

Questions and Answers

regarding

Pathway 4 Guidelines, Pervasive Needs Criteria & Teacher Roles Documents

What should be considered in determining the best use of a school's available resources?

When determining the best use of a school's available resources, consideration must be given to:

- the school profile regarding students with exceptionalities and the severity of needs
- individual programming to address each student's strengths and needs without assigning a teacher to a particular student(s)
- the most optimal environment for instruction - including dignity of student, the subject area, group size, classroom resources, opportunities for co-teaching, and social climate.
- teacher curricular expertise and skills
- scheduling

What is the role of the instructional resource and classroom teachers in the regular classroom?

Students who are following prescribed curriculum may be supported using differentiated instruction and/or co-teaching methods. Flexible grouping, graphic organizers, tiered instruction, and co-operative learning are examples of approaches which help to address diverse learning needs within the classroom setting. Co-teaching using the models of alternative or parallel teaching provides smaller teacher-pupil ratios which allow for more individualized attention.

Students who have been identified with an exceptionality may require accommodations such as assistive technology, alternate format materials, extended time, copies of notes, or scribing. Instructional resource teachers may provide support for the learning required for some accommodations including initial learning around a new piece of assistive technology or behaviour management plans.

If the program planning team determines that the regular classroom is the optimal setting for the delivery of alternate programs, courses or curriculum, the instructional resource teacher can co-teach with the classroom teacher to address the strengths and needs of all students in this setting.

Have there been any changes to the assessment and/or pre-referral process?

No, there have been no changes to the pre-referral or the assessment process. Assessment results must continue to inform programming for the student. The process for comprehensive assessment is managed through the Referral Tracking System. For further information on the

Referral Tracking System, please contact the program specialist for student support services in your district.

Do students require an exceptionality to receive service from the instructional resource teacher?

In most instances an exceptionality is required. However, within a co-teaching setting, while ensuring that the strengths and needs of students with exceptionalities are addressed, the instructional resource teacher may work with any student. Some schools may prioritize particular school-wide areas of need. The school may consult with the district regarding directing an instructional resource teacher to target prevention for areas such as primary reading. In such specialized areas, the instructional resource teachers may work in the classroom setting with all students. Only a student with an exceptionality may receive instructional support from an instructional resource teacher in an alternate setting.

What is the process for determining whether the regular classroom is the optimal setting for individual student learning?

This decision will be student-driven by individual case.

The student’s program planning team (including parents/guardians) will decide whether the regular classroom is the optimal setting for learning. This decision will be based on a review of the following:

- individual student strengths and needs
- dignity of the student
- effectiveness of changes made to the environment (e.g., grouping, lighting, seating arrangement, differentiation in content, process and product)
- success achieved in the classroom as a result of implemented accommodations
- personnel available in the classroom setting

If a determination is made that the regular classroom is not the optimal setting for the student’s learning, an alternate setting may be considered.

If pull-out is necessary for the delivery of an alternate program, what considerations must be given to a student’s program?

When pullout is required, the program planning team (including the parents/guardians and the student, if appropriate to his or her age and developmental level) must give careful consideration to the following:

- areas of interest or strength (e.g., gym, music, art, math) where the student may experience success
- the possible effects on high school graduation or post-secondary eligibility
- the requirement for a student to independently “catch up” when he or she is removed from segments of curricular instruction

- the number of alternate programs a student is doing and the impact on access to the prescribed curriculum

What considerations need to be given to the Cascade Model of service delivery to prioritize service within an inclusive school?

The Cascade Model directed that services be offered in a hierarchical method. For example, Pathway 4 represented a higher level of need than Pathway 3 or 2 and therefore received higher priority for service.

The Pathways model is currently under review and the Cascade Model comprises part of that process. Under an inclusive lens, prioritization of service should be guided by student need rather than numerical designation. For example, short term instruction around an accommodation may be as important as an alternate program or course. Instruction around an accommodation may be offered by personnel such as an instructional resource teacher, technology teacher, guidance counsellor, classroom teacher, or speech-language pathologist.

An instructional resource teacher may be scheduled to co-teach in the regular classroom as a support for student(s) identified with an exceptionality(s). However, within a co-teaching setting, while ensuring that the strengths and needs of students with exceptionalities are addressed, the instructional resource teacher may work with any student. Within a co-teaching setting, both prescribed and alternate program/course/curriculum outcomes may be addressed. When planning for co-teaching in this situation, both teachers must ensure that the strengths and needs of all students are addressed. Depending on the model chosen, each student may be supported by either teacher regardless of whether or not the student has an exceptionality.

Some schools may prioritize particular school-wide areas of need. The school may consult with the district regarding directing an instructional resource teacher to target prevention for areas such as primary reading.

How can students following an alternate program/course or alternate (functional) curriculum be meaningfully included in the regular classroom?

All students should be members of a regular classroom and should be included in the classroom for instruction whenever possible.

Both classroom/subject teachers and instructional resource teachers analyze the curriculum to investigate which prescribed curriculum outcomes are common or similar to the student's IEP outcomes and would facilitate programming in the regular classroom. There may also be classroom or school-wide activities which would address a student's IEP outcomes.

Range of Options

Unadapted participation in the prescribed curriculum

Same activities, same outcomes, same setting

- Can student complete the activities as written for the regular education classroom?
- Do one or more lesson outcomes match the student's IEP?

Adaptations to the prescribed curriculum

Same activities, different (related) outcomes, same setting

- Can the student meet the lesson outcomes with adaptations or accommodations (e.g., time, response mode, use of assistive technology)?

Embedded skills within the prescribed curriculum

Similar activity, different (related) outcomes, same setting

- Are there components of the activity in which the student can be included, even if it is not the central outcome of the lesson but matches an IEP outcome?

Alternate programs/courses and alternate (functional) curriculum in the regular education classroom

Different activities, different (related) outcomes, same setting

- Are the class activities greatly unrelated to the student's IEP? Are there IEP outcomes that could be met in the same setting?

Alternate programs/courses and alternate (functional) curriculum outside regular education classroom

Different activities, different (unrelated) outcomes, different setting

- Are the class activities greatly unrelated to the student's IEP? Are IEP outcomes better met in a different setting?

Wolfe, P.S., & Hall, T.E. (2003). Making Inclusion a Reality for Students with Severe Disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, Volume 35, No. 4, pp.56-60.

Available at:

<http://www.sbac.edu/~werner/DATA/RESEARCH/journals/Teaching%20Exceptional%20Children%20JOURNAL/inclusion%20and%20severe%20dis.pdf>

Within an inclusive environment, has the role of the student assistant changed?

No, the role of the student assistant has not changed. The student assistant's work will continue to be directed by the classroom/subject teacher and/or the instructional resource teacher. The role of the student assistant is:

- To be knowledgeable about department and district policies and procedures regarding student support services.
- Where appropriate, to attend IEP meetings.
- To inform the development and implementation of the student's IEP by contributing information regarding the student's strengths and needs.
- To support the implementation of a behavior management plan.
- To assist the teacher in meeting the student's personal care needs, including eating, drinking, lifting, self-care and toileting.
- To assist with the operation of specialized equipment (e.g., Stair-Trac, wheelchair,

walker).

- To accompany/porter the student to and from classes and school activities.
- To assist the teacher to prepare student-specific materials.
- To assist with student-specific assistive devices.
- To assist the student during emergency procedures.
- To maintain confidentiality.
- To engage in professional learning opportunities relevant to their assigned duties.

What is the difference between instruction around an accommodation and the delivery of a non-curricular alternate program?

In the past, instruction around an accommodation has been framed as a non-curricular alternate program/course. Instruction around an accommodation is still required as a vital part of that accommodation and necessary for successful implementation but does not take the form of an alternate program/course. The *Accommodation* form (available at www.gov.nl.ca/edu/forms/student-support/pathways.html) documents the plan for delivery of instruction, the projected timeline, and provision for follow-up if necessary. Instruction around an accommodation does not require formal evaluation such as progress notes or grades. Instruction around an accommodation is very short term whereas an alternate program is more substantial.

An example of instruction around an accommodation versus an alternate program:

A Behaviour Management Plan (BMP) may include a self-reflective checklist. The completion, interpretation and evaluation of the checklist require some instruction.

The same student may require anxiety management skill development. A student requiring this type of instruction has an alternate program. The program supports the success of the BMP (the accommodation); however, the alternate program does not include instruction around the logistics of the BMP.

How are instructional resource teachers deployed?

The Department of Education allocates instructional resource teachers to school districts based on the student population. Districts profile each school and deploy teachers to address demonstrated need. Teachers are not allocated to specific students, but to schools. School administrators assign their teaching staff to best address the changing needs evident in their school population.

How are accommodations included within the prescribed, modified, and alternate programs/courses/curriculum?

Accommodations support the student's access to all areas of curriculum regardless of Pathway designation. An *Accommodations* form is completed and applied to prescribed

courses, modified courses, alternate programs, alternate courses, and alternate (functional) curriculum for each student.

Is the Department of Education still mandating that teachers/school districts follow the Model for the Co-ordination of Services for Children and Youth (ISSP)?

Until further notice, the ISSP process is to be continued for students who require service from two or more agencies.

Are alternate programs or courses which (re)teach grade level curriculum outcomes appropriate?

The teaching or re-teaching of prescribed curriculum outcomes is not considered alternate programming. The use of differentiated instruction and co-teaching will allow teachers to address diverse learner needs.

Are there any changes in record keeping for alternate programs or courses?

The changes in procedures are captured in the revised forms for IEP, Accommodations, and Alternate Program/Course. These forms are available on the Department of Education website www.gov.nl.ca/edu/forms/studentssupport/pathways.html.

Progress notes and evaluation are required for both alternate programs and courses.

Which subject areas qualify for alternate course credit in high school?

Alternate curricular courses in English language arts, math, science and social studies may receive alternate course credit at the high school level. Curricular prerequisite and non-curricular programs do not receive credit.

Curriculum altering courses receiving high school credit must meet at least high school standard and therefore may only be appropriate for students identified as gifted and talented.

Is a course in Braille considered an alternate course?

Learning to read Braille is neither an accommodation nor an assistive technology device or program. It is the equivalent of learning to read the written word and is therefore an academic course. In Kindergarten to Grade 9, this would be an alternate curricular course.

In high school, students who are blind or severely visually impaired have the option to complete two credits in Braille under the *Any Other Subject* category. This is not considered alternate at this level since it is an approved and set course offering for high school students.

The provision of a Braille, materials in Braille, and books in large print or other alternate formats are considered accommodations.

Is a course in Orientation and Mobility considered an alternate course?

In Kindergarten to Grade 9, Orientation and Mobility would be an alternate program.

In high school, students who are blind or severely visually impaired have the option to complete two credits in Orientation and Mobility under the *Physical Education* category. This is not an alternate course.

Are a minimum number of alternate courses required for students determined to have pervasive needs?

In the past, students with categorical designation were required to have at least four alternate courses. There is no longer a requirement that a student with pervasive needs have a designated number of alternate programs or courses.

However, functional curriculum programming must address the four domains. For further information, visit

English Version:

www.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/studentssupportservices/publications/FunctionalCurriculumGuide.pdf

French version:

www.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/studentssupportservices/publications/Functional_Curriculum_Guide_August_28_2008_fr.pdf

The pervasive needs criteria document refers to “a high school student who requires 75% or more of his or her courses be Pathway 4.” How is this criterion reflected in the elementary and intermediate setting?

The Pathway 4 Guidelines defines an alternate course and an alternate program. This terminology equates a course to an entire prescribed subject area for elementary and intermediate students. Therefore, a Pathway 4 course completely replaces the programming for a prescribed subject area at the elementary and intermediate levels. The recommended instructional time for each subject area is outlined in the Program of Studies (www.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/curriculum/descriptions.html). The time requirement for an alternate course is equal to the time specified for the subject which it is replacing. When 75% or more of the student's **instructional time** involves alternate courses, the student's needs would be considered pervasive.

For example, in elementary, the recommended instructional time for mathematics is 16%, English language arts is 24%, science is 8%, social studies is 10%, French is 10%, health is 6% and religion is 8%. This totals 82%. An IEP with alternate courses replacing these 7 subject areas would therefore meet the criteria for pervasive needs.