Supporting the SEP Process

A Teacher' s Guide

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Beyond the Language of SEPs

Wow! Congratulations, you're becoming more comfortable with the new SEP process! It wasn't easy, as we knew it wouldn't be, but the changes that have occurred are, and continue to be remarkable.

The publication of the ***Guidelines and Standards: Educational Planning for Students with Exceptionalities*** and the ensuing implementation brought with it much discussion, discomfort, angst, and confusion as well as collaboration, problem solving, sharing and teaming in varying degrees for educators around the province.

As we know, any change process brings those feelings of unease with it, but we must remember that change **is** a **process.** We are not expected to get everything perfect right away, but we work in small increments of improvement until we have reached mastery, and we celebrate these small increments. Isn't that what we tell the kids?

Coming together is a beginning;

Keeping together is progress;

*Working together is success*

Henry Ford

Henry Ford was right. The hard part of introducing any new process is keeping together, focused on the goal through the ups and downs. However, he was also right in that success is possible if we stay committed through the challenges.

When educators meet now and discuss programs and services for students with exceptionalities, we are using the same language and the same understanding of the planning process. We are helping each other with suggestions on the same issues. Progress toward consistency, and understanding, and therefore the heightened quality of programming that is occurring for students with exceptionalities is now very evident. Questions regarding SEPs are not basic any longer, but are more refined and specific. Much has developed for which educators can be proud.

We recognize, however, that still, there is a lot of work to be done to help teachers to become comfortable with the process and enhance the quality of the SEPs and therefore the quality of education for students with exceptionalities. Systemic organizational changes also need to occur in order to resolve some of the outstanding issues such as time management, documentation, and school-wide support programming.

Success with the implementation of the guidelines will necessarily mean that general and support education programming are inextricably tied together. Standard education cannot be a separate entity from the programs and services for students with exceptionalities. You will need to be involved in a school wide system of support with such models as Professional Learning Communities at the forefront.

Supportive Practices
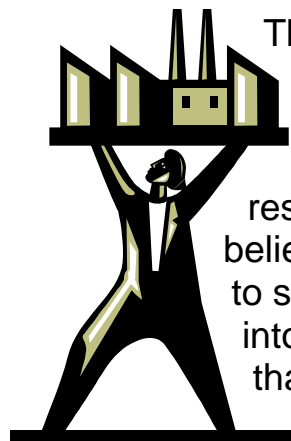
The New Brunswick government's **Quality Learning Agenda** emphasizes good first teaching through the development of literacy/numeracy interventions in the early years. This is very good news, as researchers such as Fuchs, Fuchs, and Speece (2002) believe that the increasing numbers of students referred to support education [resource] are referred and entered into resource programs because they have struggles that possibly are attributable to inopportunity for good first teaching and intervention.

Fuchs, Fuchs and Speece (2002) have developed a process that looks at a three step approach to identifying children who may be in need of support education (resource) services. This approach confirms the concepts inherent in school wide support through models such as the Professional Learning Communities.

Step one of this approach is the prescribed curricula in language arts or math. If children are unresponsive or struggle with this program, they are given the opportunity for interventions facilitated by school staff. The children who are not responsive or continue to struggle after this second stage are those who are truly in need of support education (resource) services and much more intensive services.

Figure 1   Intervention Model

(3) Support Education   5%

(2) Interventions   15%

(1) Basic curricula   80%
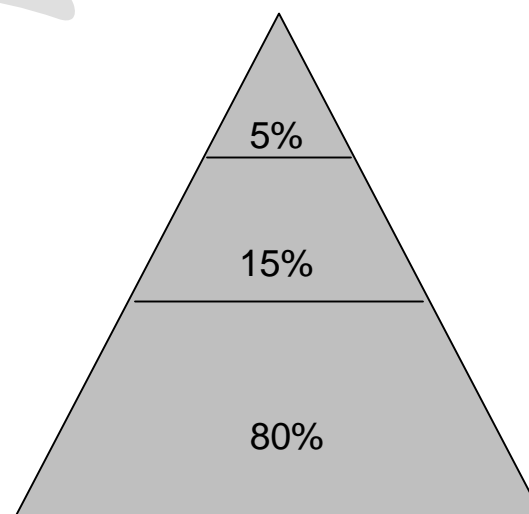
(Adapted from Fuchs, Fuchs & Speece 2002)

This paradigm reserves judgment about the need for resource services until the effects of individual adaptations have been assessed and until evidence verifies that [any interventions attempted were not successful and that] more extensive support services [would] enhance learning. (Adapted from Fuchs, Fuchs & Speece 2002)

The availability of a pyramid of interventions to ensure high levels of learning for **all** children is important in this process. It emphasizes that children should be given "whatever it takes" for intensive and specific intervention.

High Level of Learning for Each Child

These interventions are strategically implemented before the student is assigned to resource support. This concept is a paradigm shift from the current process, but it is essential to make that shift in order that children are more appropriately assessed for the presence of an exceptionality.

This vision of reserving judgment about the need for resource services fits well with New Brunswick's practice of avoiding labels whenever possible. In other words it fits well in an "educational" rather than a "medical" model and it facilitates all educators continuing involvement in the diversity of needs of all students to the greatest extent possible, with the support of the school community, including the resource teacher, the school based student services team, and families – a model that New Brunswick espouses.
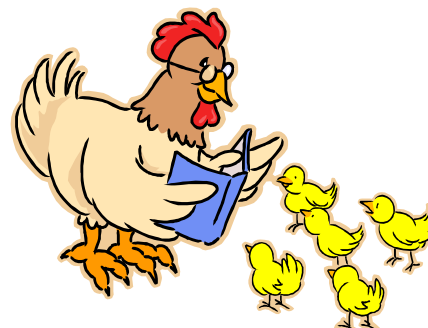
This "Pyramid of Intervention" fits exceptionally well within the model of Professional Learning Communities.

> *We argue that when schools* truly *begin to align their practices with a commitment to learning for all, the educators within them begin to function as a Professional Learning Community (PLC).* (Dufour et al, 2004)

A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats

The New Brunswick Department of Education defines its inclusive philosophy in the *Education Act* Section 12(3) by stating that:

...the superintendent concerned shall place exceptional pupils such that they receive support education programs and services in circumstances where exceptional pupils can participate with pupils who are not exceptional pupils within regular classroom settings to the extent that is considered practicable by the superintendent having due regard for the educational needs of all pupils.

As shown in **Figure 2**, this statement refers to a continuum of services with flexible learning options, allowing for grouping and regrouping for different purposes in different ways that encourage student learning, and that recognize diversity as an asset to be encouraged. However, this grouping and regrouping does not translate to streaming or static categorical grouping which is not conducive to student learning and is not conducive to the acceptance of diversity.

Figure 2

Continuum of Service Options

| Step | 1 | 1/2 | 2 | 3 |

Differentiated classroom
Instruction

Flexible grouping
for interventions

Specific interventions
from a pyramid of options

Resource
Support

Alternate site
Support*

* see NB Guidelines for Alternative Education
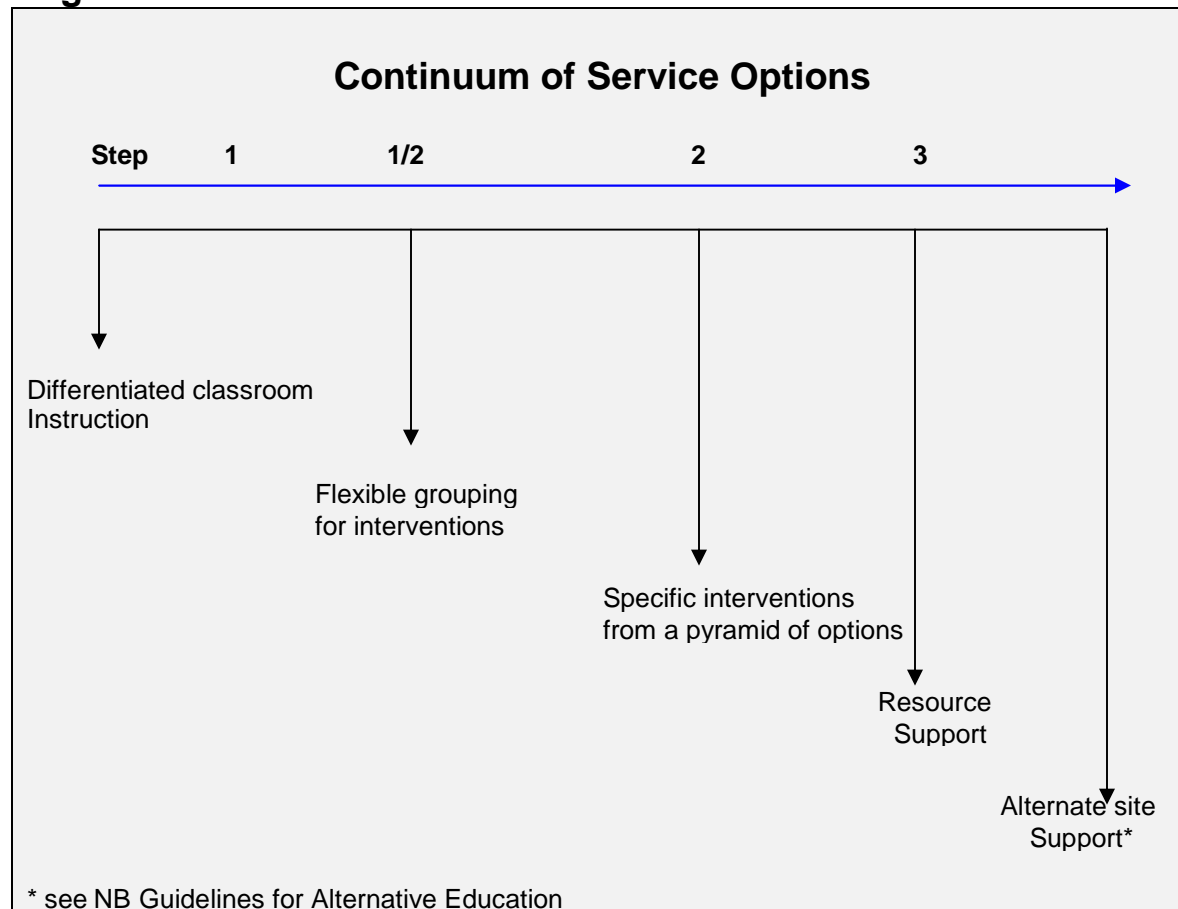
The government's **Quality Learning Agenda** encourages options for support and intervention for children who are experiencing difficulty through options for flexible grouping and regrouping. Education interventions can be offered under the umbrella of inclusion.

...maintaining the policy of providing regular classroom settings for the inclusion of all students to the fullest extent possible, while pursuing other flexible learning options as necessary to ensure the educational needs of all students are met (QLA, 2003)

This statement, contrary to popular perception does not mean that students are to be in classrooms at all times in all circumstances regardless of whether or not their needs are being met. Rather the Province of New Brunswick interprets this statement to mean that there is to be a continuum of services with the focus that groups, should they be used, are fluid, not static.

It is important to emphasize that most current literature suggests that static categorical grouping may benefit the high achievers, but does not necessarily academically benefit the average to low achievers and may even be detrimental to their social development. (Slavin 1997/98; Ireson & Hallam 1999; Shields 2002, Fieldler, Lange, et al 2003).

Categorical grouping that is static and based on general achievement should be avoided. Instead, teachers are encouraged to use the fluid flexible groupings that are utilized for various purposes to enhance learning. The concepts, strategies and methods inherent in differentiated instruction are excellent examples to follow.

Much literature suggests that the more influential school-based processes for success, rather than student groupings, are noted as: staff attitude toward learning for all children, the knowledge and skill base of teachers, the assignment of teachers and students to classes (class composition & teacher match), the use of time during the school day, the effective use and availability of academic supports or assistance, the alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment, and curriculum development and pacing. (Manset & Semmel, 1997; Ireson & Hallam, 1999; Thomas, 2002; Dufour et al, 2004)

The development of these key areas is well supported within the school wide support model of Professional Learning Communities as an example.

What is school wide support through Professional Learning Communities?

Whether we call it teaming, educational support model, collaborative consultation, or a school wide support model through professional learning communities, all staff in a school have something to contribute in support of a child's programming and especially in support of our colleagues who are grappling with the planning for and teaching of a diversity of students within our classrooms.
The benefits of a school wide support framework provide teachers, students and their families with opportunities to be full participants in the planning, development, delivery and monitoring of educational programming and services.

The practice of school wide support provides teachers and others involved, with an avenue for sharing expertise and experience. This sharing of perspectives enhances the decision making process and lessens feelings of isolation. When you engage in supporting one another you find your professional endeavors to be enriched for both your benefit and for the benefit of students and their families. Sharing in the development, delivery and review of outcomes decided upon through a collaborative process reduces the anxiety you may feel and the families may feel when you are both expected to address complex issues.

By definition, teachers are life-long learners. Mutual support provides you with opportunities to engage in life-long learning by broadening and expanding your existing expertise related to the needs of students - all students. The expertise and perspectives brought to the problem solving process will be as varied as the individuals who make up the team. You, as well as other staff, will identify on-going professional development needs in order to fulfill your roles and responsibilities as part of the collaborative team. The experiences of school wide support through professional learning communities affords you opportunities for enhanced professional growth while at the same time supporting you in the delivery of programming and services for all students.

You are charged with the responsibility of providing an appropriate education for all students some of whom will have exceptionalities. It is unrealistic to expect any one individual to have the repertoire of skills and expertise necessary to address the needs of all students. To attempt this daunting task alone would be overwhelming for any one individual. In this situation it may be that provisions are made that are more special and time consuming than necessary.

The school wide support model addresses this issue and results in the establishment of more appropriate expectations and opportunities for interventions. This mutual support also brings a repertoire of skills and expertise to the discussion through the various individuals on staff. It provides an opportunity to identify human and material resources as well as the professional development necessary to provide services for students including those with exceptionalities.

To be effective, school wide support through professional learning communities necessitates a common understanding of language related to students and their needs. Through this process, opportunities are provided for the establishment of effective working relationships based on respect and shared vision among all school staff and with the students' families.

School wide support through professional learning communities provides a forum for soliciting support and seeking resources. Inherent in this model is the capacity to problem-solve and make decisions for prioritizing planned actions. As well, the on-going documentation, such as the Special Education Plan for students with exceptionalities, provides for continuity in times of staff transition, and accountability in that all members are involved in the recording of decisions made and action taken regarding programming and services for a student. Through this process of data-based decision making, documentation, and review, you are assured that programming and services will remain current and not be redundant or repetitive. For you, the historical record provides a rationale for decisions made regarding interventions, and addresses the need to be accountable over time.

When the mutual support model is applied to problem solving, decision-making and the review of progress, teachers, students and their families are provided with flexible, comprehensive, inclusive and effective programming and services through the development of outcomes responsive to the strengths and needs of students. When the principles of this process are followed, it is evident that all members of the staff and the students' families benefit.

What are the key concepts of Professional Learning Communities?

Dufour et al (2004) suggest that there are several key concepts in any professional learning community.

Shared Mission/Vision/Values/Goals

When school staff begin a school wide support model, it is imperative that everyone understands that the journey on which they are about to embark will necessitate sharing, brainstorming, problem solving, decision making, monitoring and evaluating. While everyone is mutually planning with the students at the centre of the discussion, it is important that they continuously remind themselves that their primary function is to establish a common purpose which would result in the best and most appropriate outcomes for the students. The focus is on learning not teaching.

> ### *The Focus is on Learning not Teaching*

Participants in this process make a long-term commitment through sharing of the expertise and perspective of themselves and others involved. This sharing implies a need for you to develop an interdependency that would result in a willingness to adapt expertise and perspectives to see student success - whatever it takes.

Dufour et al (2004) suggest that you ask yourselves three questions:

1. What is it we want all students to learn?

2. How will we know when each student has acquired the intended knowledge and skills?

3. How will we respond when students experience initial difficulty so that we can improve upon current levels of learning?

In schools today, teachers work with students from a variety of family configurations. As a result the understanding of family has become more expansive. Consequently, interactions with families also must respect the reality and diversity of family circumstances. Teachers recognize that student and family involvement is now embedded in the planning process for students with exceptionalities. Subsequently, interactions in this process must acknowledge the perspectives, the aspirations, and the commitment brought to the process by families in order for the dialogue to be meaningful and to establish a welcoming environment. Families can be a vital part of the school wide support system.

Collaborative Teams

Embedded within the school wide support model through professional learning communities is the basic assumption that staff will work in collaborative teams that are interdependent and share common goals for the students.

Did you know there were stages in the development of teams? The Atlantic partners (Atlantic Provinces Educational Foundation) have characterized these stages as: **Testing the Waters, Weathering the Storm, Calming the Waters, and Smooth Sailing.**

Where do we fit in this process?

Regarding our implementation of a collaborative model and of the Special Education Plan guidelines, most of us are still "weathering the storm". However, the sky is breaking up and the sun is beginning to shine on calmer waters!

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Figure 3

Stages of Team Development

Smooth Sailing

Flexibility
Common goals
Interdependence
Confidence
Effectiveness
Openness
Honesty
Consensus
Acceptance
Respect
Productivity
Broadened Perspective

Calming the Seas

Focus on issues
Support
Constructive debate
Development of trust
Established process
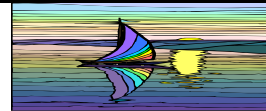Action oriented
Conflict management
Optimism

Weathering the Storm

Focus on personalities
In-fighting
Criticism
Resistance
Hostility
Distrust
Allegiances
Conflict
Confrontation
Opting-out
Territoriality
Disharmony

Testing the Waters

Anxiety
First Impressions
Politeness
Formality
Guardedness
Tentativeness
Uncertainty

Figure 3 eloquently illustrates the four stages most often associated with team development and in our case, the implementation of the new guidelines and a shift to a school wide support process. Staff and families using this collaborative process for the first time will experience feelings of anxiety associated with an unfamiliar method of problem solving and decision-making. In the first stages of developing the mutual support model, staff and families should be welcomed and encouraged in their willingness to adopt a new approach. Those of you who are more experienced with the process should recognize and validate other's initial feelings of uncertainty. This stage of *Testing the Waters* if handled appropriately should not need to continue beyond a preliminary introduction. Mutual support at this stage could include an orientation to the process, a chronology or history of any interventions to date and an explanation of how shared involvement and responsibility result in the development of solutions. In this initial stage of team development you will tend to be more formal, with communication among staff and with families being somewhat tentative and guarded.

Figure 3 also shows the possibility that staff or families in the formative stages of team development may entrench themselves in positions that do not necessarily lead to the interdependency that the team will eventually need to develop. In **Figure 3** this is referred to as *Weathering the Storm*. While it is recognized that this phenomenon is often part of the natural development of team growth, it will lead to the demise of the team's effectiveness if allowed to go unaddressed. Diplomatic facilitation is needed to begin *Calming the Seas*. It is at this stage in a team's development that we see the establishment of the relationships in the school wide support framework that are conducive to the mutual respect and trust required to focus on the needs of the students and their families. At this point, the process begins in earnest and you will start to feel a sense of accomplishment as you move toward *Smooth Sailing.*

Figure 4

Functional Team Behaviour

Initiating: proposing tasks or goals, defining a team problem, suggesting a solution

Seeking information or opinion: requesting facts, asking for expressions of feelings or concerns, soliciting expressions of values

Harmonizing: reconciling disagreement, reducing tension, getting people to explore differences, finding common ground

Listening and encouraging: being responsive to others, indication by nonverbal and verbal behaviour, interest in the views of others, supporting the views of others

Compromising: offering or accepting a compromise, admitting error, modifying position in the interest of team cohesion or growth

Consensus testing: asking to see if the team is nearing agreement on the decision, sending up (trial balloons) proposals to see if a consensus is eminent

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Figure 5

> ## Dysfunctional Team Behaviour
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> **Being aggressive**: asserting own interests, views and rights above those of others; showing hostility toward team or an individual within the team, demeaning the contribution of others
>
> **Blocking:** interfering with the progress of the team by arguing points at length, rejecting ideas without consideration, refusing to work toward a consensus
>
> **Competing:** polarizing discussions, creating win-lose alternatives, seeking to have one's own point of view adopted, seeking to have other points of view rejected
>
> **Lobbying:** introducing or arguing for ideas related to personal parochial interests, biases or feelings
>
> **Disrupting:** disrupting discussions or work sessions, clowning, joking, or other behaviours that interfere with the concentration of the team
>
> **Withdrawing:** acting indifferent or passive about participation in the team or in discussion of issues raised by the team, entering into side discussions, resorting to excessive formality.
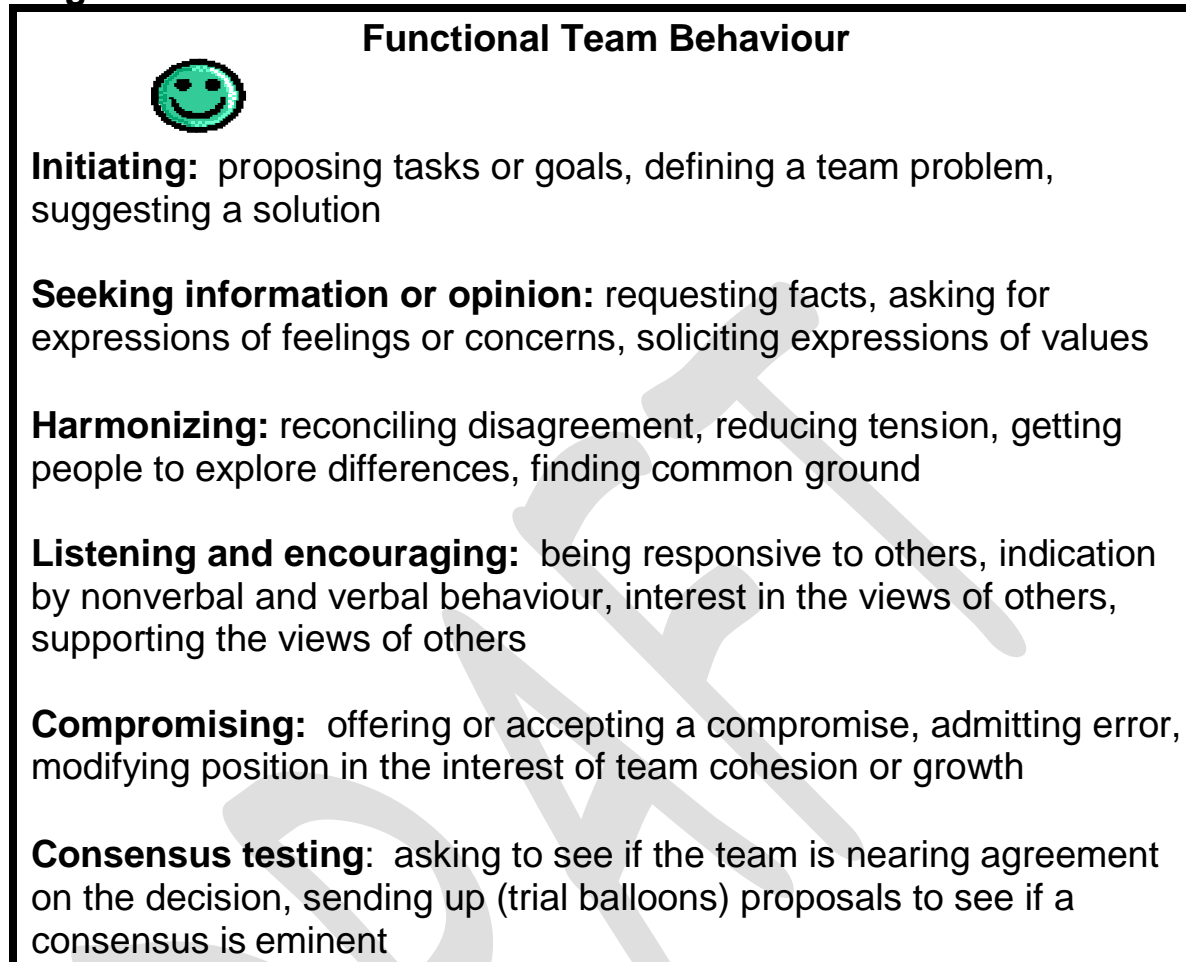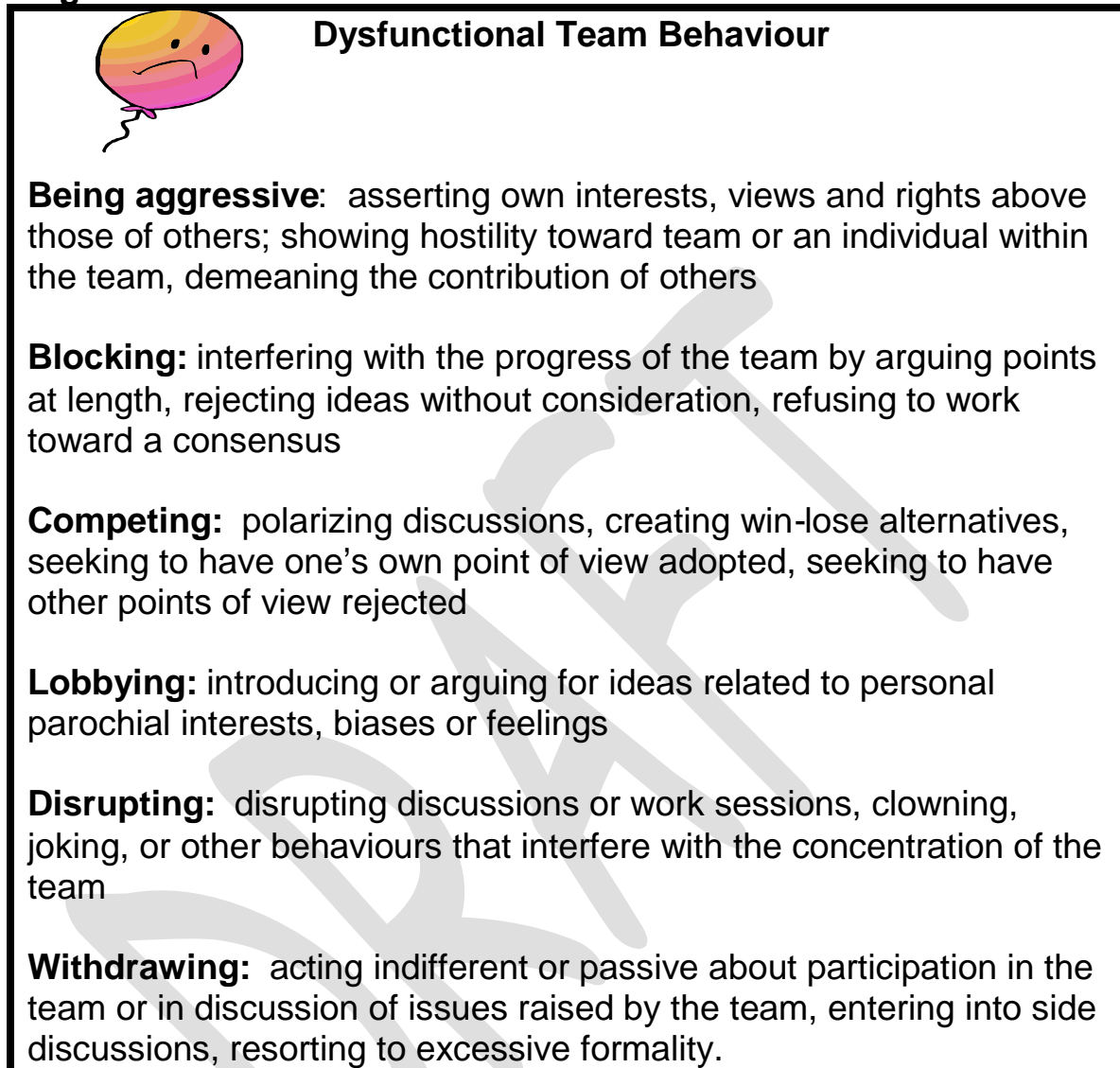
Figures 4 & 5 represent the types of behaviour displayed by team members when engaging in a collaborative effort. Those behaviours that show flexibility and understanding are much more conducive to a successful result and are described as "functional team behaviours". Unfortunately, particularly in the *Testing the Waters* phase, we can also display behaviours that can derail a successful interaction. These behaviours are termed "dysfunctional team behaviours". **We need to be wary of those!**

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Hints for Effective Teaming

Communication skills are a critical element of effective teams and the school wide support through the professional learning communities framework. Building rapport is key to developing positive relationships and involves the development of trust and respect. Those who develop a good rapport are more likely to listen and try to understand the other person's perspective. It is important to avoid judgmental comments when responding to others. As well, you need to demonstrate acceptance of diverse opinions. Don't forget though, that at times you or the child's family may need to be assertive in order to express an opinion. Being assertive is a difficult task and involves getting your point across or achieving your goals without damaging the relationship or another person's self-esteem. (Dettmer, Dyck, & Thurston, 1999, p 164)
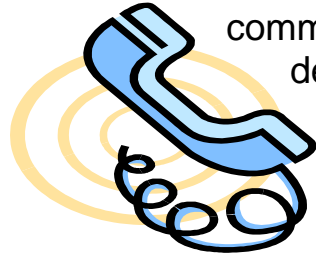
Assertiveness is NOT Aggressiveness

Figure 6 provides strategies a team may use to enhance communication among members, avoid conflict and support and encourage members in their efforts.

Figure 6

Assertiveness Tools

- Use an "I" message instead of a "you" message.
  I feel frustrated when I don't have the time to spend on improving John's reading skills.
- Say "and" instead of "but."
  I am frustrated when John doesn't do well on tests and I would like help to work together toward improving his skills.
- State the behaviour objectively.
  John, I am not pleased when homework returns to school not completed.
- Name your own feelings.
  I am angry because I have not been able to help John.
- Say what you want to happen.
  I would like to problem solve with the team to develop some plans for reading intervention for John and others.
- Express concern for others.
  I recognize that your time is limited and I think that if the team works together John will be much more successful and will not take as much of your time.
- Use assertive body language.

Adapted from Dettmer, Dyck & Thurston, 1999, p164-165

Guiding Principles

The relationship among staff and with families is one of collegiality and mutual support.

All interactions among staff and with families are characterized by mutual trust and respect.

Effective communication is demonstrated through the development and use of a common language for working together in support of students with diverse needs.

Interactions among staff and with families are non-judgmental and based on the assumption that all are involved for the purpose of serving the best interests of the student.

Teamwork consists of a joint effort wherein individuals contribute their expertise with the knowledge and understanding that the best outcomes result from shared input and collaborative decision-making.

Responsibility and accountability for planning, implementing and monitoring the results of team decisions are shared among all staff and with families.

Dufour et al (2004) continue with the key concepts of professional learning communities:

Collective Inquiry

Professional learning communities with collaborative teams are always searching for new answers and are never satisfied with the status quo. Flexibility and a continual searching for new methods, strategies and ideas to address collective issues regarding students, implementing and continually evaluating new strategies is a way of life for these communities.

Action Orientation and Experimentation

If professional learning communities aren't satisfied with the status quo, then they aren't satisfied with inaction either. The collaborative teams that make up a professional learning community are always developing, implementing and evaluating an action plan based on their vision and goals for student success. Sometimes we can get ourselves into a rut and wonder why things don't change. Professional learning communities are proactive and recognize the old adage that:

> **The definition of INSANITY is**
> **doing the same thing over and over**
> **and**
> **expecting different results!**

Continuous Improvement

Teams who work well collaboratively also, beyond evaluating the success of their action plan, evaluate themselves as a team. This formative evaluation looks at the quality of their interactions, the processes that are used, the success with which they reach their goals, the quality of their action planning and the ability of the team to look to future improvements of their working relationships and processes so that, in the end, students benefit.

Results Orientation

Dufour et al (2004) bring together the previous key concepts of the professional learning community into summary by explaining that this collaborative model evaluates success on results, not on intent. In other words, an action plan can have great intentions, but if it does not have measurable results for greater student success then it hasn't been effective.

Dufour et al (2004) suggests that the effectiveness of a professional learning community is based on an affirmative answer to the following questions:

1. Is the staff's response WELL-TIMED for early intervention?
2. Is the staff's response to an issue based upon INTERVENTION strategies that are begun as soon as the student experiences difficulties or are interventions delayed to summer school, or relegated to retention, remedial help, or static grouping?
3. Is the response SYSTEMATIC? In other words, is there a structured continuum of interventions developed and implemented by all school staff for all children?
4. Is the response DIRECTIVE? Is the initial intervention mandatory for all students if they display difficulties?

In professional learning communities, the myriad of interventions are generally set in a pyramid. Interventions begin with the bottom level. Schools develop interventions based on the community resources. Each pyramid will be as individual as each school is individual.

Figure 7 taken from Dufour et al (2004) illustrates the pyramid of interventions developed by the staff of Adlai Stevenson High School. **Figure 8** shows a possible pyramid for a school in New Brunswick.

Figure 7

**Pyramid of Interventions
Adelai Stevenson High School**

Resource
Support

Case Study
Evaluation

Ombudsman
Placement

Child Review Team

Mentor Program
Placement

Guided Study Program

Itinerant Support Program

Insight Class

Student Assistance Team Referral

SST and Teacher Conference with Parent

Doctor Verification

Social Work Contact/Peer Mediation

Student Placement on Weekly Progress Reports

Counsellor Conference with Student & Parent

Good Friend Program

Counsellor Phone Calls to Parents

Counsellor Meeting with Student

Counsellor Watch/ Survival Skills of High School

Freshman Advisory/Freshman Mentor Program

Dufour et al (2004)

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Figure 8

NB Pyramid of Interventions

Strategy generation, problem-solving & collaboration occurs throughout the process

Resource Support

Evaluation

External support referral

School based team referral

Conference with parents

Literacy/numeracy interventions by school staff

In school tutoring support (peer or adult)

Homework Club

Parent/teacher contact on weekly progress

Mentoring/Circle of Friends

Discussion with parents

Counsellor/teacher discussion with student

Flexible grouping within & among classes

Differentiate Instruction

Flexible Grouping Strategies

In order to enhance student learning you need to provide a balance of grouping options so that you can include educational experiences for whole class, small group and individual work so that the learning remains appropriate.

The methods and strategies of continuous, fluid groupings inherent in the differentiated instruction model (Tomlinson, 2003) provide many choices for addressing the learning needs of students for a variety of purposes. Some of these groupings include gender, multi-age, learning styles, skills, themes, and interests. Teachers are encouraged to group according to the need of the lesson and of the specific learning styles of the children in the class. A variety of grouping is encouraged to provide many opportunities to process information in different ways, and to provide for the practice of specific concepts.

Co-teaching is a methodology encouraged by the school-wide support model. You need to keep in mind though, that in order to enable this to occur, the school will need to consider the scheduling options for teachers. One such effective example is **parallel block scheduling** where two, three or four teachers are scheduled to have the same class (e.g. Language arts) at the same time so that mixing and matching can be managed quite easily. In this way there are many more options for fluid grouping, even between French immersion and English classes than if teachers are scheduled separately. By thinking more globally of the whole staff schedule, one enters into thinking about school wide support.

There are various ways that teachers can assist one another in enabling children to learn more successfully. The *One Teach, One Drift* approach sees one teacher responsible for instruction while the other teacher drifts, monitoring students. The drifting

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teacher can redirect students who are off-task, provide feedback on the individual student's participation and effort, and deliver reinforcements and/or consequences on a regular basis.

In *Station Teaching* the teachers split content into two parts and students into three groups. Each teacher teaches one of the two content pieces at a station to a small group, and the third group works independently. The student groups rotate as directed by the teachers.

With *Parallel Teaching*, the two teachers split the class into two groups and teach the same content to a smaller group of students. This allows the teachers to adjust content as necessary to meet the needs of the students with whom they are working.

Alternative Teaching has one teacher providing content instruction to a large group of students, while the other teacher provides supplementary instruction to a small group for specific purposes. These groups are fluid and change frequently to address varying issues.

In *Team Teaching* teachers alternate or "tag team" in delivering instruction to the entire class. Team teachers can work together to present content and learning strategies in unison to better meet the needs of students.

Several methods of having students work together to learn or to practice concepts, have proven to be very beneficial. Each of these approaches is scaffolded in that the teacher presents a concept to the class, follows this with guided practice and then uses the peer methods.

Peer Assisted Learning (PALS) has high achieving students paired with lower achieving students. The teacher presents a concept or lesson and then provides each pair with specific structured activities that provide opportunities for discussion and practice of the concepts the teacher has presented. One student is the "coach" the other is the "player". The higher achieving student begins the activity as the coach, and half way through the time allotted, the two students switch

roles. Every three weeks the pairs are reassigned and every third three week cycle, the high achievers are paired with one another.

Cooperative Integrated Reading and Comprehension is a methodology that can be applied to language arts. Daily small group instruction with the basic curriculum along with weekly direct instruction, as well as reading lessons on comprehension and metacognitive strategies are incorporated. Students work in mixed ability teams, work in pairs, or collaboratively otherwise on reading orally, decoding, recognizing story structure, predicting and summarizing. A reward structure is built in to the system.

Reciprocal Teaching is a methodology whereby students practice reading paragraph by paragraph, receiving feedback from their peer. The teacher models first, and the students learn to generate questions, summarize, clarify word meanings or confusing text and predict content in subsequent paragraphs whatever text they are using. The students practice this technique with teacher coaching, and giving hints and explanations until the students are independently able to assist one another.

ClassWide Peer Tutoring occurs on a schedule of three times weekly for forty minutes per session. The program is seen as supplementary to the core curriculum. Students work in pairs. One student reads for five minutes while the other critiques the reading. At the end of the five minutes, the partner then asks – who what, when, where and why questions for the next five minutes. The partners then switch and the activity begins with a new reader.

With these methods, students are paired regardless of whether or not they are using the same text.

Fluid grouping can be arranged for intensive intervention as well. We see this with the literacy interventions that are now occurring in K-2 and include such interventions as Reading Recovery, phonemic awareness, FastForword, LIFT, etc. Many of these options schedule intensive intervention for literacy or numeracy over a six to eight week period.

Extra assistance can be provided for students through external tutoring programs as well. Schools have an option to provide tutoring for struggling students through after school or lunchtime programs among others. Schools can enlist parent volunteers or community volunteers to practice reading with students.

Another option that many other jurisdictions have incorporated into there pyramid of intervention options for students struggling with literacy or numeracy is the provision of summer "camps" that extend intervention beyond the school year. Literature suggests that these summer literacy interventions use empirically based methodology in a four to six week time frame for a period of four hours a day.

New ideas for literacy and numeracy practice and intervention are continually being developed. In a school wide support model, school staffs will develop interventions and practice methods that are inclusive and focus on learning. The grouping, intervention and practice options listed in this section are only a small portion of the options schools can develop.

Accountability

Canadian society is becoming a more knowledgeable society regarding legal issues and rights, including those in education. With this new awareness, there have been an increasing number of issues brought forth with regard to students with exceptionalities to New Brunswick school districts and the New Brunswick Department of Education, and these issues have had to be resolved. Some consider this a temporary phenomenon. However, our society along with others internationally, is becoming more litigious. This therefore, makes the issue of quality education and the documentation of such planning and implementation essential, and something that will be required for a long time to come. The accountability requirements for both of these areas benefit both students and educators. It requires us to be more diligent in our planning processes and the monitoring and evaluation of those plans - seeing that children are being challenged and are seeing success, and it leaves a permanent record of the programs and services that educators, schools or the districts have implemented and revised in response to students' issues. The Professional Learning Communities model supports the collaborative team's efforts to question strategies, to try new techniques and to evaluate the efficacy of their action plans to assist students to be the best they can be.

The **Education Act** states that a student with exceptionalities shows an educational delay due to a behavioural, communicational, intellectual, perceptual/sensory, or physical condition or conditions that requires specific educational planning to meet his or her needs.

We might ask how the **New Brunswick Human Rights Act** relates to this definition. It states:

5(1) No person, directly or indirectly, alone or with another, by himself or by the interposition of another, shall

> *(a) deny to any person or class of persons any accommodation, services, or facilities available to the public, or*

> *(b) discriminate against any person or class of persons with respect to any accommodation, services, or facilities available to the public, because of race, colour, religion, national origin, ancestry, place of origin, age, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, sexual orientation or sex.*

The public school system is considered to be a public service and therefore we cannot deny accommodation or service to students with disabilities in our school system. With respect to students with exceptionalities, the reference in the **New Brunswick Human Rights Act** that is directly related to our programs and services in the school system is related to nondiscrimination based on mental or physical disability.

"Mental Disability", according to the **New Brunswick Human Rights Act** means:

> a) Any condition of mental retardation or impairment

> b) Any learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the mental processes involved in the comprehension or use of symbols or spoken language, or

> c) Any mental disorder

Placing this within the context of our **Education Act**, we can see that **a)** is an intellectual condition, **b)** are perceptual/sensory and communication conditions respectively and **c)** is a behavioural condition. The **Act** cites a physical disability independently as part of the nondiscrimination clause.

We are required to provide reasonable accommodation and service to the point of **undue hardship**, and for public schools under the jurisdiction of the Government of New Brunswick, we may have difficulty defending "undue hardship", unless the issue is in direct opposition to legislation, the rights of others, or collective agreements.

Referral and Assessment

Many educators are under the misperception that students cannot receive resource services until the child has been "tested". However, "assessment" and "testing" are not synonymous. "Assessment" is an integral part of the referral process, but "testing", as most educators would understand it, is not necessarily needed. The decision for testing with formal tools remains with the district school psychologist.

Assessment is an ongoing process involving the collection of data for the purpose of evaluating the performance of a student. You are in the best position to provide information on a current basis. Observation, work samples, student portfolios, journal entries or logs, project work, interview results, daily or weekly tests, criterion-referenced tests such as the provincial assessments, and standardized tests, whether group or individual, are all valid examples of assessment, and therefore are all appropriate in assisting you and your collaborative team to determine the best approach to programming for your students.

One of the more formalized methods of assessment that has proven to be of great assistance to teachers in determining the skill level of students and in evaluating progress is the method of curriculum based measurement (CBM).

Curriculum based measurement directly assesses a student's academic skills and can be used to measure basic skills in reading, math, spelling, and written expression.

When using CBM, the instructor gives the student brief, timed samples, or "probes," made up of academic material taken from the child's school curriculum. These CBM probes are given under standardized conditions. In other words, the teacher will use the same directions each time s/he gives the task. Curriculum based measurement probes are timed and may last from 1 to 5 minutes, depending on the skill being measured. The child's performance on a CBM probe is scored for speed, or fluency, and for accuracy of performance. Since CBM probes are quick to administer and simple to score, they can be given repeatedly (for example, twice per week). The results are then charted to offer the teacher a visual record

of a targeted child's rate of academic progress.

In our system, assessment is to be a collaborative effort among classroom teachers, school based team members and parents with the district school psychologist acting as a consultant to this group. Again we need to shift our mind set from a "medical" to an "educational" model. In other words we are collecting and evaluating data about a student for the purposes of determining what educational services would be appropriate given the student's current characteristics, strengths and needs. In order to do that, our educational system does not require a diagnostic label, but we do need to be able to evaluate appropriately what a student's strengths and needs are.

However, sometimes a diagnostic label is needed for access to other federal and provincial government programs. In this case, often the district school psychologist will address this issue by considering information on a student in a variety of ways.

Included at the back of this resource for your reference, is a copy of the recent referral guidelines for school psychology services developed by a committee of current school psychologists and others. A major theme of our model of school psychology services is that the school psychologist's primary role is to provide collaborative consultative services to school districts and schools.

Definitions

Probably one of the greatest issues that we have had to grapple with during implementation of the SEP process is the clarity of the definitions for accommodations, modification, and individualization.

We must remember that when we are trying to decide which plan is right for a student, that we are making our decisions based on an *educational* rather than a *medical,* and an *inclusive* rather than a *special education* model. In other words, when we are deciding whether or not to consider a support education plan, we, as classroom teachers, must have gone through the process of trying various ways of presenting or evaluating the curriculum to suit the diverse learning styles in the classroom. We must have implemented the options in the school's pyramid of interventions to which the student has not responded, and we must have discussed the issues with the resource teacher and/or the school-based team, and with the parent/guardian.

The key to deciding which type of plan a student needs is to compare the student's curriculum relative to the grade level curriculum outcomes. Consideration of a Special Education Plan must be based on careful assessment of the work product and the characteristics that a student is displaying. Classroom teachers will want to ask for the assistance of the resource teacher and the child's family in observing the child in context and in looking at the child's work.

Remember that a Special Education Plan is implemented when a child is showing both an educational delay AND a behavioural, intellectual, communication, perceptual/sensory, or physical exceptionality. *We have to be vigilant that we are not identifying students as needing significant support services when in fact the child may just need a literacy or numeracy intervention.*

We also need to be vigilant that we are not creating an SEP needlessly, especially when looking at accommodations. Children who need an SEP have shown the same processing struggles over time. If you removed the accommodations, they would not be successful where others probably would.

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All school staff in a professional learning community support struggling students through a structured continuum of interventions prior to the development of a Special Education Plan

How do we document interventions for a student who doesn't have an SEP?

Initially, some teachers had concerns, especially with respect to the early years, that some children would have a Special Education Plan developed when it might not be appropriate at that time for the child for developmental reasons. In response to this concern, the documentation was revised so that a separate form entitled "Intervention Plan" was developed that provided documentation for a short-term intensive intervention (see Appendix A). This also can serve as one of the pieces of assessment data used in consideration of the initial development of a Special Education Plan. *The teacher who is assigned to offer the intervention is the one who completes the intervention form.* This fits well with the three step process.

A copy of the intervention form, as with the Special Education Plan is kept in the cumulative record for the year that it is implemented. It is then removed, but a copy remains with the resource files for further reference if needed. The form can be used for specific interventions for middle/high school level students as needed as well, if it is a specific short-term intervention.

What happens next when you do decide an SEP is needed?

When a Special Education Plan is needed, accommodations, modification and/or individualization of programming may be developed.

For the most part, students who need a plan for Accommodations (only) will show processing difficulties but will be able to achieve most of the grade level outcomes with adjustments for their processing difficulty. Some of the characteristics these children display can

include: reversals/transpositions in written work, difficulty copying notes from the board, having to take extra time to write something. These are only a small sample of the characteristics you may see in your classroom. The documents **Resource for the Identification and Teaching of Students with Specific Learning Disability: Elementary/Middle Level** and the **Resource for the Identification and Teaching of Students with Specific Learning Disability: High School Level** available on the Department of Education website have proven to be extremely helpful to teachers in familiarizing them with various processing characteristics.

Since classroom teachers are most familiar with the curriculum and with the specific learning styles a child is displaying in class, it is appropriate that the classroom teachers write and monitor the Accommodated (only) SEP with the support of students' families and with the support of other staff in the professional learning community.

Making a decision as to whether or not a program should be modified is perhaps one of the more difficult decisions that you will make. In those situations where you may be indecisive about whether or not the program is accommodated or modified, or whether or not the program is modified or individualized, as always, you will need to use your professional judgment with the help of your colleagues and the child's family to make a decision using the guidelines for assistance. You should keep in mind that a student on a modified or an individualized plan may have his or her options for entrance to post-secondary studies jeopardized.

Our **Golden Rule** for determining whether or not an *outcome* is modified or not, is to go back to the outcomes of the grade level curriculum to see whether or not it has been simplified. In some instances, something you do for the child may be considered an accommodation; sometimes it will be a modification. **It all depends on the expectations of the grade level outcomes**.

Let's look at an example:

In an elementary language arts program where a good deal of the outcomes will involve the acquisition of reading skills at a particular level, a provision of a text at a lower reading level most likely would be a modification of several of the outcomes. *Depending on how many are modified (50% + for modified),* the plan for language arts will be either accommodated or modified.

In elementary science, however, very few of the outcomes are related to developing reading skills. Instead they are related to the acquisition of information and related skills having to do with a science topic. In this case if the child is provided with a lower reading level text that contains the same information as the grade level texts and allows the child to succeed with the expected outcomes, then that is an accommodation.

Again, the key is to **know the curriculum outcomes well** so that you can use them as a measuring stick in your decisions about planning.

Since the decision to have a student's program modified is a fairly weighty one, we'd suggest that the first time an SEP - modification is developed that teachers use in-depth planning. That way, the initial planning is well thought out, and the goals and outcomes documented and evaluated. If the child continues on a modified program after the initial planning, and there seem to be similarities in the ensuing years, then the documentation may be abbreviated if the planning team deems this appropriate. Using this process also emphasizes the gravity of making the decision for modification. Accordingly, we would expect that more students would be accommodated than modified. In the new electronic version of the Special Education Plan, this process of documentation will be much easier.
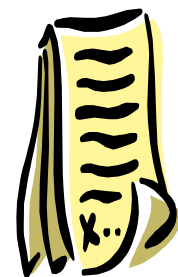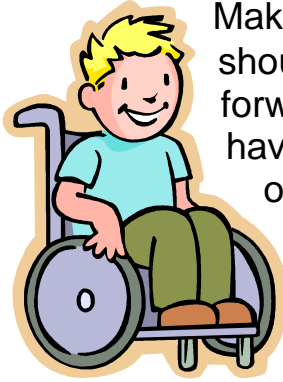
Making decisions about whether a student's program should be individualized is probably more straight forward than others. The outcomes for this type of plan have little if any resemblance to provincial curriculum outcomes and many of the outcomes for this type of planning involve other areas such as motor development, social development, communication, etc. Individualized plans record the significant support personnel that may be involved with the child. These would include teacher assistants, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists, Applied Behavioural Analysis therapists, etc. The test for this decision is to ask "Is the child going to be following some level of provincial curriculum or are these outcomes outside of provincial curriculum?" This may mean that you will need to readjust your thinking about what type of programming it is. Even though the modification may be fairly significant (a student in grade ten working at a grade two reading level) this is still a MODIFICATION if the outcomes the student is working on are provincial curriculum at any level.

Let's look at example:

John Smith is a child in grade four. The teacher has identified an outcome in which he will be working on reading in the Level H books (~grade 1). This outcome is a MODIFICATION as he will be working on many of the provincial outcomes that relate to Level H reading. On the other hand, one of John's outcomes is to be able to use his "quiet voice" in the hallways 8 out of 10 times that he is in the hallway. This type of outcome would not be contained in provincial curriculum and is an INDIVIDUALIZATION. The reinforcement of the skills related to this will most likely involve a teacher assistant.

In addition to the accommodation, modification, and individualization types of Special Education Plans, many teachers have questioned what to do about documentation for those students who may not necessarily have academic issues, but have serious behavioural issues and because of this have support programming. If you remember back to the two elements necessary in order to consider a Special Education Plan, there must be both an issue as stated in the legislation, AND an educational delay because of this issue. In the

purest sense then, a student who is on a behavioural plan, but is not having difficulties academically, does not require a Special Education Plan. **However,** the behaviour plan of this sort does need to be documented. Many districts already are using their own behavioural planning form. Many of these forms are similar in set up and process to the Special Education Plan, and we would encourage districts to continue with their own adapted forms. Since the development of behavioural plans are not under the umbrella of planning for students with exceptionalities (as defined in legislation) districts and schools at this point will need to determine whose responsibility it is to coordinate, write and manage these plans.

Once you have made plans for the accommodations, modifications, or individualizations needed, you will have determined how much resource support is appropriate for the child. A resource teacher has several ways in which he or she can assist with the planned programming for a child. The most obvious and easily definable of these is **direct** support where a child or group of children is taken aside for specific programming. It is important to note that, in previous years this was the main component of a resource teacher's job description. He or she was a "remedial teacher". With its focus on literacy, especially in the early years, the *Quality Learning Agenda* and the government have added more educators to the system to specifically address literacy, thus transferring the emphasis of literacy intervention from the resource staff to the literacy staff. This supports the sharing of interventions among the school staff and ensures that there is an intervention option prior to an assignment to resource services.

A resource teacher's job description, and therefore the skills and competencies expected have changed over the years. The Province of New Brunswick, in its *Quality Learning Agenda* (2003) has stated that *within three years, new provincial certification standards will be developed for resource and methods teachers.* These standards will reflect the changing role of the resource teacher and the movement toward mutual support of whole school staff in a professional learning community.

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Resource teachers must balance their time with other activities relevant to planning for students with exceptionalities. In many instances, the resource teacher is in the regular classroom co-teaching and co-planning with the classroom teacher regarding the needs of certain children in the class, or is engaged in many of the other tasks such as observing, assessing, writing reports etc. that are an integral part of a resource teacher's day. This assistance, to the benefit of the regular classroom teacher and the child is defined as **indirect**.

Occasionally, a child will have reached a point where they have gained enough skills to be able to operate successfully in a classroom setting without the need for a Special Education Plan. When this is being considered for a child, the resource teacher will not be involved with the educational planning for the child, but will need to **monitor** the child's independent success in the classroom to help inform the decision making in these cases. In this case, the resource teacher will be checking with you and the child's family, routinely observing the student, and collecting and evaluating work samples for a period of time (suggested 3 months). The classroom teacher, the resource teacher and the family of the child will need to discuss the issues and make a decision regarding a change. This discussion should be documented and placed in the resource file. From that point the resource teacher need not officially monitor the child, but it is understood that, *should the child begin to experience difficulty once again, you or the parent will bring this to the attention of someone on the school-based team - usually the resource teacher.*

**The number of children a resource teacher is monitoring should not be large. Try to be decisive as to whether or not a child needs support planning.**

Actually, the resource teacher's job description considers a "workload" rather than a "caseload" concept, and the tasks in which the resource teacher is engaged come under one of four categories; direct service to students, indirect activities that support inclusion in

classrooms, indirect service in support of student Special Education Plans, and activities that support compliance to provincial policy. There should be a balance among all four quadrants.

Workload Model

Figure 9
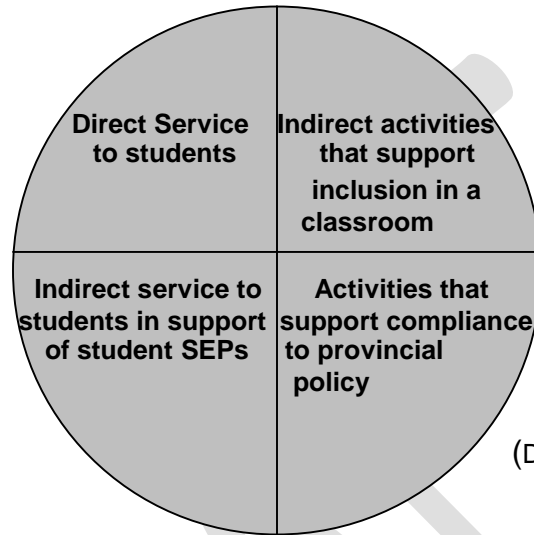
(Disney, Estomin et al, 2004)

Analyzing these quadrants into sample tasks would look something like this:

Figure 10
Student Services Summary

Student Name	Direct Services	Indirect Supporting Education Program	Indirect Services Supporting Inclusion	Compliance and Other Activities
Jesse	One on one	Analysis of assessment data	Consult with teacher regarding curriculum	Write SEPs
	Small Group	Co-teach Grade 5		Contact parent
		Observe in class		

(Disney, Estomin, et al 2004)

Collaborative Communication

One of the biggest tasks emphasized with the guidelines for support education planning has been scheduling and planning for parent involvement.

It should be understood that although we are required to communicate with parents and get their input to the plan, this doesn't need to be a face-to-face meeting in every case, especially when it comes to discussion of accommodations.

These days there are many ways of communicating: e-mail, talk mail, text messaging, regular mail, meetings and by phone. Any one of these can be used to contact parents for their input. (*You will want to be familiar with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) though regarding confidential communication).*

It might be a good idea at the first of the year to send a note home to families, suggesting that if they don't have Talk Mail (free for them to do) set up on their phone presently, that it would be a good idea to do so, as you frequently use this as a means of communication.

However, you will want to communicate directly with the family when decisions regarding whether or not modification should be implemented are being made because of the gravity of this decision.

Since classroom teachers routinely contact and discuss various issues with the parents of the students in their classrooms, it is appropriate that they do so in the case of accommodated or modified Special Education Plans as well.

Collaboration with regard to an individualized program is a little bit different in that there is generally more specific planning involved as well as detailed transition planning. Many districts use the Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) process or the McGill Action Planning System (MAPS) to develop goals and outcomes in a family centred process with the involvement of pertinent stakeholders.
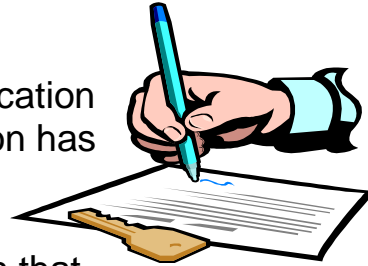
In this individualized planning process the resource teacher will orchestrate the collaboration with all parties and is responsible for the documentation of the individualized plan with collaboration with parents and within the professional learning community.

Communication takes up a great deal of time. How then do you ensure that collaboration and communication occurs when you have so many other tasks to do for the day-to-day planning for the running of a classroom? **Collaborative time needs to be routinely built into the school scheduling for this to be most effective** One relatively easy way to delegate collaborative and communication time is to have the principal designate at least the first two weeks of school, a week at reporting time and at least two weeks at the end of the year when resource teachers are not providing direct support to students, but rather are developing, monitoring and evaluating Special Education Plans, conducting assessments, and the other tasks associated with 3 of the 4 quadrants shown in **Figure 9.** This time also provides for the professional learning community to share tasks among team members so that everyone is able to complete their tasks. For example, one teacher may cover a class for another so that the teacher can prepare Special Education Plans and contact parents.

A minimum of the first two weeks of school, a week at reporting times, and a minimum of two weeks at the end of school should be considered to be designated as dedicated to Special Education Plan development and implementation and collaborative time is built in accordingly.

Signatures

The signatures on the form for the Special Education Plan are an important indicator that collaboration has occurred in the development of the plan for a child. The signature is also there for *accountability* purposes. For teachers, it shows that you were involved in discussions regarding the accommodations, modifications, or individualizations that are occurring for a child and you have agreed that these accommodations, modifications or individualization are ***reasonable*** for you to try. It's important to understand that a Special Education Plan is a *living document* and is expected to change throughout the year as the educational needs of the child change and as goals or outcomes have been met. Accordingly, perhaps something you may have found appropriate at the first of the year when initial planning took place becomes inappropriate after you have tried the accommodation, modification or individualization. It is appropriate for the adaptation then, to be removed from the plan and another tried. Once the plan is made, you are accountable to what is in it, ***whether or not you have signed the document.*** That's why it is important that you be involved in the decisions regarding the development of the plan and that adaptations are reasonable for you. Remember though, that you cannot refuse to make accommodations, modifications or individualizations for children with exceptionalities who need such (*remember that Duty to Accommodate?).* It is also important to note that once something has been entered in the plan, you need to be able to show that the accommodation, modification, or individualization was at least attempted before it was abandoned. In other words, you must be able to show that you have made an attempt at an accommodation, modification or individualization, but the adaptation may have been dropped because it was educationally inappropriate for the child or unreasonable for you. This would be noted in the comments areas on the SEP and other strategies tried.

> **Teachers are responsible for the accommodations, modifications, or individualization noted in the Special Education Plan regardless of whether or not they have signed the plan.**

What happens when we can't get a parent's/guardian's signature?

Some teachers and school teams have been concerned as they have had difficulty in some cases of getting input and signatures from parents/guardians. Since they realize that collaboration is integral to the development of a Special Education Plan and to the accountability mechanisms inherent in the process, many have spent hours attempting to obtain these signatures.

In some cases teachers have attempted many times to contact the families for their input, but have not received a response. As such, it is reasonable to say that once a school has made **three** attempts to garner input and the signature from the parent(s)/guardian(s), and the school has not received a response, then there is no further obligation at that time to obtain input and signature, but the attempts need to be noted on the Special Education Plan.   Further attempts can be made at the next reporting period, using the same guidelines.

What happens if parents are not in agreement with the proposed program or services for their child?

Occasionally questions have also arisen with regard to situations where the family has participated in discussions regarding programming, but is not in agreement with the school concerning placement, programs and services, and therefore do not want to sign the Special Education Plan form. These occasions are few and far between, and we would hope occur very rarely. However, in cases such as this, all attempts should be made to work proactively with the family to resolve the issues. If the issues remain unresolved, however, it is important to note that the **Education Act** gives the final decision regarding placement, programs and services to the district superintendent. Parent(s)/guardian(s) then have the right to appeal. In such cases you will want to refer them to the document *A User's Guide for the Appeals Process* found on the Department of Education website.

How do we manage updates?

Signatures are only required once (K-9) unless there is going to be a significant change in the planning or program. In such cases, families and teachers would most likely have been involved with that kind of change and a revised SEP written. For smaller changes, a Talk Mail message (date of message noted on the SEP or in your journal) will do. The parent must be given the opportunity to return your call if they wish further discussion.

High school teachers might want to consider listing a student's courses for the full year and obtaining signatures at that time, with the resource teacher providing reminder's and offering opportunities for discussion for the new teachers in January. In this way, signatures only have to be obtained once.

This is a difficult issue to resolve. The school staff will need to engage in discussion regarding options that would work best for their particular school. In this way the school staff generates ideas in support of the process.

Time Management

Time management is probably one of the top issues that teachers are having the most difficulty with when developing and following the process for educational planning for students with exceptionalities. Since the development of a plan involves you, the resource teacher and the family, scheduling becomes an issue. To help in this regard, it's important that the staff practice the mutual support mechanisms that have been developed within the school.

Each of us needs to be aware of how we use our time and discover whether or not we are using time efficiently. Below are a few suggestions to help you become more aware of your time management skills so that you can make the most effective choices. Some of these suggestions are from Dettmer, Thurston & Dyck (2002):

- Keep a daily journal for a week, showing what you did during the day and how much time was spent on each activity. Analyze the information and identify tasks that are occupying most of your time. Think of ways to delete or delegate some tasks.
- Prioritize tasks that remain to A, B and C priorities.
- Say "no" when you need to.
- Make a "to do" list.
- Break large tasks into smaller ones and set timelines for completion.
- Establish daily/weekly/monthly goals with timelines
- Search for ways to improve your computer skills if you are not computer savvy.
- Make a list of tasks you can complete when you find some small periods of available time have come up.
- Keep a contact journal where you can record the date of communication regarding a student with parents or others and make a small note of the topic discussed if needed.

Collaborative team members also need to create ways in which they can schedule collaborative time. Principals will need to take the lead in this. Below are a few suggestions, some of which come from the research of L. Raywid (1993):

- Schedule a shared lunch period with scheduled collaborative time following.
- Use working conditions or "blue" days to hire a supply teacher to cover for various classes during the day so that resource and classroom teachers can have time together.
- Shorten the lunch period or lengthen the school day so that a half day school collaborative time can be scheduled once or twice a month. The half day would be dedicated exclusively to collaborative time and issues having to do with children with exceptionalities.
- Schedule voluntary supper meetings - food provided.
- Meet with the resource teacher on a spare period in exchange for the resource teacher covering another of your classes.
- Schedule theme periods with a specialist (craft, hobbies, special interest) while teachers meet to plan.
- Provide other persons to supervise assemblies or student activities so that teachers can be released for collaboration time.
- Partner with university education department personnel to provide classroom activities (periods) while teachers meet, the experience benefiting the university and the school personnel as well as the students.

Time management at the **high school level** regarding the planning for students with exceptionalities comes with its own set of unique issues. Due to the semester system teachers must juggle course changes, high numbers of student plans for which signatures must be obtained, collaborating with large numbers of subject teachers, transition planning, etc.

Here a few suggestions from resource teacher colleagues that have helped in these situations:

> *...One thing we have undertaken here and hope to have running well next year is to post the SEPs on the staff school server where staff can access them. Then after in-service with them and consultation they can make comments at reporting time and click off whether outcomes are achieved or not.*

> *...Another thing I'm trying this year to reduce paperwork, printing off endless updated pages, getting pages to teachers, etc.... I have a draft SEP that I start the year with. During review periods teachers update the SEPs and I have all SEPs on the teacher shared files for our school. I will update the SEPs on the shared file and make the necessary changes. I use the draft when I meet with teachers and will add all comments recommendations and changes to the draft which I will use all year. Teachers are aware that all SEPs are on the shared files for their referral and they can choose which pages to print off for their use. Updated SEPs are on the shared files available to all teachers. During second semester I will print off the first page with new courses and attach it to the front of the draft SEP for updated teacher signatures with updated outcomes for the second semester.*

> *...We place SEPs each year in an easily accessible place in the main office, in alphabetical order by student. Beside the box of files is a list of students accompanied by the teacher's names. This is cross-referenced by a list individualized for each teacher; this list is placed in the teacher's mailbox. Teachers read the document and sign if they are in agreement, or meet with the resource teachers to iron out any difficulties or misunderstandings before signatures. Two copies are sent home: one for parent records, another to be signed by parent and returned to the school. Meetings are arranged as needed.*

Because of the large numbers of students with exceptionalities at the high school level, end of year evaluations for the SEP have also been problematic as well. One resource teacher offers this suggestion:

> *School report cards contain all that information. Are you repeating information that is already recorded for parents and students? Consider making the SEP Year End evaluation a general one. Example:* David has made satisfactory progress this year as indicated by his home reports. His SEP will be updated in October to reflect changes that the new year will bring.

<div align="center">OR</div>

> *Example:* David's report cards indicate that he is experiencing ongoing difficulties in English Literature studies. A meeting will be scheduled for (late June/early September) to review this situation with teachers and parents so that changes can be made to the SEP if required.

Storage

The SEP guidelines explain that a "current copy" of the SEP must be kept in the cumulative record files and that the resource teacher maintains a complete copy of a child's SEP.

Actually, the resource teacher's files are very important as they will contain previous copies of SEPs and the current year's SEP that will show the changes or updates for the child's program. If you're completing the SEP for accommodations or modification, make sure that the resource teacher has the copy of the SEP with any updates as necessary. You don't need to have a separate copy with updates for yourself - housing the copy in one place (the resource files on the server) is fine. If the SEP is on a teacher's shared file, then print copies can be made as needed. The electronic version of the Special Education Plan will make this process much easier.

Remember not to get caught up with detailing the particulars of how progress has been made (particularly for accommodations [only]), as your assessment (test, projects, portfolios, etc.) records, as well as the home report, will do that. What is required is that you indicate whether or not the child has been successful and if not, what's the next step.

The school district office will need to have a copy of at least the summary pages of the initial SEP as well. This can be, and will be eventually, accessible through the electronic version, but for now, a paper copy should be at the District office. This is where the advantage of having the working version of the SEP stored on a shared server is beneficial, as the district can access the SEP when needed and the SEP can be transferred electronically within a secure environment from school to school at key transition times such as the move from elementary to middle school.

Writing a Special Education Plan

The guidelines have a small section on page 15 that gives a short explanation of the expectations for the various parts of the form, but let's look at them in more detail.

The **Demographic Information** at the top of the Summary form is straight forward, so it will not be dealt with here. **Pertinent Medical Information** is just that - information on a physical issue (e.g. Cerebral Palsy), medications (e.g. Ritalin) or chronic health problems (e.g. Asthma). You don't need to spend a lot of time with explanations in the section. Psychological or medical diagnosis that describes a developmental, learning or behavioural condition doesn't need to be written here. That information should be on file with the resource teacher.

The section on **Justification** has presented confusion for some people. Remember that it needs to relate back to what the *Education Act* says about an "exceptional pupil". There must be the two components of: one or more of the characteristics (behavioural, intellectual, communication, perceptual/sensory or physical) AND a related educational delay. These are students who should have had exposure already to interventions offered through regular education and who are continuing to struggle. As such there should be a short explanation of the interventions attempted. If the child has a diagnosis on file, it is appropriate to use this here. As explained in a previous part of this resource, however, a "diagnosis" is not needed. Through the assessment process - and assessment, as we defined it previously, must have been done - teachers and other members of a collaborative team will have identified certain characteristics in classroom behaviour and work production that they believe have been interfering with the child's educational progress. The **justification statement should also contain a statement of approximate literacy & numeracy levels.** Remember not to use grade equivalents though as these scores are not reliable and are open to misinterpretation. Use rather a letter level as found in Fountis & Pinnell, or an approximate grade level such as that provided in the regionally developed reading assessment kits. In making this type of statement here, we can quickly see how much

progress in these key areas is being made. The statements in the **Justification** section can be broad, but still defining.
In the case where there is a diagnosis:

> *Julie, a student in grade 4, is having difficulty with reading because of an identified learning disability related to visual processing. Julie spent 2 years with reading intervention through the LIFT program and with tutoring options without significant gains. Julie reads at ~ H level. Julie's math level is within average.*

> *Sam, a student in grade 8, is delayed in all areas because of an identified diagnosis of autism. Sam entered the school system with a diagnosis of Autism and with pre-school intervention using Applied Behavioural Analysis. Transition planning and the development of an individualized Special Education Plan occurred on school entry. Sam reads at ~ K level. Math is ~grade 3.*

In the case where there has been no formal diagnosis, but the team has identified certain characteristics that are felt to interfere with learning:

> *Katie, a student in grade 5, is experiencing difficulty with processing auditory information. As a result, she is having difficulty the reading, spelling and written language. Katie had interventions in phonemic awareness, phonics, literacy, and has had peer tutoring. She has not responded successfully to these interventions. Katie reads at ~J level. Math is within average.*

> *Bob, a student in grade 9, is experiencing significant difficulties with math related to a weakness in visual perception as evidenced in classroom behaviour and work output. Bob took part in extra practice with classroom volunteers, was paired with older students for practice, received numeracy intervention and took part in after school tutoring without significant success. Reading is within average. Math is ~grade 6 level.*

The next sections regarding the **Type of Plan** and the kind of **Resource Support** were discussed in previous sections.

The section regarding **Teacher Assistants** has been a bit confusing to some. Remember that Teacher Assistants are assigned to classrooms and that you and the school-based team determine the activities of that teacher assistant. If the best use of his or her time is to spend the majority of the day with one student then mark "Full time" on that child's Special Education Plan. If you and the school based team decide that his or her time can be divided so that maybe only part of the day, or particular days or times periods are spent with an individual child on a consistent basis then mark "Part time" on the child's Special Education Plan. If, however, you and the school based team decide that the teacher assistant's time is best used working with a number of children in the class on a *consistent* basis, then mark "Shared" on the Special Education Plans of those children. Remember for this last designation, that if the teacher assistant only very occasionally gives extra help to a child, then this is not really the "shared" situation. There has to be a *consistent* pattern to the time the teacher assistant spends assisting the same group of children.

The designation for teacher assistants can change from term to term depending on what the teacher and the school based team feels is needed at that time. Teacher assistant time is allocated based on the needs of the classroom and the teacher, and can be adjusted relative to changing needs.

The section entitled **Assessments on File** is fairly straightforward. The assessments listed should be the most up to date versions. For example, if a Woodcock Reading Test was completed in both September 2000 and in March 2004, then list the 2004 test. With the electronic version of the Special Education Plan, it is easier to keep a record of all tests that have been completed.

Similarly, the section entitled **Program Adjustments** is relatively straightforward, although it can be a bit unfriendly for the high school level. Remember for this section that a number of boxes can be checked at the same time. High school teachers may need to

overwrite the current selections, or add to the current choices. Again, this section is more user friendly in the electronic version.

Within the section on **Current Support Services,** check those services that apply. If the child has a support service that is not listed, enter it under "Other".

The next section on **Short Term Remedial Assistance/Intervention** can be used for a child who is already on an SEP. Your description of the program doesn't need to be lengthy, just cover a succinct description without going into detail. Children who are receiving intervention support, but who are not currently on a Special Education Plan will need to have the intervention documented on the generic Intervention Form.

Similarly, the description of the **Recommendations for Change** does not need to be explicit. Simple statements such as: "Revision of accommodations needed/March 2005", **or** "Move to modification agreed/June 2004 - implementation September 2005" **or** "no revisions needed/March 2005", are all that you need. If you're concerned about documenting discussions or changes in more detail, a **journal** or a record of meeting notes is a good idea, and you can schedule your own time for that, or keep the journal handy to jot down items as you complete them.

Writing a **modified** or an **individualized** plan begins after the summary pages with a statement of the student's **strengths and needs**. When you're listing the student's **strengths,** try to be specific to behaviours or work habits that help the student in their learning process or that would be helpful for you or another teacher to know so that the student's learning styles can be better addressed. Include information on behavioural, physical, social and academic issues that will provide information about the student's learning styles to others. You can also include statements regarding temperament, etc. if they will be helpful in planning for the student. e.g. "Katie is a strong visual learner" indicates to others that including strategies or teaching methods that use the visual modality will be helpful for her. However, a statement such as "Katie is always pleasant" does not give much information for planning purposes. However, the statement "Katie works best within a group" is helpful.

Student needs are those behaviours or work habits that cause difficulty for the student. In this case the statement is not meant to mean "Katie needs................." because that type of itemization will occur later in an accommodations checklist, or in the goals and outcomes. Rather, the statements here should reflect the weak areas such as "auditory processing" or "visual perception" or "focus of attention".

Goals and Outcomes

Writing goals and outcomes for the more comprehensive plans is a very time consuming and a tough job to do. Attaining consistency among teachers around the province with regard to the writing of goals and outcomes will take practice. The electronic version has provincial outcomes in the areas of language arts, math, science and social studies available as drop down lists.

Annual goals are statements of expected achievement that are usually anticipated over a one year school period. They are statements of how you expect the student to perform in certain areas in the future.

Annual goals are statements that reflect a number of perspectives including; the student's values and goals, the family's values and goals, the urgency of need for the child, the contribution a goal may make to the overall achievement of the child and the goal's potential for generalization in other areas, the importance of social development, the usefulness in other environments and also the instructional time it may take considering the availability of resources.

The development of goals begins with a consideration of the child's strengths and needs, and is really a "best guess" of what a student should be able to accomplish by the end of the school year. Remember that, as with any planning, goals are not set in stone; they're just a target for you and the student to focus on. They may require adjusting throughout the year.

One of the most difficult tasks when writing an annual goal is to avoid statements that are vague or nebulous and provide no clear direction for outcome planning. The acronym **SMART** is a good pneumonic strategy to follow for writing annual goals. Goals need to be:

Specific - Goals need to be very clear and unambiguous in their language

Measurable - The goal needs to be able to be described, assessed and evaluated

Achievable - The goal has to be realistic for the student

Relevant - The goal has to be meaningful for the student

Time related - The goal must contain a time frame (usually 1 school year)

(Manitoba Education & Training, 1998)

Let's look at a couple of examples of annual goals:

Vague

Joshua will improve his reading.

Clear

Joshua (student) will read (action) to locate specific information in two daily newspapers (what/how) within the grade 8 language arts class (where) with 95 percent accuracy (by what criteria) by June (when).

Vague

Susie will improve her social skills.

Clear

Susie (student) will play (action) with peers from her circle of friends (what/how) at school (where) for 10 min a day over 5 consecutive days (by what criteria) by June (when).

When thinking about the verb to use in the goal statement try to avoid verbs that are difficult to measure such as: *know, understand, appreciate, think, believe, acquire, remember, feel, value, consider, be aware of,* and *learn.* (Manitoba Education & Training, 1998)

Outcome statements are even more specific than the goal statements and are related to the steps it takes to accomplish the goal.

In the previous example the goal for Joshua restated is:

Joshua will read to locate specific information in two daily newspapers within the grade 8 language arts class with 95 percent accuracy by June.

We now must break this goal into tasks or **outcomes** that will lead to Joshua's attaining the intended goal.

In this instance, the outcomes associated with the goal would look something like this:

1.   By the end of October, Joshua will independently locate 6 pieces of information in 1 newspaper (*Telegraph Journal*) 95 percent of the time as measured by his identifying the following items: name of paper, date, day in school cycle, classified ads, weather forecast, and daily TV listings.
2.   By the end of January, Joshua will use a highlighter to locate independently the 6 pieces of information in 2 newspapers (*Telegraph Journal, Daily Gleaner)* 95 percent of the time as measured by the items in #1.
3.   By the end of March, Joshua will be able to use the information located in the daily newspaper to answer scripted questions posed by peers, 95 percent of the time.

Be aware when you are developing these outcomes, that it can be very easy to get carried away with the number of minute steps it takes to reach a goal. *Three of four outcomes per goal is plenty*! These can be added to or changed at reporting times if appropriate. It will take practice to be able to write these efficiently. Collaborate with

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other teachers in your school to get a pattern of specificity that suits the requirements but that doesn't take up all of your time.

Remember that this specificity of planning is not needed for all students who have an SEP

Appendices

New Nouveau
Brunswick
C A N A D A
EDUCATION

Intervention Plan
Summary

School Year: _____   **District:** _____

Name: _____   **School:** _____

Medicare #: _____   **Grade:** _____

Date of Birth: _____   **Teacher:** _____

Phone: (H)_____ (W) _____   **Intervention Teacher:** _____

Address: _____

_____   **Postal Code:** _____

Justification for Intervention: _____

_____

_____

Assessments or Screening on File: (Give date if possible) _____

Duration of Intervention: _____

Pre-intervention Skill Level: _____   **Date:** _____

Post-intervention Skill Level: _____   **Date:** _____

Intervention Program: (Describe the goals and nature of the program) _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Intervention Teacher: _____   **Parent:** _____

Principal: _____

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New ⛵ Nouveau
Brunswick

Education   **Special Education Plan**
                              Summary

Name: John Smith   **District:** 25
Medicare #: 123456789   **School:** Green Elementary
Date of Birth: October 17, 1994   **Grade:** 4
Parent(s)/Guardian(s): Jack & Pam   **Teacher:** Mrs. O'Dell
Phone: (H) 111-1234 **(W)** 222.1234 **Resource Teacher:** Mr. White
Address: 124 Sugarplum Lane, North George,   **Postal Code:** H0H 0H0
NB

Pertinent Medical Info: environmental sensitivity

Justification for SEP: John, a child in grade 4, is showing academic delays related to diagnosed Autism Spectrum Disorder. John was diagnosed prior to school entry, and had support through the Early Childhood Intervention Program. John has had a combination of modified and individualized programming since school entry. He currently reads ~level H. Math is ~grade 2

Type of Plan: X Accommodation X Modification X Individualization

Resource Support: ☐Direct   X Indirect   ☐Monitor

Teacher Assistants: ☐ Full-time   X Part-time (2 1/2 hrs/d)   ☐ Shared

Assessments on File: (Give date if possible)

Educational: Boehm 2003	Psychological: 2002
Speech and Language: 2004	Other: APSEA assessment 2004

Program Adjustments

Subject	Regular Curriculum	Regular Curriculum with Accommodations (only)	Modified Curriculum	Individualized Curriculum	Teacher Signature
English Lang. Arts	☐		X		
Math	☐		X	☐	
Science	☐		X		
Social Studies			X	☐	
French	☐		X	☐	
Music		X	☐	☐	
Art	☐		X	☐	
Health	☐		☐	X	
Personal Development	☐		☐	X	
Physical Education	☐		X		
Technology	☐		X		

Name: John Smith   **Date:** September 2004

Current Support Services

X Speech Language Path.	X APSEA – DHH*
X Occupational Therapy	

*APSEA – Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority DHH: Deaf or Hard of Hearing BVI: Blind or Visually Impaired

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Short-term Remedial Assistance/Intervention

List/description of alternate programs, resources, strategies

APSEA will provide a bi-yearly consultation service with teachers and will monitor maintenance of classroom FM system. Reports will be forwarded to home and school.

Reporting Period Reviews

Date: November 2004
(if applicable)   **Date:**   **Date:**   **Date:**

Recommendations for Change: During Review Periods, please indicate any changes needed.

Revise and develop outcomes to reflect achievement. Further behavioural planning needed. Accommodations adjusted to reflect independence/November 2004

Complete this section only for students who have individualized or modified planning

X   Individualized   X   Modified

Name: John Smith   **Date:** September 2005

Student Strengths	Student Needs
~very verbal ~loves books ~gets along with peers ~reads well ~ loves computers ~knows address, phone number, birthdate, name ~can print numbers 1-29 consistently ~can sing ABCs ~very good memory ~knows what he wants	~patience ~self help skills ~concentration ~eye-contact ~independence on tasks ~improvement in neatness of work ~focus ~routines ~life skills ~development of concept of personal space

ANNUAL GOALS

1. John will improve reading, writing, speaking and listening skills to the accuracy level noted in specific outcomes

2. John will refrain from asking for the computer or reading a book no more than 5 times a day

3. John will develop independent skills for tying shoes with mastery at 80% level.

4. John will be able to brush his teeth independently with an 80% mastery level.

I have read the above document and believe the goals and outcomes in it to be representative of those agreed to in planning sessions. I understand that the above goals and outcomes are designed to meet my child's individual needs and that they are not necessarily those of the provincial curriculum for my child's grade level.

Parent Signature:		Date:
Resource Teacher Signature:		Date:
Principal Signature:		Date:
HRT Signature:		Date:

We were unable to contact Mrs. Smith for her input to this SEP. Letter sent Sept. 14/04. Phone messages: Oct. 1 & 2///Nov.'04

New Brunswick EDUCATION   **Special Education**

Accommodations

Name: John Smith   **Date:** September 2005
Subject(s): ALL SUBJECTS

Learning Tools and Technology Devices

X Manipulatives	X Dark line paper
	X Calculator
X Spell checker	
X Computer assisted technology	X Classroom FM system

Learning Environment

X Alternative program site	X Special study area/individual work area (e.g., resource room, study carrel)
X Seating arrangement	

Note Taking

X Near rather than far point copying	
X Photocopied notes	X Student note taker
X Key words and phrases only	
	X Teacher's copy of notes provided
	X TA Scribes

Organization

	X Individual/personal schedule

Human Resource Assistance

X Peer tutor	X Peer helper
	X Scribe
X Reader	

Teaching and Learning Strategies

X Strategy card (step-by-step direction)	X Simplified directions
X Emphasize visual presentations	X Provide tactile/kinesthetic activities
X Monitor attention (signal systems)	X Adjusted expectations for length of assignments
X Frequent activity breaks	

Name: John Smith   **Date:** September 2005
Subject(s): ALL SUBJECTS

Testing/Evaluation

X Scribe for designated tests	X Quiet, individual or small group setting
	X Access to computer
X Oral testing	
	X Extra time (usually time and a half/double time)

Comments:

New Nouveau Brunswick

EDUCATION

Special Education Plan
Modification

Name: John Smith   **Date:** September 2005

All Subjects:X   **Subject:**

X   Simplified Instructional Level

    X   level of task requirements

    X   concrete vs. abstract methodology

X   Curriculum Content

    X   simplified/abridged text

    X   modified curricular outcomes (more than 50%)

X   Instructional Strategies
- Ask John during and/or at the end of the class to list 1-2 items that were taught during the class
- Put keywords on the board before class begins
- Use visual schedules whenever possible
- Use tactile or visual cues to assist John to refocus
- Use grouping and regrouping for learning reinforcement
- Use Peer Assisted Learning System with the class for reinforcement
- Use Applied Behavioural Analysis methods when appropriate
- See accommodations check list

X   Materials
- manipulatives
- computer
- calculator
- pictorial cues/Boardmaker
- Picture Exchange Communication System
- Lower level texts

X   Evaluations/Assessment Expectations
- daily work
- observations of teachers, TAs, peers, parents

Special Education Plan

New Nouveau
Brunswick
EDUCATION

X Individualized (Personal Development)   X Modified (Language Arts)

Name: John Smith   **Date:** September 2004

Subject/Skill: Language Arts

Goal: 1. John will improve reading, writing, speaking and listening skills to the accuracy level noted in specific outcomes

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Outcome: John will read and comprehend Level H books with 80% accuracy by the end of the first reporting period.

Methods/Materials: John will retell stories, listen to stories, answer questions, sequence cards, read & respond to stories, use Dolch word lists and use personal spelling list.

Responsibility: TA, teacher, parent

Evaluation: X Achieved/Nov. '04 ☐ **Not Achieved   Comment:** John began at his independent level with practice of G level books.   **Date:** Nov. 2004

Outcome: John will print legibly on a line with spaces between words, numbers, etc. with 70% accuracy by the end of the first reporting period.

Methods/Materials: Daily printing practice, use of black line paper, near copying rather than far copying, dictated sentences.

Responsibility: TA, teacher

Evaluation: ☐ **Achieved X Not Achieved   Comment:** John is still having some difficulty with the fine motor coordination. He has achieved 50% accuracy. Work on this outcome will continue/Nov.'04   **Date:** Nov.'04

Outcome: John will speak and read at an acceptable rate 80% of the time by the end of February.

Methods/Materials: Use tape recorder & replay so John can monitor reading speed. Use sliding mask for reading practice. Use a visual timer (e.g. hourglass) with set time so that John can pace himself.
Responsibility: Teacher, TA, peers, parent

Evaluation: ☐ **Achieved X Not Achieved   Comment:** The visual and tactile cues to bring Johnny's attention to pace are working well. He has achieved 50% acceptable rate. Work ongoing/Nov.'04   **Date:** Nov.'04

Name: John Smith   **Date:** September 2004

Subject/Skill: Personal Development

Outcome: John will use a quiet voice 8 out of 10 times while in the hallways.

Methods/Materials: Model & practice "quiet voice". Use reward system displayed visually. Teach use of picture card for "quiet voice". Social stories

Responsibility: Teachers, TA, peers

Evaluation: X Achieved/Nov.'04 ☐ **Not Achieved   Comment:** John achieved this outcome quickly. However, adults and peers must be consistent with expectations and quick with reward. Although achieved, this skill will continue to be expected. Further outcomes needed   **Date:** Nov.'04

Goal: 2. John will refrain from asking for the computer or reading a book no more than 5 times a day

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Outcome: John will recognize the use of tokens for computer use or independent reading time 80% of the time.

Methods/Materials: John will be assigned 5 Bingo tokens that represent the # of times he can use the computer or read. The teacher will model and John will practice the use of this token system e.g. 1 token is placed in a container each time John uses the computer or reads for pleasure. When the tokens are gone, he can't use the computer or read books. John will immediately be rewarded for proper use of the tokens.

Responsibility: Teacher, TA

Evaluation: X Achieved/Nov.'04 ☐ **Not Achieved   Comment:** John has achieved the 80% mastery of this skill, but it needs continued reinforcement.   **Date:** Nov.'04

Subject/Skill: Personal Development

Goal: 3. John will develop independent skills for tying shoes with mastery at 80% level.

Outcome: Using the technique of forward chaining, John will learn how to carry out the first 5 out of ten steps involved in tying shoes independently with 80% accuracy.

Methods/Materials: A hierarchy of prompts will be established as a method of monitoring the degree of prompting John's mother will be attempting to fade to promote independence. John's mother will use physical prompting at first, and then fade the intensity of prompts as John develops success in this skill sequence. John's mother will continue to use hand-over-hand prompting for the remaining 5 steps in the task sequence.

Responsibility: Parent. The school will attempt to generalize the skill once it has been learned in the home.

Evaluation: X Achieved/Nov.'04 ☐ **Not Achieved   Comment:** John had no difficulty acquiring this skill   **Date:** Nov.'04

Name: John Smith   **Date:** September 2004

Outcome: The first 5 steps that John will carry out independently will consist of: crossing laces, wrapping one lace around the second, pulling the laces tight, looping the first lace, and looping the second.

Methods/Materials: Using colored shoe laces, John's mother will use physical prompting at first and then attempt to fade the intensity of prompts, once John demonstrates success. John will be able to carry out the first 5 steps in the shoe tying sequence independently.

Responsibility: Parent

Evaluation: X Achieved/Nov.'04 ☐ Not Achieved   Comment: No Difficulty   **Date:** Nov.'04

Outcome: John will learn to carry out the remaining 4steps in conjunction with the previous 5 he has already attained. John will be able to independently tie his own shoes from start to finish with 80% accuracy.

Methods/Materials: John will independently complete the first 5 steps in the shoe tying sequence. John's mother will fade the degree of physical guidance needed to complete the remaining 4 steps as John demonstrates success. These remaining 4 steps will involve: crossing both loops, wrapping the first loop under the second, pulling the loops tight, and producing a bow.

Responsibility: Parent

Evaluation X Achieved/Nov.'04 ☐ Not Achieved   Comment: John worked on this and the other two previous outcomes in one time period   **Date:** Nov.'04

Subject/Skill: Health

Goal: 4. John will be able to brush his teeth independently with an 80% mastery level.

Outcome: John will be able to follow the steps of a visual task schedule for brushing teeth with assistance 80% of the time.

Methods/Materials: The task of brushing teeth will be broken down into several parts and displayed on a visual task schedule. John's mother will assist John completing each task indicated by the cards with immediate reward given for correct responses

Responsibility: Parent

Evaluation: X Achieved/Nov.'04 ☐ Not Achieved   Comment: Mrs. Smith found that John struggled with this task at first, but has achieved the outcome.   **Date:** Nov.'04

Name: John Smith   **Date:** September 2004

Outcome: John will be able to follow the steps of a visual schedule for brushing teeth independently at an 80% mastery level.

Methods/Materials: The visual task schedule in the 1st outcome will be used. Mrs. Smith will fade her assistance with this task until John can follow the task cards independently.

Responsibility: Parent

Evaluation: ☐ **Achieved X Not Achieved   Comment:** John has not reached the point yet where Mrs. Smith can significantly fade her assistance. This needs more practice/Nov.'04
Date: Nov.'04

Outcome: John will be able to follow the steps of teeth brushing independently with 80% mastery.

Methods/Materials: The visual tasks cards will be faded and John will perform the tasks with prompting when needed. Prompts will then be faded.

Responsibility: Parent

Evaluation: ☐ **Achieved X Not Achieved   Comment:** Not attempted/Nov.'04   **Date:** Nov.'04

END OF YEAR EVALUATION
(Complete and attach to SEP in May/June)

Results of Yearly Evaluation: John achieved most of the goals set for him this year as indicated in the SEP. John's academic progress can be seen in his progress report.

Comments: It took a while for us to set up communication with Mrs. Smith. She therefore didn't have as much input to the initial SEP as we would have liked. We found that e-mailing is the best way to communicate with Mrs. Smith. She was very willing to work on the goals and outcomes for shoe tying and brushing teeth. She spent time with Mrs. O'Dell to learn the method to use for those outcomes. Mrs. Smith has suggested that we continue to use e-mail to communicate with her.

Mrs. O'Dell found that she needed to have more collaborative time with Mr. White at the beginning of the year regarding John's program to understand how the curriculum could be modified for John.

Recommendations for Change/Next Steps:

1. Further development needed on self-control and personal space
2. Continue to modify academic subjects
3. Health practices still an issue. In the fall, develop with Mrs. Smith additional goals and outcomes in this area.

Team Member Signatures: _____

_____

_____

_____

Date:

Comments:

If parent/guardian is unable to participate in end of the year evaluation, please ensure a copy is sent home so they may participate and are aware of the recommendations for the fall.

Guidelines For Referral

For School Psychological Consultation

Teachers and parents are often uncertain as to how to access psychological services within the school system. The following process is suggested to facilitate referrals for school psychological services, and to ensure that the most appropriate service is provided to those requesting the assistance of the school psychologist. It should be noted that there are two levels of referral possible, for consultation and for student-centered services; however, the entry point to any service provided by school psychologists is the referral for consultation. Thereafter, the decision regarding the most appropriate service to be provided rests with the psychologist.

School psychologists are guided by professional ethics and utilize only research-based interventions in the services they provide to schools. Although the specific service offered will be determined by the need, as assessed by the psychologist, the following two principles will be adhered to in all school psychological involvements.

* Documentation

In the course of working with schools and other professionals and parents, school psychologists will likely be engaged informally in telephone or face-to-face conversations about a student. It is important to remember that all contacts will be documented in writing and filed for future reference.

* Informed Parental Consent

Beyond Step 1, good professional practice requires that school psychologists obtain "informed parental consent" for any activities undertaken by the psychologist. Informed consent details the specific types of interventions planned to be carried out, to whom and how it is intend that information will be communicated, and to what use the data will be put. (See attached recommended model format for informed consent

Recommended Referral Model for

School Psychological Services

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │          Step 1             │
──────────────────  │  No Parental Consent Required │  ──────────────────
                    │                             │
                    │        Consultation         │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘
                         ↓        ↓        ↓
┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
│     Step 2A      │  │                  │  │     Step 2C      │
│                  │  │     Step 2B      │  │                  │
│ Student-Centered │  │                  │  │ Psycho-Educational│
│   Behavioural    │  │ Student-Centered │  │   Assessment     │
│  Consultation    │  │  Intervention    │  │                  │
└──────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘

        ──────────  Informed Parental Consent Required  ──────────
```
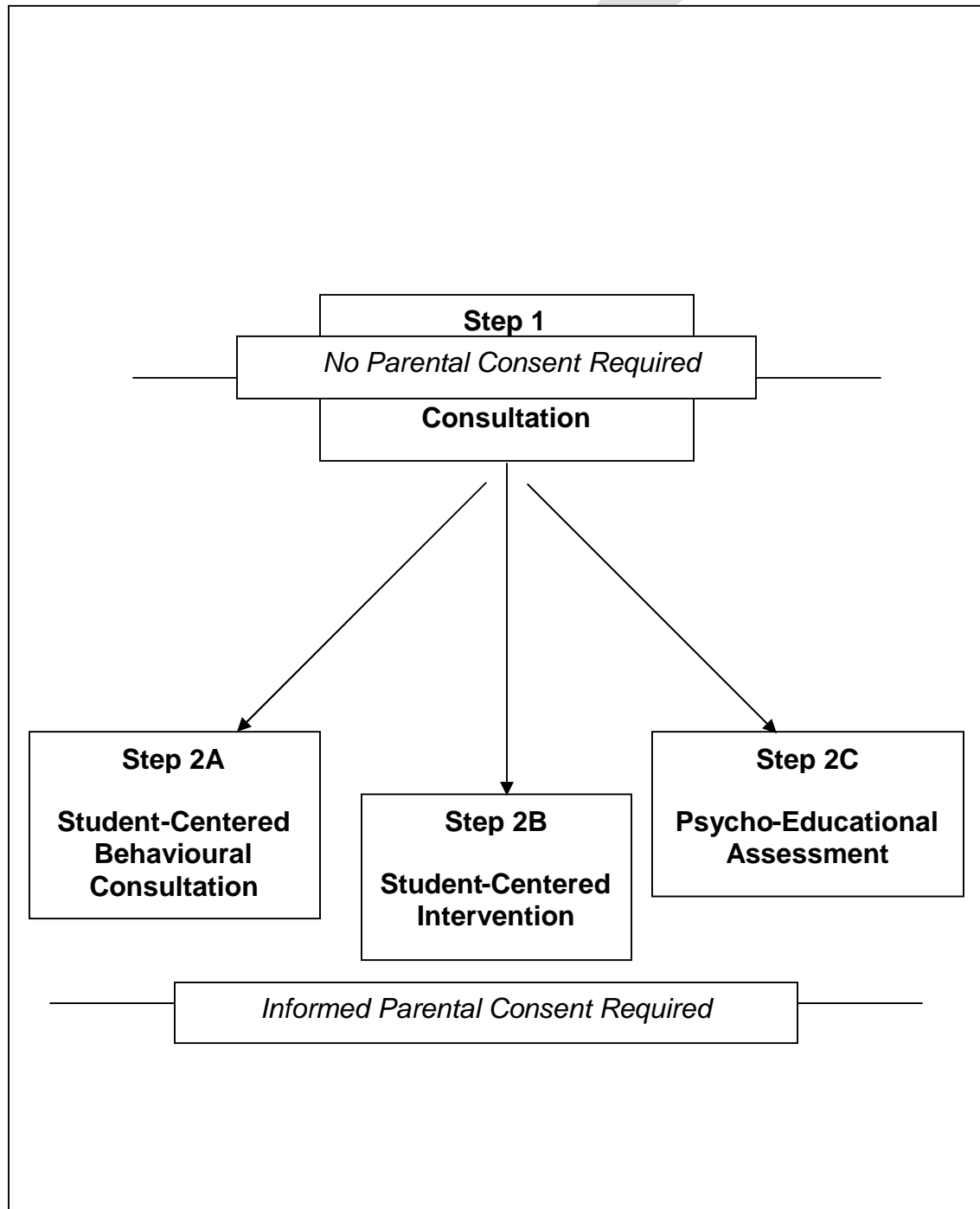
Step 1:
Guidelines for Referral Procedures:
Teacher- Centered Instructional Consultation

Teachers have a right and a responsibility to consult with professionals in the system to help provide the best learning environment for all students in the classroom. Entry to the consultation process may be the school-based team or a case conference. School psychologists serve the total school system. As such, they provide consultation services to school-based teams, and upon request of the school-based team, to individual teachers, para-professionals or school staffs who are experiencing difficulty. All interventions undertaken as a result of a request for consultation must be documented. No parental consent is required at this point; however, it is always advisable to involve parents as early as possible in the problem-solving process. In Step 1, the psychologist is serving in the role as resource person to the school teams.

The purpose of this level of school psychology consultation is to help the teacher with behaviour management of the class and/or individual students. This level of consultation **does not involve** making any kind of diagnosis as to what type of behavioural, emotional or developmental disorder the child might have but looks only at observable behaviour. The psychologist may assist or advise the teacher/team with methods of observing students or in using teacher-made tools which lead to a better understanding of behaviour and how to manage it in the classroom. Supportive services that can be accessed through the instructional consultation process include:

- o Classroom observations
- o Teacher and para-professional coaching
- o Staff in-service education
- o Facilitation of Functional behavioural assessments
- o Feedback and discussion with the teacher and the school-based team and others (eg, parents) as required

- If the consultation is group or school-related, a report of actions taken should be filed within the school Student Services file(s) (ie, school-team minutes).
- If the report is student-specific, a report should be filed in the Student Services file under the child's name (ie, case conference notes).

NOTE: See sample Referral for Consultation form at the end of Guidelines.

Step 2
Guidelines for Referral Procedures:
Student-Centered Consultation

- Consent – **Informed** parental consent is required for any psychological assessment or direct intervention such as counselling. All consultations at this level require **informed parental consent.**

- Referral procedures – may differ by district, depending on resources and regional practice, but referrals:
    - o **Must** follow a consultation with the school psychologist, either directly, or at a school-based team meeting or case conference
    - o **Do require a written referral**

- Intervention type - The decision to do a psychological assessment (behaviour or learning) or to engage in direct intervention (counselling) **rests with the school psychologist.**

- Reporting procedures – Schools have a right to the psychological assessment report. Parents have a right to the psychological assessment report. Initial sharing and interpretation of the report should be in the presence of the school psychologist.

    - o Psychological assessment reports should be housed in the resource file at the school and in the Student Services file at District office, with a notation on the cumulative record indicating that such a report exists.
    - o Reports should contain a preamble which explains that **the results of the assessment are valid for a period of two years** and after that timeframe should be viewed only as historical information.
    - o District office copies of psychological assessment reports should be kept in perpetuity.

Step 2 - A:
*** Note: A report will be written by the psychologist for any student-centered consultation, intervention, or assessment.

Guidelines for Referral Procedures:

Student-centered Behavioural Consultation

In the process of the Teacher-centered Instructional Consultation, the school psychologist may determine that the focus of the intervention needs to be on an individual student. The purpose of this level of school psychology consultation is to look at an individual student's behaviour in depth in order to formulate a more specific/individualized program for that child in the classroom. Within this process, the psychologist may determine a diagnostic hypothesis as to what type of behavioural, emotional or developmental disorder appears to explain the behaviour, and, as a result, may advise and/or facilitate support from community groups (such as a parenting courses or local associations dedicated to assisting parents with the special needs of their child) **or** assist with a referral to an appropriate community agency (such as Mental Health, Family and Community Services, Physicians, Psychiatrists, etc). Activities the psychologist may choose to complete at this level might include participation in or coordination of:

- o Behavioural observations
- o Functional behavioural assessments
- o Clinical interviews
- o Behavioural checklists
- o File review
- o Self-report checklists
- o Projective Testing

Note: If at any point, parental permission for intervention is rescinded, the psychologist will engage only in school-based consultation (Step 1).

Step 2 - B:

Guidelines For Referral Procedures:

Student-centered Intervention

In addition to assessment and planning for a student, there may be individual interventions required to aid his or her performance in school. Among these interventions might be:
- o Individual counselling
- o Group counselling

Step 2 - C:
Guidelines For Referral Procedures:

Psycho-Educational Assessment

The psychologist may determine that more information is needed to better understand and plan for student learning. In this case, the psychologist decides to complete a psycho-educational assessment, which may include:
- o Assessment of intelligence, development, perceptual processing, academic skill mastery, learning strengths and weaknesses

ATTACHMENTS:
- Sample Referral for Consultation
  - Model Informed Parental Consent

New ⛵ Nouveau
Brunswick

SCHOOL DISTRICT _____

SCHOOL: _____ DATE:_____

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The attached form (Parent/Guardian Consent) is being sent to you to obtain permission for your child to receive consultative, intervention or assessment services from School Psychological Services. The areas checked below indicate the specific services being requested. Through information received in consultation with your child's school, it is felt that these interventions would be helpful in planning an appropriate educational program for your child. The specific reason the school is requesting this support service is stated below:

_____

_____

Student-Centered Behavioural Consultation:

❑   May include behavioural observation, behaviour checklists, functional behaviour assessments, clinical interviews, file review, self-report checklists, projective testing

Student-Centered Intervention:

❑   Individual counselling focusing on _____

❑   Group counselling focusing on_____

❑   Other _____

Psycho-Educational Assessment:

❑   Psycho‐educational assessment of intelligence, development, perceptual processing, learning strengths and weaknesses.

As a parent you have the right to be informed of the results of any psychological assessment, consultation or intervention. Parents have a right to receive copies of any psychological reports. Following any student centered consultation or assessment, you will be invited to a case conference where the results will be discussed. Other parties at this case conference may include the principal, teachers, teacher assistants and other professionals, depending on who is working with your child. If you wish to discuss the matter of the consent form or the assessment, please call your school principal.

Any reports of individual consultations, interventions or assessments are kept on file at the School District Office and in a file at the school. These reports may only be accessed by school personnel working with the student and will not be released to any agency or person outside of the school district without the parent's written permission.

Principal: _____ Telephone:_____
School Psychological Services Telephone: _____

Referral for Consultation   New Nouveau
                                  Brunswick

School Psychological Services

School: _____ **Date:** _____

Reason for Referral: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Other Services Involved: (currently or in the past – please indicate when): _____

_____

_____

_____

Actions Taken by the School to Date:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____   _____

Principal   **Referring Teacher**

SCHOOL DISTRICT _____

PARENTIAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT

School Psychological Assessment/Intervention

I _____
(Parent/Guardian)

do hereby freely authorize School District _____
Psychological Services to provide the services checked
above to my child _____
(Name of Child)

Parental permission for a student-centered behaviour consultation, intervention or psycho-educational assessment is valid for one year from the date of signature. I understand that I have a right to cancel my consent at any time.

DATE:_____SIGNED:_____
Parent/Guardian

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