

## Pathway 4 Guidelines

This document is intended to provide guidelines regarding the development and delivery of Pathway 4 as we move towards more formalized inclusive education practices in all schools. It is important that, where possible, students receive required programming in the company of their peers, reducing pull-out from prescribed curriculum.

### What is Pathway 4?

**Pathway 4 Course** – intended to target the learning strengths/needs of students with exceptionalities and completely replaces a prescribed subject area or high school level course. This alternate course time requirement equates to the time requirement specified for the course/subject which it is replacing. A Pathway 4 course can be one of two types:

1. Curricular (curriculum significantly different from the student's current grade level). This would include students who are gifted and talented who require above grade level curricular outcomes.
2. Non-curricular, including outcomes that support student skill development. Such courses are reserved for students who require mostly Pathway 4 (i.e., students with cognitive disorders who do not meet the criteria for Pathway 5). These students may pursue life skills-based courses, but these courses are not eligible for high school credit (e.g., social skills, safety, nutrition). This is the only instance in which non-curricular is considered a course. In all other instances, it is considered a program.

A Pathway 4 course at the high school level must be 55 hours (1 credit) or 110 hours (2 credits). Credit will only be given for Pathway 4 courses that are curriculum based and contain high school level content. Pathway 4 courses consisting of outcomes below the high school level curriculum are not eligible for credit. Thus, as of September 2010, credit will not be granted for alternate courses in Technology, Social/Life Skills and Study Skills.

**Pathway 4 Program** – intended to target the learning strengths/needs of students with exceptionalities and is shorter in frequency and duration than a course. A Pathway 4 program can be one of two types:

1. Prerequisite, including outcomes that supplement grade level curriculum and assist students to stay on grade level (e.g., place value, phonemic awareness).
2. Non-curricular, including outcomes that support skill-based programming (e.g., social skills, study skills).
  - < The intensity and amount of time will vary depending on the nature of the programming.

- < Involves flexibility with regard to scheduling, grouping, and setting.
- < Support, for the most part, is intended to be provided within inclusive classrooms. Pathway 4 programs are not eligible for high school credit.

### **What is not Pathway 4?**

- Learning associated with a Pathway 2 accommodation, such as using a new piece of assistive technology is not Pathway 4 programming. Instructional support for the student in the use of the assistive technology is a Pathway 2 accommodation.
- A student with a Behaviour Management Plan may receive instruction relating to that plan without requiring Pathway 4 programming.
- Skill-based programming which falls within the scope of the grade level curriculum and/or the developmental range for a particular age group is not considered Pathway 4, e.g., phonemic awareness is a curriculum based skill for primary aged students.

### **Guidelines for Pathway 4:**

- Pathway 4 should be offered in the least restrictive, most inclusive environment respecting the dignity of the student. Many of the Pathway 4 outcomes can be delivered in classrooms and infused throughout the prescribed curriculum. For a student to receive instruction in an alternate learning setting (pull-out) the following criteria must be met:
  - < It has been demonstrated that the learning cannot occur in the regular classroom.
  - < The purpose, timelines, intended outcomes, and evaluation plan for the intervention must be stated.
  - < There is a plan in place for the student to return to the regular classroom.
- In instances where students do require an alternate setting, pull-out for curricular prerequisite and/or non-curricular programs should not occur during core subject areas or during courses required for graduation. For example, students must not be removed from language arts to receive a Pathway 4 prerequisite program in reading. By contrast, the delivery of a curricular course significantly different from grade level should occur during the class's scheduled time for that particular subject area. For example, students taking a curricular course significantly different than grade level in Language Arts would access that course during Language Arts.
- It is essential that students not be overloaded with Pathway 4 programs and not be denied access to the prescribed curriculum. The long-term implications of removing students from curriculum and curricular instruction must be considered.
- There is no longer a requirement for a specific number of Pathway 4 courses/programs tied to teacher allocation.

- Pathway 4 courses/programs must be guided by the student's exceptionality(s). For example, if a student has a speech and/or language exceptionality, programming should address skill building in areas specific to the exceptionality such as articulation and language development. Any other course or program is not justified by the presence of this exceptionality, e.g., curricular course in math or a non-curricular program in organization. S-LPs should continue to inform programming for students whose primary exceptionality is speech and/or language disorder.
- The teaching of skills such as communication, socialization and behaviour should not occur in isolation. It is important that the teaching of these skills occur in natural environments to promote generalization.
- It is recognized that, in some instances, students with Pervasive Developmental Disorder may require programming outside of the regular classroom (i.e., communication programming, anxiety management programming, self-regulation programming). Use of positive reinforcement techniques may promote a gradual return to the regular classroom.
- For each Pathway 4 outcome, the document should specify the setting in which it will be delivered and the educator(s) responsible.

### **Criteria for Providing Service to Students with a Learning Disability**

*A Learning Disability refers to a number of disorders which may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding or use of verbal or nonverbal information. These disorders affect learning in individuals who otherwise demonstrate at least average abilities essential for thinking and/or reasoning. As such, learning disabilities are distinct from global intellectual deficiency. (Exceptionalities, Department of Education Website)*

- A student diagnosed with a learning disability may require a range of school-based services depending on level of functioning and need. Programming decisions are made by the student's program planning team and may include Pathway 2 accommodations, a Pathway 4 non-curricular program, and/or a Pathway 4 pre-requisite program. In extreme cases, Pathway 4 courses (curriculum significantly different from grade level), or Pathway 3 may be required.
- It is essential that students diagnosed with a learning disability not be overloaded with Pathway 4 programs and courses and not be denied access to the prescribed curriculum. The long-term implications of removing students from curriculum and from curricular instruction must be considered.
- Pathway 4 programs and/or courses should be delivered in the least restrictive, most inclusive environment respecting the dignity of the student.
- Non-curricular programs deal with transferable skills and are best taught and supported in the classroom. Social skills, study skills, organizational skills, time management, self advocacy instruction, etc. should not be taught in isolation. It is expected that instructional resource teachers and classroom teachers collaborate in the provision of Pathway 4 outcomes.

- Program planning teams make decisions regarding the setting for the delivery of Pathway 4 programs or courses. For a student to receive instruction in an alternate learning setting (pull out) the following criteria must be met:
  - < It has been demonstrated that the learning cannot occur in the regular classroom.
  - < The purpose, timelines, intended outcomes, and evaluation plan for the intervention must be stated.
  - < There is a plan in place for the student to return to the regular classroom.