into the regular classroom.

They may also provide additional types of assessments for students in need of these services.

What organizations are available to assist parents?

Many parent organizations are available to provide information and support to parents of exceptional children.

- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Community & Social Services
- Association for Bright Children
- Association for Community Living
- Association for the Gifted
- Autism Society Ontario
- Canadian Diabetes Association
- Canadian Hearing Society
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind
- Canadian Red Cross Society
- Council for Exceptional Children
- Community Care Access
- Down Syndrome Association of Ontario
- Easter Seals Society
- Family and Children's Services
- Firefly
- George Jeffrey Children's Treatment Centre
- Lakehead Regional Family Centre
- Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
- Mental Health Association
- Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada
- Northwestern Health Unit
- North Words Pre-School Speech & Language
- Ontario Association of the Deaf
- Ontario Association for Family of Children with Communication Disorders
- Ontario Association of Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus
- Ontario Brain Injury Association
- Ontario Council for Children with Behaviour Disorders
- Patricia Centre for Children and Youth
- Weechi-it-te-win Family Services

Additional information may be accessed by contacting the Special Education Coordinator at The Northwest Catholic District School Board office at 807-223-4663.

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Legislation requires that all school boards in Ontario have Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). For more information on SEAC, parents may contact their child's school for a brochure.

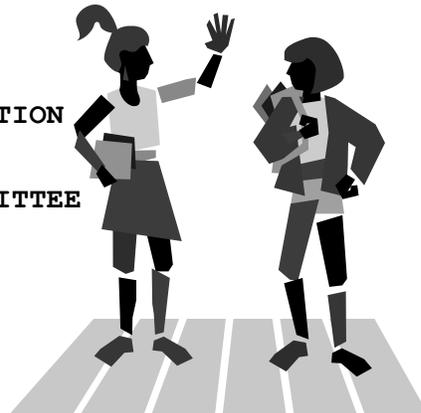


SOME INFORMATION ON

SEAC

SPECIAL EDUCATION

ADVISORY COMMITTEE



What are the Ministry's Provincial and Demonstration schools?

The Ministry operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools throughout Ontario for deaf, blind, deaf-blind, and severely learning-disabled students, as well as those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Residential programs are offered at the schools Monday to Friday, for students who live too far from school to travel daily



Demonstration schools for English-speaking students with severe learning disabilities and for students with learning disabilities in association with ADHD:

Amethyst School
1515 Cheapside Street
London, ON N5V 3N9
Phone: (519) 453-4408

Trillium School
347 Ontario Street South
Milton, ON L9T 3X9
Phone: (905) 878-8428

Sagonaska School
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville ON K8P 1B2
Phone: (613) 967-2830

Schools for the deaf:

Ernest C. Drury School
255 Ontario Street South
Milton ON L9T 2M5
Telephone: (905) 878-2851
TTY: (905) 878-7195

Robarts School
1515 Cheapside Street
London, ON N5V 3N9
Telephone and TTY: (519) 453-4400

Sir James Whitney School
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
Telephone and TTY: (613) 967-2823

School for the blind and deaf-blind

W. Ross Macdonald School
350 Brant Avenue
Brantford ON N3T 3J9
Phone: (519) 759-0730

French-language school for the deaf and Demonstration School for French-speaking students with severe learning disabilities, including learning disabilities associated with ADHD

Centre Jules-Léger
281 rue Lanark
Ottawa ON K1Z 6R8
Phone: (613) 761-9300
TTY: (613) 761-9302 and 761-9304

Where can parents obtain additional information?

Additional information can be obtained from:

- The Director of Education

The Northwest Catholic District School Board
555 Flinders Avenue
Fort Frances, ON P9A 3L2
Phone: (807) 274-2931 or (888) 311-2931

- The Special Education Coordinator

The Northwest Catholic District School Board
75B Van Horne Avenue, Suite B
Dryden, ON P8N 2B2
Phone: (807) 223-4663 or (877) 235-4663

Visit our Website at www.tncdsb.on.ca

- the Principal

Our Lady of the Way School
Box 10
Stratton, ON P0W 1N0
Phone: (807) 483-5477
Website: www.olow.tncdsb.on.ca

St. Patrick's School
160 Hemlock Avenue
Atikokan, ON P0T 1C0
Phone: (807) 597-2633

St. Francis School
675 Flinders Avenue
Fort Frances, ON P9A 3L2
Phone: (807) 274-7756
Website: www.stfrancis.tncdsb.on.ca

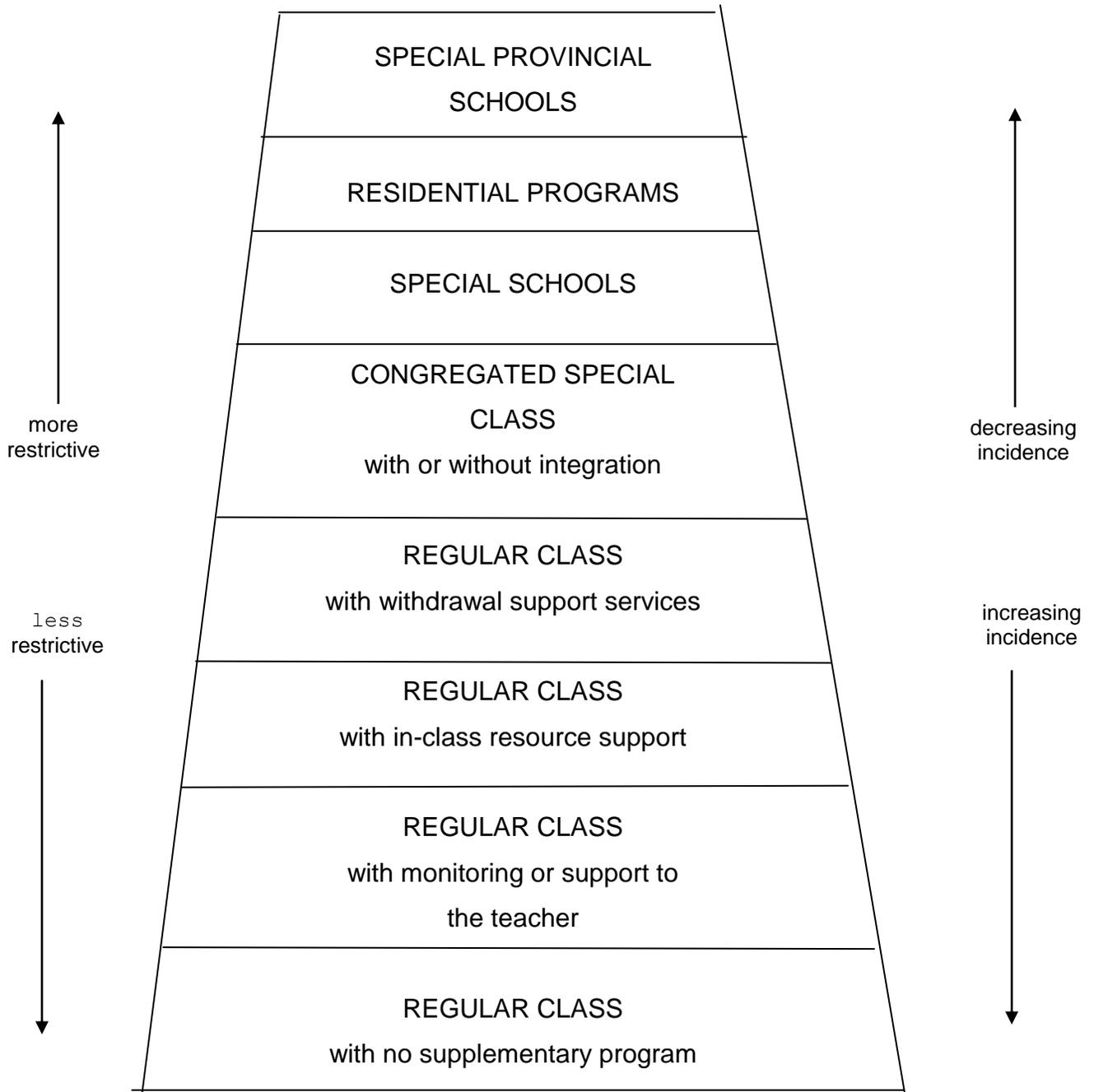
St. Joseph's School
185 Parkdale Road
Dryden, ON P8N 1S5
Phone: (807) 223-5227
Website: www.stjosephs.tncdsb.on.ca

St. Michael's School
820 Fifth Street East
Fort Frances, ON P9A 1V4
Phone: (807) 274-9232
Website: www.stmichaels.tncdsb.on.ca

Sacred Heart School
P.O. Box 1059
41 Eighth Avenue
Sioux Lookout, ON P8T 1B7
Phone (807) 737-1121
Website: www.sacredheart.tncdsb.on.ca

The Northwest Catholic District School Board follows

The Reynold's Cascade Model of Service Delivery
As shown in the figure below:



Update to the Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities

1. Category: Behaviour

A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance, and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following:

- an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships;
- excessive fears or anxieties;
- a tendency to compulsive reaction,
- an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors or any combination thereof.

2. Category: Communication

(A) *Autism*

A severe learning disorder that is characterized by:

a) disturbances in:

- rate of educational development;
- ability to relate to the environment;
- mobility;
- perception, speech, and language;

b) lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language.

(B) *Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing*

An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.

(C) *Language Impairment*

A learning disorder characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or the use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may:

- a) involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; and
- b) include one or more of the following:
 - language delay;
 - dysfluency;
 - voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based.

(D) *Speech Impairment*

A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors; that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages; and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm, and stress.

(E) *Learning Disability*

A learning disorder evident in both academic and social situations that involves one or more of the processes necessary for the proper use of spoken language or the symbols of communication, and that is characterized by a condition that:

- a) is not primarily the result of:
 - impairment of vision;
 - impairment of hearing;
 - physical disability;
 - developmental disability;
 - primary emotional disturbance;
 - cultural difference; and

- b) results in a significant discrepancy between academic achievement and assessed intellectual ability, with deficits in one or more of the following:
 - receptive language (listening, reading);
 - language processing (thinking, conceptualizing, integrating);
 - expressive language (talking, spelling, writing);
 - mathematical computations;

- c) may be associated with one or more conditions diagnosed as:
 - a perceptual handicap;
 - a brain injury;
 - minimal brain dysfunction;
 - dyslexia;
 - developmental aphasia.

3. Category: Intellectual

(A) Giftedness

An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.

(B) Mild Intellectual Disability

A learning disorder characterized by:

- a) an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and supportive service;
- b) an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development;
- c) a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.

(C) Developmental Disability

A severe learning disorder characterized by:

- a) an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development;
- b) an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development;
- c) a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.

4. Category: Physical

(A) Physical Disability

A condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of pupils without exceptionalities who are of the same age or developmental level.

(B) Blind and Low Vision

A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.

5. Category: Multiple

Multiple Exceptionalities

A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities, that is of such nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.