

Inclusive Schooling

Education in the NWT is committed to an inclusive philosophy and practice, which welcomes all students into its schools. Inclusive schooling provides all students with learning opportunities appropriate to their diverse strengths and needs, in classrooms with their age peers.
IEP Guidelines (Pilot Version)

The *Education Act (1996)* incorporates the current “inclusive schooling policy” of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. It gives all students, whenever possible, access to an education program in a classroom setting, and says that support services will be provided to assist students to be successful in their school program. Inclusive schools educate all students in regular classrooms in one of three programs:

1. **Regular Program** -A regular program is determined by the learning outcomes articulated in the NWT curricula. (Grade 1 – 12)
2. **Modified Program** -A modified program retains the learning outcomes articulated in NWT curricula, typically at a level other than the assigned grade level. Based on student strengths, needs and interests, a collaborative process is used to determine and document/record necessary program changes. Information about a student’s Modified Program is written in a Student Support Plan.
3. **Individual Education Program** - An Individual Education Program is a comprehensive written education plan with goals and objectives, determined through a collaborative process, driven by the strengths, needs and interests of the student. It may or may not include outcomes articulated in NWT curricula. Information about a student’s Individual Education Program is written in an Individual Education Plan (IEP) (Grades 1 – 12)

In the NWT, a standard template for planning Individual Education Programs (IEPs) has been developed and is required to be used in planning and documenting IEPs, as has an NWT template for a Student Support Plan to be used to plan for modified programming. In addition to educating all students in regular classrooms, inclusive schools:

- build programs which respond to the diverse strength and needs of students;
- promote involvement of parents/guardians;
- have ongoing staff development to ensure that teachers have skills to respond to the range of challenges and learning needs;
- have staff and services to support the role of the classroom teacher;
- have a school team and an inter-agency team to support the role of various staff, and;
- provide public awareness about meeting the diverse needs of students.

While all students need support in order to reach their potential, the type and amount of support varies from one individual to another. A variety of specific, well planned supports at the school and board level can help students overcome problems which interfere with their learning, and help them reach their full potential – emotionally, socially, physically, spiritually and intellectually.

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| Support could include: | |
| Academic Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in specific subjects • assistance with homework • small group or individual instruction | Personal and Counselling Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in relating to others • in anger management • in problem solving • attendance counselling • behaviour support plan (group or individual) |
| General Skills Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in organizing self and materials • in focussing and staying on task | Assessment Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • academic • behavioural/social/emotional • medical |
| Program Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Education Plan (IEP) • Modified Education Plan (MEP) • documented accommodations for success in a regular education program | Specialized Rehabilitation or Medical Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech and language therapy • Occupational therapy • Physiotherapy • Services for the hard of hearing or deaf • Home care |
| Personal Assistance Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with personal care • Assistance with mobility • Mobility aid (e.g. wheelchair) • Alternative communication (e.g. sign) • Communication aid (e.g. hearing aid, FM system, etc.) • Alternative and augmented communication • Special transportation • Adapted furniture • Life skills training • Special materials • Assistive devices • Monitoring and/or administration of medication • Alternative activities for reasons of medical conditions | |

Student support should benefit all students, but particularly those at risk of not completing school. While the specific supports available in any given school will vary according to local needs and board priorities, student supports will be most effective when there is an active school team and interagency team, as well as active family and community involvement.

Student Support Plan

Because of individual needs and learning challenges some students require accommodations/adaptations in order to meet the learning outcomes of a particular course. For students with persistent learning difficulties who require specific strategies to ensure their success, a Student Support Plan is developed. For Senior Secondary students a Student Support Plan is a one or two-page document developed using FileMaker Pro, which identifies the area of difficulty (such as motivation, focusing, or written skills, to name a few), as well as the specific strategies (or accommodations) that will be put in place to assist the student. Likewise, if a student requires enrichment strategies, they too would be documented using the same FileMaker Pro template.

In general terms, a Student Support Plan is developed with a student experiences persistent learning difficulties and requires specific strategies to address those difficulties or when a student needs enrichment. In more specific terms, the Student Support Plan documents one of four alternatives:

- 1. Regular Education Program with Accommodations/Adaptations for Learning Difficulty (K-12)**
 - a. A Student following the Regular Education Program may be close to achieving the learning outcomes of the NWT curricula at grade level but, because of certain needs or challenges, is at risk of not achieving that goal. For such a student, the teacher puts in place individual accommodation/adaptations to assist the student to achieve the learning outcomes. These accommodations/adaptations may be necessary for some of all subjects or for general skills.
- 2. Regular Education Program with Accommodations/Extensions for Enrichment (K-12)**
 - a. A student who exhibits abilities and capabilities beyond their age peers in one or more subject areas may achieve the learning outcomes at their grade level with ease. For such a student the teacher offers more challenge through enrichment strategies. These strategies foster and develop higher order thinking skills, creativity and problem-solving, adding breadth and depth to the learning experiences at the student's grade level.
- 3. Modified Education Program – Student Working Below Grade Level (Grade1 – 9)**
 - a. A student who is attempting to achieve the learning outcomes of the Regular Education Program may be unable to do so even with differentiated instruction and/or a variety of accommodations/adaptations. For such a student the teacher targets the subject areas of most concern and has the student work on learning outcomes at a level below grade placement and closer to his/her performance level. The student will likely also require accommodations/adaptations to meet the learning outcomes at this level.
- 4. Modified Education Program – Student Working Above Grade Level (Grade 1 – 9)**
 - a. A student who demonstrates exceptional abilities in one or more subject areas may achieve the learning outcomes of the Regular Education Program more rapidly than other classmates and be able to handle learning outcomes of a higher grade level. **It is strongly recommended that before considering the subject or grade acceleration, the teacher offer the student many opportunities for enrichment of the curricular outcomes at grade level as in #2 above.**

Accommodations / adaptations

Students following any of these programs may have a range of accommodations/adaptations to help them meet the learning outcomes of their program. Accommodations/adaptations do not alter the learning outcomes of a program, but they help students to achieve those outcomes by taking into account individual strengths and needs.

Types of Accommodations include:

- reader/CD version of the test
- scribe
- Braille
- Large print
- Changes in testing environment (isolation, noise barriers, more time)

What is an IEP?

Individualized Education Plan or Program – A comprehensive written education plan with goals and objectives, determined through a collaborative process, and driven by the strengths, needs and interests of the students, needs and interest of the students. It may or may not include outcomes articulated in NWT curricula. The purpose of an IEP is to help the student attain the skills and knowledge that are the next logical step beyond their current level of performance and which are relevant to their life goals and environment.

An IEP describes what the student knows and can do and, based on the long-term goals identified, what and how the student should learn next, where instruction would take place, whom will provide it, how long it may take, and what the student will do to demonstrate learning.

An IEP is written as an individual education plan of one school year’s duration. Short-term goals and short-term learning objectives may be adjusted any time during the school year but will be reviewed at least twice a year. The student’s progress on the IEP will be evaluated at the end of each school year and recommendations will be made for the following year.

A team approach

A team approach to educating all children is advocated. Collaborative program planning with students, parents and educators involved is desirable for all students. Throughout the child’s schooling, students and parents are involved in discussions of the most appropriate program for their child based on the child’s strengths and needs.

| An IEP is . . . | An IEP is not . . . |
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| . . . a summary of the learning outcomes and objectives for a student’s learning during a school year. | . . . a description of everything that will be taught to one student. |
| . . . a written plan to reach and assess progress towards short-term goals and learning objectives. | . . . learning outcomes and objectives for a group of students. |
| . . . a document to help teachers monitor and communicate student growth. | . . . a means to monitor the effectiveness of teachers. |
| . . . a plan developed with students and families and implemented and monitored by school staff. | . . . a daily plan. |
| . . . a document to communicate among students, parents and staff. | . . . a report card. |
| . . . a flexible, working document with meaning for all contributors. | . . . written in stone. |
| . . . a plan, which may involve social adjustments, adaptive behaviour and transitions from one environment to another. | . . . restricted to curricular issues. |
| . . . a plan, which may involve decision-making, related to supports from other professionals or volunteers. | . . . dependent on classroom resources alone. |

| Summary | Elementary (Grade 1-9) | Secondary (Grades 10 -12) |
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| Regular program - <i>Information about program is found in the approved curriculum</i> | ✓ | ✓ |
| Regular Program with Accommodations/Adaptations for Learning Difficulty - <i>Information about program is found in the Student Support Plan (SSP)</i> | ✓ | ✓ |
| Regular Program with Accommodations/Extensions for Enrichment - <i>Information about program is found in the Student Support Plan (SSP)</i> | ✓ | ✓ |
| Modified program – Student Working Below Grade level - <i>Information about program is found in the Student Support Plan (SSP)</i> | ✓ | No – SH courses are leveled to accommodate student ability (e.g. In Grade 10 English: ELA 10 – 1, 10-2, 10-3, 16 L; In Grade 10 Math: Pure, Applied, Essentials) |
| Modified program – Student Working Below Grade level - <i>Information about program is found in the Student Support Plan (SSP)</i> | ✓ | No – SH courses are leveled to accommodate student ability (e.g. In Grade 10 English: ELA 10 – 1, 10-2, 10-3, 16 L; In Grade 10 Math: Pure, Applied, Essentials) |
| Individual Education Program - <i>Information about program is found in the Individual Education Plan (IEP)</i> | ✓ | ✓ |

Planning an Inclusive Program

Responding to individual needs does not mean that each student in the room should have a program which is completely different from every other student’s program. That is an unrealistic expectation for any teacher with a classroom full of students.

Students in the classroom are grouped according to their strengths, interests and needs. The group of children who require enrichment challenges in a math unit however may not be the same children who require enrichment challenges in a language arts unit, although some students may be involved in both enrichment groups. The configuration of the group changes with the need for the skills being taught.

The number of students in a specific grouping may vary from one individual to a whole class. Within the concept of inclusive programming the teacher’s perspective changes from one where students in the classroom are seen as “regular” or “special” to one where students are all learners requiring appropriate individualized educational programming. This necessitates accurate and ongoing assessment of those strengths and needs and flexible groupings which are constantly in flux as the learning requirements for individuals within those groups change.

Program Adaptations

Education staff shall make adaptations to the school program of a student (enrichment, modified, Individual Education Plan) where the education staff considers the adaptations necessary to accommodate the needs or abilities of the student through various program strategies to meet curricular expectations.

On a Modified Education Program, a student is meeting the regular curricular goals, but is provided with some modified form(s) of evaluation, (i.e. oral tests, scribes). If this is not sufficient to ensure success, one would add modification of student output (i.e. reduced amounts of work, modified criteria for assignments), then move to modification of information input (i.e. simplified text, taped text) and lastly to modification of learning goals. Where learning goals are significantly altered, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is required.

If the objectives of the education program are too challenging for a student or do not challenge a student sufficiently, the principal may recommend to the student's parent the development of an Individual Education Plan for the student, or the student's parent may in writing request the principal to develop an Individual Education Plan. For students requiring an IEP, refer to the *NWT IEP Guidelines, (2006)*.

Consultation with Parent

The principal or a school team designated by the principal shall consult with the student's parent(s) in making any decision concerning an Individual Education Plan for the student including the development, content, implementation, evaluation and alteration of the Individual Education Plan.

The principal must obtain the written approval of the student's parent of the Individual Education Plan for the student before the Individual Education Plan is implemented. The student's teacher shall keep the student and the student's parent informed of the student's progress under the Individual Education Plan.

CERTIFICATES FOR STUDENTS ON IEPs

The Department has approved the awarding of Secondary School certificates to students on IEPs. Schools / Jurisdictions are responsible for creating their own Secondary School certificates that will be awarded to their students on IEPs who will be leaving the school system. Jurisdiction can be creative in incorporating their DEC/DEA logos. A sample is included for your perusal. **It is imperative that the principal meet with the parents and the student on the IEP to explain that the IEP School Leaving Certificate is not a Diploma.**

