SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Statement of Beliefs

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board is committed to the principle that the integration of exceptional pupils should be the norm, provided the placement meets the pupil's needs and is consistent with parents' wishes.

In our Catholic schools the uniqueness of every student is celebrated. We recognize each child's dignity and value within the family, the church, the community and the school. The goal of purposeful integration of all students with adequate supports will ensure that each child's needs are met and assist the child to participate fully in the life of the school.

Integration of all exceptional students requires flexibility on the part of schools and parents, as well as partnerships with community agencies providing expertise and personnel. Integrated programs must be supported through adequate training and funding for facilities and equipment, and require evaluation to ensure that expectations are being achieved in the best interests of all students.

Students have needs in a variety of domains: spiritual, social, emotional, cognitive-academic, and physical. To achieve the highest quality of education for all students, each student's strengths and needs must be evaluated individually.

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board acknowledges the need for a full range of placement options to meet these varying needs of students. These placement options include placement in a regular classroom with resource support, specialized classes, purchase of service and referral to provincial schools.
Philosophy of Programs and Services

*Anyone who welcomes you, welcomes me and those who welcome me welcome the one who sent me.*  (Matthew 10: 40)

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board is committed to creating stimulating and nurturing learning environments for all the students entrusted to its care. The Catholic school community respects, builds upon, and indeed celebrates the uniqueness of the individual, who is created in God’s image.

When specialized learning is required, our shared faith vision manifests in the integration of exceptional students in an atmosphere of loving acceptance, shared responsibility and continuous support. A recognition that students with special needs are more like other students than unlike them, and a focus on abilities rather than disabilities, is the primary focus in our Catholic schools.

There are different gifts but the same Spirit; there are different ministries, but the same Lord; there are different works but the same God who accomplishes all of them in everyone. To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.  (I Co. 12: 4-8)

*The challenge is*

*To be caring, growing, barrier-breaking, horizon-stretching,*

*To acknowledge each other’s fragility, uniqueness, gifts.*

*To nourish, enrich and ever-extend a loving, sharing community of God’s people*  

*To essentially, build Jesus’ earthly Kingdom.*  

(Margaret Egan)

Parents are valued members and necessary partners in the education of all students in our Catholic schools.

Although the Identification, Placement and Review process may appear formal, every effort is made to make every step in the process a welcoming, informal, information sharing session.

Further information about Board special education services can be found in the Board’s Special Education Plan, a copy of which is located in each school and on the Board website.
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accommodations – Strategies to assist a student in achieving within the curriculum expectations for that grade. Preferential seating, extra time to write tests and photocopied notes are examples of accommodations.

Modifications – Significant changes to the curriculum expectations for that grade level by reaching well below or well above grade level or significantly reducing the number of expectations. For example, a Grade 7 student working on Grade 3 Mathematics expectations would have a modified Math program as outlined in his/her Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Expectations – Statements that describe the knowledge and skills that students should be able to develop or demonstrate.

In-School-Team – A group of teachers/support staff led by a school administrator who meet regularly to discuss the strengths, needs, progress and plans for students who are experiencing learning difficulties and need support within the school.

Educational Assessment – An on-going process used to measure student progress and to improve programming. It may include samples of a student’s daily work, teacher observations, results of curriculum based assessments and diagnostic tests. Formal assessments that include a psycho-educational assessment and/or a speech-language assessment require written parental consent and may be part of an educational assessment.

Exceptionalities – Exceptionalities described by the Ministry of Education: They are as follows:

- Behaviour
- Communication
  - Autism
  - Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing
  - Language Impairment
  - Speech Impairment
  - Learning Disability
- Physical
  - Physical Disability
  - Blind and Low Vision

Placement – The program or service provided to your child:
- regular class with an Individual Education Plan (IEP);
- special class with an IEP.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>The legal process followed when parents disagree with an IPRC decision.</td>
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<td>Liaison</td>
<td>The sharing of information from one agency to another in order to provide the best support for your child.</td>
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<td>Transition Plan</td>
<td>A plan for transition to appropriate post-secondary activities, such as work, further education, and/or community living, for exceptional students 14 years of age or older (except for those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness), that is part of their Individual Education Plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpreter</td>
<td>A person who interprets/facilitates communication on behalf of a deaf or hard-of-hearing student.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intervenor</td>
<td>A person who helps interpret the world on behalf of a deaf/blind student.</td>
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<td>Case conference</td>
<td>Once assessments are completed, the case conference is an opportunity for all parties involved to discuss those results. At or before a case conference, the parent will be provided copies of the assessment report(s) prepared by school personnel and/or special education/student services staff. Parents are encouraged to provide the school with any relevant outside documentation which they wish to be considered. Should there be any questions after the case conference and after studying the assessment report(s), another meeting with school staff and special services personnel, and student if appropriate, should be requested.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEP</td>
<td>Individual Education Plan (see page ____).</td>
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To accommodate the variety of needs of exceptional pupils, the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board offers a range of placements as follows:

- **A regular class with indirect support**
  The student is placed in a regular class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialized consultative services.

- **A regular class with resource assistance**
  The student is placed in a regular class for most or all of the day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified special education teacher.

- **A regular class with withdrawal assistance**
  The student is placed in a regular class and receives instruction outside the classroom, for less than 50 percent of the school day, from a qualified special education teacher.

- **A special education class with partial integration**
  The student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class in which the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regular 298, section 31, for at least 50 per cent of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.

- **A special education class full time**
  The student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class, where the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regular 298, section 31, for the entire school day.

- **Specialized settings**
  In a supportive classroom, the classroom teacher plays an extremely important role in the success of the exceptional pupil. By being knowledgeable about the student’s background, current abilities, strengths and potential areas of educational and social needs, the teacher can set the stage for success. In many cases, teachers may be able to draw on the expertise and assistance of school and board staff who can provide support around issues related to special education.

Some students require placement within a small group setting for a certain period of time. Programs available in specialized settings are:

a) **Learning Skills Classroom**
   Students identified with severe to profound learning disabilities who would benefit from more highly structured intervention.

   Location:  Mother St. Bride School  
   Our Lady of Sorrows School, Sturgeon Falls (Maamwi-Enchiyang Program)

b) **Social Skills Classroom**
   Treatment program for students who are unable to benefit from regular school programming for social and/or emotional reasons.

   Location:  St. Joseph School
c) **Learning Assistance Centre**  
Unique settings for severely challenged students. Each program incorporates as much meaningful integration with the whole school and peer age classrooms as possible.

Location:  
- St. Alexander School (Primary)  
- John XXIII School (Primary/Junior/Intermediate)  
- St. Hubert School (Junior/Intermediate)  
- Our Lady of Sorrows School, Sturgeon Falls (Junior/Intermediate)  
- St. Joseph-Scollard Hall Catholic Secondary School (students aged 14-21)

d) **Programs for Hearing Impaired Students**  
This program provides instruction and support services for children who are “educationally deaf” with a hearing threshold of 70dB level ANSI 1969 unaided in the better ear.

Students in this program must meet the criteria set out in Policy/Program Memorandum 76C.

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

Gifted modules are offered at the Junior level.

f) **Transitioning**  
A coordinated plan that forms part of the student’s IEP is implemented well before any anticipated move in order to ensure that the student has supports in place to assist in the transition.
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Regulation 464/97 under the Education Act requires each school board in Ontario to establish a Special Education Advisory Committee which is composed of trustees, members from local associations and local agencies.

Local association means an association or organization of parents that operate locally within the area of jurisdiction of a board and that is affiliated with an association or organization that is not an association of professional educators but that is incorporate and operated throughout Ontario to further the interests and well-being of one or more groups of exceptional children or adults.

This standing committee’s major functions are to advise the Board regarding any special education matter and make recommendations concerning the needs of exceptional pupils in the Board’s jurisdiction.
SEAC members are appointed by the Board for the term of office of the Board. Members represent the following associations:

**Trustees**
Barbara McCool, Chair  
Linda Jamieson  
Charles Leblanc (alternate)  
Judy Manitowabi (alternate)

**Nipissing Association for Disabled Youth**  
Judy Camirand  
North Bay ON  
judy.camirand@sympatico.ca

**Community Counselling Centre**  
Gisèle Côté-Filion  
North Bay ON  
gfilion@communitycounsellingcentre.com

**Learning Disabilities Association of North Bay**  
Kathy Honeysett  
North Bay ON  
kathyhoneysett@hotmail.com

**Nipissing First Nation**  
Yvette Bellefeuille  
North Bay ON

**Nipissing Down Syndrome Society**  
Virginia Yzereef  
North Bay ON  
gyzereef@cogeco.ca

**Parent Representative**  
Tania Dubuo  
North Bay ON  
fifthave@cogeco.ca

Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board Trustees

For further information about SEAC, contact:  
Executive Assistant (Special Education) at 472-1201  
www.npsc.edu.on.ca  
www.edu.gov.on.ca
IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

In Ontario, Reg. 181/98 under the Education Act sets out the requirements and procedures for special education Identification, Placement and Review Committees (IPRC) and appeals.

1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT?
   The Education Act defines an ‘exceptional student’ as “a pupil whose behavioural, communication, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that s/he is considered to need placement in a special education program.” Students are identified according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education.

   For students who have been identified as exceptional, the IEP must indicate the student’s exceptionality, as stated in the IPRC’s statement of decision (and as given in the ministry-approved list of categories and definitions of exceptionalities). The approved list of exceptionalities is as follows:
   • Behaviour
   • Autism
   • Deaf and hard-of-hearing
   • Language impairment
   • Speech impairment
   • Learning disability
   • Giftedness
   • Mild intellectual disability
   • Developmental disability
   • Physical disability
   • Blind and low vision
   • Multiple exceptionalities

2. WHAT IS A SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM?
   A special education program is defined in the Education Act as an educational program that:
   • is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation; and
   • includes a plan (called an Individual Education Plan or IEP) containing specific objectives and an outline of education services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil.

3. WHAT ARE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES?
   Special education services are defined in the Education Act as the facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.
4. **WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)?**

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

- a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student, based on a thorough assessment of the student’s strengths and needs – that is, the strengths and needs that affect the student’s ability to learn and to demonstrate learning;

- a record of the particular accommodations needed to help the student achieve his or her learning expectations, given the student’s identified learning strengths and needs;

- a working document that identifies learning expectations that are modified from the expectations for the age-appropriate grade level in a particular subject or course, as outlined in the Ministry of Education’s curriculum policy documents;

- a working document that identifies alternative expectations, if required, in program areas not represented in the Ontario curriculum;

- a record of the specific knowledge and skills to be assessed and evaluation for the purpose of reporting student achievement of modified and/or alternative expectations;

- an accountability tool for the student, the student’s parents, and everyone who has responsibilities under the plan for helping the student meet the stated goals and learning expectations as the student progresses through the Ontario curriculum;

- for students 14 years and older (except those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness), a plan for transition to appropriate post secondary school activities, such as work, further education, and community living.

The IEP must be completed with 30 school days after your child has been placed in the program, and the principal will provide the parents with a copy.

Parents/guardians are invited to consult in the development, review and/or revision of the content of your child’s Individual Education Plan. This consultation process may occur in a face-to-face meeting, a telephone meeting, or via written communication.

5. **WHAT IS AN IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC)?**

An IPRC is a committee composed of at least three people, one of whom must be a principal or supervisory officer of the Board. In the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic schools, the IPRC is a committee consisting of:

- the Executive Assistant – Special Education, or the Catholic Coordinator of Special Education, as chairperson/secretary (voting member); and

- two school principals, other than the presenting principal (also voting members).
6. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE IPRC?
   The committee:
   • decides whether or not your child should be identified exceptional;
   • identifies the areas of your child’s exceptionality according to the categories and definitions provided by the Ministry of Education;
   • recommends placement of an exceptional student into an appropriate program;
   • reviews the identification and placement of the exceptional student at least every 12 months, or when requested by the parent or school principal, provided that the program has been in effect for at least three months.

7. HOW IS AN IPRC MEETING REQUESTED?
   The principal of your child’s school:
   • must request an IPRC meeting for your child upon receiving your written request;
   • may, with written notice to you, refer your child to an IPRC when the principal and child’s teacher or teachers believe that your child may benefit from a special education program.

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

8. WHO MAY ATTEND AN IPRC MEETING?
   • the Identification, Placement and Review Committee;
   • your child’s school principal (who will present the case);
   • parents/guardians, and pupil if over 16 years of age;
   • your representative or advocate; that is, a person who may support you or speak on behalf of you and your child;
   • an interpreter if one is required;
   • other resource people, e.g., child’s teacher(s), special education staff or any representative from an agency who may provide further information or clarification. Their roles are limited to the above.

9. HOW WILL I KNOW WHERE AND WHEN THE IPRC MEETING WILL BE HELD?
   At least 10 days in advance of the meeting, you will receive a letter from your child’s school principal inviting you to the meeting to be held in your child’s school on a specified date and time. You will be requested to indicate by telephone or return mail whether or not you will be in attendance. Before the IPRC meeting occurs you will receive a written copy of any information about your child that the chair of the IPRC has received. This may include the results of assessments or a summary of information.

10. WHAT IF PARENTS ARE UNABLE TO MAKE THE SCHEDULED MEETING?
If you are unable to make the scheduled meeting, you may:

• contact the principal to arrange an alternative date or time; or

• let the school principal know you will not be attending, and as soon as possible after the meeting the principal will forward to you, for your consideration and signature, the IPRC written statement of decision noting the decision of identification and placement and any recommendations regarding special education programs and services.

11. WHAT HAPPENS AT THESE MEETINGS?

• The chair introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting.

• Academic, social and behavioural information gathered by your child’s teacher(s), school resource teacher, and school principal will be presented to the committee members for consideration.

• If there is a medical or psychological assessment, this too will be presented. Discussion and questions will follow.

• Interview your child with your consent if your child is less than 16 years of age, if they feel it would be useful to do so.

• The committee will also consider any information about the pupil submitted by the parents of the pupil. You are encouraged to ask questions and join in the discussion.

• After all information is presented the committee will determine:
  • if the pupil is an “exceptional” pupil according to the Ministry of Education definition;
  • the areas of exceptionality of the pupil according to Ministry of Education categories and definitions;
  • an appropriate educational placement for the pupil.

The committee will also provide a description of the pupil’s strengths and needs.

When making a placement decision the committee shall, before considering the option of placement in a special education class, consider whether placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services:

  a) would meet the pupil’s needs; and
  b) is consistent with parental preferences.

If a committee is satisfied that (a) and (b) are met, the committee shall decide in favour of regular class placement in the home school, with appropriate special education services.

The needs of some exceptional pupils may be such that they would benefit from placement in specialized settings with low pupil/teacher ratios and access to special resources. If the committee decides that your child should be placed in a special education class, it must state the reasons for that decision in its written statement of decision.
It is not appropriate to include information about *what the student needs* or *what the student needs to do*, such as the following:

- the need for a type or level of human support (e.g., “the student needs an educational assistant” or “the student needs one-to-one assistance”);
- the need for a specific program or service (e.g., “the student needs speech therapy”);
- the need for improvement in a particular subject (e.g., “the student needs to improve his or her math skills”).

For most exceptionalities, the areas of need do not change significantly over time.

Note: An IPRC does not deal with the question of specific equipment, or educational assistants and other support staff. These are administrative decisions made in implementing the program.

### 12. WHAT WILL THE IPRC’S WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DECISION INCLUDE?

The IPRC’s written statement of decision will state:

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

### 13. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE IPRC HAS MADE ITS DECISION?

- If you agree with the IPRC decision, you will be asked to indicate, by signing your name, that you agree with the identification and placement decisions made by the IPRC. The statement of decision may be signed at the IPRC meeting or taken home and returned within 15 days.

- If the IPRC has identified your child as an exceptional pupil and you have agreed with the IPRC identification and placement decision, the Board will promptly notify the principal of the school at which the special education program is to be provided of the need to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child.
14. **ONCE A CHILD HAS BEEN PLACED IN A SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM, CAN THE PLACEMENT BE REVIEWED?**
- A review IPRC meeting will be held within the school year, unless the principal of the school at which the special education program is being provided receives written notice from you, the parent, dispensing with the annual review.
- You may request in writing a review IPRC meeting any time after your child has been in a special education program for three months, but not more often than once every three months.

15. **WHAT DOES A REVIEW IPRC CONSIDER AND DECIDE?**
- The review IPRC considers the same type of information that was originally considered.
- With your written permission, the IPRC conducting the review will consider the progress your child has made in relation to the IEP.
- The IPRC will review the placement and identification decisions and decide whether they should be continued or whether a different decision should now be made.

16. **WHAT CAN PARENTS DO IF THEY DISAGREE WITH THE IPRC DECISION?**
- If you do not agree with either the identification or placement decision made by the IPRC, you may:
  - within 15 days of receipt of the decision, request that the IPRC hold a second meeting to discuss your concerns; or
  - within 30 days of receipt of the decision, file a notice of appeal with the Secretary of the Board, Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board, 1140 Front Street, North Bay ON P1B 6P2;
  - if you do not agree with the decision after the second meeting, you may file a notice of appeal within 15 days of your receipt of the decision;
  - if you do not consent to the IPRC decision but you do not appeal it, the Board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

17. **HOW DO I APPEAL AN IPRC DECISION?**
If you disagree with the IPRC’s decision of your child as exceptional or with the placement decision of the IPRC, you may, within 30 days of receipt of the original decision or within 15 days of receipt of the decision from the second meeting described above, give written notification of your intention to appeal the decision to the Secretary of the Board.

The notice of appeal must:
- indicate the decision with which you disagree; and
- include a statement that sets out your reasons for disagreeing.
18. WHAT HAPPENS IN THE APPEAL PROCESS?

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- The Board will establish a special education appeal board to hear your appeal. The appeal board will be composed of three persons (one of whom is to be selected by you, the parent) who have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal.

- The chair of the appeal board will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but no later than 30 days after he or she has been selected (unless parents and Board both provide written consent to a later date).

- The appeal board will receive the material reviewed by the IPRC and may interview any persons who may be able to contribute information about the matter under appeal.

- You, the parent, and your child, if he or she is 16 years old or over, are entitled to be present at, and to participate in, all discussions.

- The appeal board must make its recommendation within three days of the meeting ending. It may:
  - agree with the IPRC and recommend that the decision be implemented; or
  - disagree with the IPRC and make a recommendation to the Board about your child’s identification, placement or both.

- The appeal board will report its recommendations in writing to you and to the school board, providing the reasons for its recommendations.

- Within 30 days of receiving the appeal board’s written statement, the school board will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations (boards are not required to follow the appeal board recommendation).

- You may accept the decision of the school board, or you may appeal to a Special Education Tribunal. You may request a hearing by writing to the secretary of the Special Education Tribunal. Information about making an application to the tribunal will be included with the appeal board’s decision.
1. **Catholic Coordinator of Special Education**
   - To chair central IPRC meetings.
   - To coordinate the development, implementation and review of all programs for exceptional students.
   - To consult with principals, teachers and parents.
   - To consult with community agencies.

2. **Speech-Language Pathologist**
   - To assess the speech and language needs of students upon referral from school staff.
   - To provide strategies to teachers and parents in promoting language development.
   - To provide direct service on a priority basis to students with language disorders.

3. **Behaviour Management Consultant**
   - To assist teachers with providing strategies to meet the needs of exceptional students with behavioural difficulties.
   - To interact with students and assist them with anger management and conflict resolution.

4. **Behaviour Management Assistant**
   - To assist teachers in meeting the needs of students who demonstrate severe behavioural difficulties in the regular classroom.
   - To work in consultation with the BMC in a proactive effort to deliver modules aimed at helping children with problem solving, conflict resolution, anger management and other social skills by providing them with strategies in a small-group setting.

5. **Classroom Resource Teachers**
   - Classroom resource teachers are made available to school staffs to assist with program modifications to meet the needs of exceptional students.

6. **Educational Assistants**
   - Educational assistants provide support in the classroom to students. Educational assistants report to the principal and in cooperation with the classroom teacher they assist in the design, development, implementation and monitoring of individual student program.
PROVINCIAL SCHOOLS

The Ministry of Education operates a number of schools in the province which are specifically designed to offer educational opportunities for pupils who cannot be accommodated in local school programs. These schools are:

**Schools for the Blind and Deaf-Blind**
The W. Ross MacDonald School for Blind & Deaf Blind Pupils  
Brantford ON  N3J 3J9

**Schools for the Deaf**
The Sir James Whitney School for Deaf Pupils  
350 Dundas Street West  
Belleville ON  K8P 1B2

The Robarts School for the Hearing Impaired  
P.O. Box 7360, Station E  
London ON  N5Y 4V9

The Ernest C. Drury School for the Hearing Impaired  
255 Ontario Street South  
Milton ON  L9T 2M5

**Demonstration Schools for English-Speaking Students with ADHD and Severe Learning Disabilities**
Sagonaska Demonstration School for Learning Disabled Pupils  
350 Dundas Street West  
Belleville ON  K8P 1B2

Amethyst Demonstration School for Learning Disabled Pupils  
London ON  N5Y 4V9

Trillium School  
347 Ontario Street South  
Milton ON  L9T 3X9
WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT IF I WOULD LIKE FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THE IPRC PROCESS?
Contact your child’s school principal _____________________________ at _________________.

OR

the Coordinator of Special Education _____________________________ at 472-5030.