

PROGRAM PLANNING PROCESS AND STRUCTURE

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Wild Rose Public Schools is required to provide appropriate programming for all students with special needs and must use allocated resources for this purpose.

Guidelines

Alberta Education provides a block-funding grant to assist Wild Rose Public Schools with the costs of providing programming and services for students with special needs. The provisions of this funding may be subject to change from year to year.

Procedures

Alberta Education supports the use of a wide variety of delivery structures which necessitates flexible scheduling and the cooperation and involvement of all team members in implementing services for students with special needs. Division staff responsible for student services, in conjunction with school administrators, develop the roles of student services personnel to meet the needs of the students for whom they are responsible. These responsibility areas are developed in the context of Division and provincial policies and guidelines. As the needs of the students change, the role of personnel may also change.

Wild Rose Public Schools is responsible for establishing a process of identification, assessment, program planning and evaluation for students with special needs.

Guidelines

Wild Rose Public Schools is responsible for implementation of this process; therefore, each procedural step will be documented in the Division's special education policy manual.

Sample Procedure

On the following pages is a sample outline, in graphic and written form, of how a program planning process might be implemented. It is not intended as a prescribed approach, but rather as an illustration.

Identification, Assessment and Program Planning Process

Stage 1 – Screening and Identification

This stage may be initiated by a variety of people. Some children and students may come to school with a myriad of assessments and programming information from other agencies or from another school. Some students may have been in school for a number of years and their special needs may be identified at a later stage by the classroom teacher who regularly observes students in the learning situation. The planning process can be initiated at any time based on student need.

If a student has been identified as needing an individual program plan before entry to school, the team may wish to restart the process at Stage 3, "Referral to Program Planning Team" to avoid delay.

Parents are expected to be involved at the beginning of the process. Classroom teachers, parents, students and outside agency personnel, special education teachers, learning assistance teachers and resource teachers are all possible initiators at this stage. The principal should be aware of any communication concerning students at this stage.

Stage 2 – Exploration of Instructional Strategies

After a student has been identified as requiring additional planning to meet his/her needs, the classroom teacher uses available material and human resources to explore a variety of strategies in the learning process. In all schools there is a wealth of experience to draw upon. In exploring alternative methods of working with students, teachers may also wish to consult supervisors, special education personnel, school psychologists or other available personnel. The key at this stage is to be as creative as possible in determining a wide variety of behavioral and/or curriculum strategies to meet student needs while ensuring accurate record keeping in terms of the outcome of utilizing these approaches. Determining why a method doesn't produce the desired outcome can yield as much information as one that does. Co-operation and collaboration among professionals and parents are essential at this stage.

The identification, assessment and program planning process may not go beyond this stage for many students as their needs may be met through ongoing evaluation and monitoring in the classroom.

Stage 3 – Referral to Program Planning Team

If the classroom teacher requires further support to meet the needs of a student, he/she may wish to refer to the Program Planning Team (see attached referral Stage A).

The format of the referral depends on school and Divisional procedures. In some cases the initiator of the referral may be required to have certain types of information available for the principal, or designate, in order to make an informed decision whether or not to select team members and set a date for the program planning team meeting. Information required may include anecdotal information, observation records, informal assessment, interviews with the student and involved agencies, school records or any other information available that may be of help in program planning. Care should be taken not to use outdated or irrelevant assessment data.

Stage 4 – Program Planning Team Meeting

The program planning team must ensure that the problem or difficulty facing the student and/or teachers and parents is clarified before proceeding with planning. The reason for referral does not always match the team's clarification of the problem and careful problem solving at this stage can prevent unnecessary or inappropriate steps being taken.

Team members should be those who have responsibility for the student's learning. The team should always include the principal or vice-principal, or designate, specialist teacher, teachers involved and parents/guardians. These members form the core of the team. The selection of additional members depends on the needs of the student and on the personnel resources of the Division and community. In cases where there are many teachers involved, as in high school, reports can be gathered from teachers for presentation at the team meeting; however, key personnel should be present. In some cases this may include the student, especially at a high school level when career/transitional decisions are being discussed. Every attempt should be made to encourage parents to feel comfortable in presenting their views of the student's strengths and needs.

The team meeting provides an opportunity for members to come together to clarify, given all available information, the student's strengths and needs and to decide on future actions to be taken in terms of program planning (see attached referral Stage B). **The meeting should not be a forum for teachers, administrators, and other agency personnel to present a completed program to the parents.** If this is done, the parents become outsiders to the process and do not have the opportunity to affect decision making in any meaningful way. Together, the members should discuss the information each has observed and collected. Concerns should be expressed openly and information presented, without judgmental rebuttal. However, in cases where differences of opinion occur, the chairperson would act as mediator in the process. At this point, the team has brainstormed a variety of methods, strategies or services to assist with planning for the child in the classroom setting.

Eventually, the team decides whether or not to proceed with development of an individualized program plan (IPP). This is usually not decided in the first meeting unless it is clearly indicated that this process should begin immediately. The meeting may highlight the need for a change in instructional strategies or evaluation methods while maintaining the objectives of a prescribed course. When this occurs, a statement outlining adaptation of strategies, evaluation methods and support services required should be recorded in the student's cumulative file. However, when the objectives of provincially approved curriculum must be changed to meet the needs of the student, an IPP becomes necessary. An IPP may focus on behavioral as well as curriculum outcomes to address student behaviors which may inhibit learning. At this point, the chairperson designates responsibility areas to the team members to develop the individualized program plan according

the priorities, goals and approaches set at the meeting, or to collect further information if necessary.

Stage 5 – Program Plan Development

The program planning team uses information gathered to write the program plan. Those that have responsibility for implementation of parts of the plan should be involved in developing the objectives, deciding on strategies and evaluation procedures. The individual program plan should include the following components:

- A summary of student strengths and needs
 - ▶ annual individualized outcomes (goals)
 - ▶ specific individualized outcomes (objectives)
 - ▶ recommended services
 - ▶ responsibility areas
 - ▶ review dates
 - ▶ signatures

Stage 6 – Implementation of Program Plan

Team members are assigned responsibility areas and monitor student progress. The teacher responsible for teaching the student is also responsible for evaluating the student's progress in that curriculum area.

Stage 7 – Monitoring

Teachers and designated team members are required to evaluate individual program plans in order to assess student progress continually.

Stage 8 – Review of Program Plan

The program planning team is responsible for reviewing the student's progress in the plan and meeting to discuss changes when necessary. The program plan should be reviewed at least twice annually.

Wild Rose Public Schools shall establish, at the school level, program planning teams responsible for programming and monitoring.

Guidelines

The responsibility for ensuring that appropriate programs are provided for all students, including those with special needs, lies with the principal. The planning and implementation of programs should be accomplished through a team process. The core team should comprise of the school principal or vice-principal, teachers involved (e.g. classroom teachers, resource teachers, learning assistance teachers, special education teachers), parents/guardians, and students as appropriate. Selection of additional members will depend on the special needs of the students and on the personnel resources of Wild Rose Public Schools and the community.

For example, additional members may include:

- ▶ Assistant Superintendent, Student Services
- ▶ School Counselor
- ▶ Chartered/School Psychologist
- ▶ Speech-language Pathologist
- ▶ Itinerant Teacher
- ▶ representatives of other agencies

Each school is responsible for involving and informing parents/guardians with respect to decisions regarding assessments designed for their child.

Procedures

Wild Rose Public Schools is responsible for developing guidelines on the nature of consultation with the parent or guardian prior to, and subsequent to, the completion of an assessment.

The principal or case manager is responsible for ensuring that parents/guardians are involved in the identification, referral, and assessment processes. Whatever procedure Wild Rose Public Schools develops, the following key points should be considered:

- ▶ At the time of registration or early in that school year, all parents/guardians should be made aware of Wild Rose Public School's policies and procedures for identification, assessment and referral.
- ▶ Before a referral for assessment is initiated by Wild Rose Public School's employees, the parents/guardians must be consulted and the child case would have gone through the program planning team process.
- ▶ Written parental consent is required for any formal individual assessment carried out by employees of Wild Rose Public Schools or persons/agencies to whom the student has been referred.
- ▶ A written confirmation of the nature of any formal assessment and/or consultation should be sent to the parents/guardians and a copy kept in the student's confidential file. The written confirmation should indicate a date and time for a follow-up meeting to be held with the parents/guardians to discuss the results of any referral/assessment.
- ▶ Parents/guardians consultation meeting should be organized by the case manager to go over a copy of the assessment report upon request.

Wild Rose Public Schools is responsible for ensuring that appropriate assessments are carried out by qualified personnel.

Guidelines

Good professional practice suggests that the education progress of all pupils be monitored regularly in order to identify students who are at risk as soon as possible. Classroom teachers are in a position to offer an abundance of information regarding students in their care. Informal assessments (e.g. observation, running records, checklists, portfolios, etc.) should form the basis of a comprehensive profile of strengths and needs. When formal assessment is deemed necessary, parental consent is required and the purpose, format and results of the assessment should be discussed with parents/guardians.

Formal and informal assessment should be selected and conducted in such a way that interpretation will be free of bias due to gender, language, culture or race. Bias-free assessment is particularly important when schools are using assessments in decision making regarding changes in program or implementation of supports.

An individual program plan (IPP), based on the student's strengths and needs, will be developed and implemented for every student for whom the provincial curriculum outcomes are not applicable and/or attainable.

Guidelines

Wild Rose Public Schools will establish procedures and guidelines for the development and implementation of individual program plans.

Teaching practice necessarily includes the use of a variety of teaching strategies to enable students to meet or to extend their learning beyond the designated outcomes. The manipulation of additional variables such as time, classroom organization and evaluation techniques will also be necessary to meet individual student needs. Provided the designated outcomes are not substantially altered, these procedures do not require an individual program plan, although specific changes should be documented in the student's cumulative file, e.g. oral evaluation in place of written evaluation, curriculum compacting.

When the manipulation of instructional variables is not sufficient to address student needs in the context of the prescribed curriculum, the school based team is responsible for the development of an individual program plan. Program plans should be developed in the context of the broad curriculum outcomes for each core program. For students whose special needs include non-academic areas, the individual program plan should detail the outcomes involved and the supports and services needed to enable the student to reach these outcomes.

Procedures

The components of the individual program plan for each student should include the following (all of these sections are clearly outlined in the SIRS SPED Module).

1. A Summary of Student Strengths and Needs

The summary should include information on the student's physical, behavioral, social, and academic strengths and needs. A brief summary of the types of assessments used in determining strengths and needs should be included in the individual program plan, while more complete results/reports should be kept in the student's confidential file.

2. Annual Individualized Outcomes (goals)

Annual individualized outcomes are statements of expected achievement over a one-year period. These statements are estimates of future performance based on past achievement, present performance, and priority areas of desired development. Priority areas should be established in consultation with parents through the program planning team process to ensure a coordinated effort between the home and school.

3. Specific Individualized Outcomes (objectives)

Specific individualized outcomes are statements outlining specific steps which lead to the attainment of the broader outcomes. Specific outcomes are arranged according to the developmental process involved and the expected progression toward identified broad outcomes. The specific outcomes are the basis for the evaluation of the student's growth toward attainment of the annual individualized outcomes. Specific outcomes should be grouped under curriculum outcomes in each program where applicable.

"Goals and objectives should be relevant to the child's funding category."

4. Recommended Services

These services may be divided into three categories:

- (a) educational strategies (e.g. specific instructional strategies, organizational techniques, evaluation procedures)
- (b) special materials/equipment (e.g. computers, alternative formal materials, optical aids, specially designed furniture);
- (c) human resources (e.g. resource teachers, speech-language pathologists, physiotherapists, teacher/student assistants, mentors, etc.).

5. Responsibility Areas

Specific responsibilities for teaching, modifying/extending and evaluating objectives must be assigned to individuals with the appropriate professional competence. However, the overall responsibility for the evaluation of the plan rests with the team as a whole. The team is responsible for ensuring that the plan outlines a comprehensive and cohesive approach to meeting student needs.

6. Review Dates

The school based team is responsible for setting dates for the review of the overall plan. However, individual team members are responsible for the ongoing evaluation of their designated responsibility areas. The overall plan should be reviewed at least twice in each year. Dates for the review of the program plan should be set at each school based team meeting.

7. Signatures

The IPP is signed at a meeting with the parents at which the team members from the school or representatives of that group review and discuss the program. The signatures indicate agreement on the IPP. In cases where parents/guardians do not agree with the program plan, an appeal procedure may be initiated. However, all efforts should be made to resolve disputes through discussions, and mediation before a formal review (appeal) is required. If the school is experiencing difficulty in having the parents attend a meeting, the Assistant Superintendent, Student Services should be notified. Parents should be provided a copy of the IPP.

**Roles
and
Responsibilities
of
Division Student Services Staff**

School Psychology Program

Who are School/Chartered Psychologists?

School/chartered psychologists have specialized training in both psychology and education. They hold a minimum of a master's degree in school psychology and are also certified teachers. Core training includes graduate level coursework in the following areas:

- § Assessment – Intellectual, Academic, Behavioural and Emotional Development
- § Curriculum and Learning
- § Identification, Support and Program Planning
- § Counselling and Behaviour Management
- § Ethics, Law, Statistics and Measurement

School/chartered psychologists use their training and skills to team with educators, parents, and other mental health professionals to ensure that every child learns in a safe and supportive environment. School psychologists understand school systems, effective teaching strategies, curriculum development and successful learning.

School/chartered psychologists provide educational and mental health services designed to support students (K-12), school personnel and parents in enhancing academic, adaptive and social skills for students.

Description of Services:

- Provide pre-referral collaborative consultation
- Participate on Program Planning Team (PPT)
- Provide specialized assessment for students prioritized by the PPT
- Assist with Alberta Education designation
- Assist with adaptation and modification of the curriculum
- Assist in the planning and development of the IPP
- Assist with development of transition plans
- In-service training in areas such as Alberta Education codes, early interventions, assessment practices, academic and Individual Program Plan (IPP)
- Work with students to promote self-advocacy
- Liaise with community and inter-ministerial agencies

Referral Process:

- Pre-referral collaborative consultation with:
 - Program Planning Team (PPT) as the forum to gather classroom-based data, design and/or implement instructional strategies, and access district, community and/or provincial support to enhance access to the curriculum.
- § **All referrals for school psychology services must be made through the Program Planning Team (PPT).**
- § Please refer to the Identification, Assessment & Program Planning Process.

Assessment

Assessment only occurs after there has been pre-referral consultation. Assessment may include some or all of the following practices:

- § Observation
- § File Review
- § Interviews
- § Inter-agency Consultation
- § Assisting with interpretation of A and B Level school-based assessments.
- § Administration of Formal C-Level assessments (restricted in use to chartered psychologists) such as measures of perception, cognition/intelligence and adaptive behaviour.

Reporting:

- § Formalized assessment findings are documented in a written report, which is shared with the parent/guardian, relevant school-based personnel and, when appropriate, with the student.
- § In keeping with best practices and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOI/POPA), all reports are confidential. They are not to be reproduced without signed permission from the parent/guardian.

Best Practice:

Best practice suggests that the priority in service delivery be given to:

Grades K – 3	Grades 4 – 7	Grades 8 – 12 and Transition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Program considerations § Developmental concerns § Early identification § Observation and/or consultation § Transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Program considerations § Designations § Transition to secondary school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Program considerations § Adjudication requests § Transition planning § Updating designations/codes

Elementary Counsellor

Who is an Elementary Counsellor

The focus of the Elementary Counsellor is to enhance student development, create an enabling school culture, and empower students toward positive change.

Elementary Counsellor provide a continuum of preventative, developmental remedial, and intervention services and programs and facilitate referral to community resources. The counsellor's role includes counselling, school-based consultation, co-ordination and education. The counsellor does not discipline, but rather helps in the development of effective behavioural change.

The Elementary Counsellor should hold the following qualifications:

- § a professional teaching certificate;
- § a Master's degree (or equivalent) recognized by the College of Teachers in counselling or a related discipline with a focus in counselling.

Services may include: (In no specific order)

§ Responding to critical incidents at school or in the community	§ Maintaining case files
§ Responding to student safety issues in schools	§ Conducting Parent/Family counselling
§ Coordinating services for students requiring intensive behaviour support and students with serious mental illness.	§ Supporting teachers and principals
§ Developing IPPs with school and community care teams.	§ Monitoring students' progress
§ Providing Functional Assessments	§ Providing Student advocacy: placement, programming and services.
§ Collaborating to create behavioural support plans	§ Screening for Child and Youth Care Services and follow up consultation
§ Collaborating to ease transitions	§ Providing Non-crisis Individual student counselling
§ Attending Program Planning Team	§ Providing updates regarding outside agencies and best practice
§ Organizing and chairing Community Care Teams	§ Providing classroom presentations: personal safety and violence prevention programs
§ Providing communication internally and to agencies	§ Locating and/or supplying resources for teachers and others
§ Support/planning regarding social responsibility performance standards	§ Providing in-service and support regarding: "Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect" for teachers
§ Conducting behavioural observations	§ Creating Peer Counselling / mediation programs
§ Teaching related subjects	
§ Holding parenting groups	

Priority of Service:

Priorities are set based on the counsellor’s entire caseload.

- § Any school crisis takes priority in service delivery.
- § Counsellors communicate priorities with school principals.
- § Counsellors communicate with school principals regarding which students they have spent time with (daily, weekly or monthly).
- § Working with parents
- § Communicate with the medical community (with release of information)
- § A member of program planning team
- § May assume case management

Priority One	Priority Two	Priority Three
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Critical incidents at school or in the community: Family, individual student or school staff crisis. § Student safety issues in schools: Crisis response and prevention. § Case coordinator for students requiring intensive behaviour support and students with serious mental illness. § Developing IPPs with school and community care teams. § Functional Assessments § Behavioural support plans § Transition work for at-risk students changing schools § Member of Program Planning Team § Organizing and chairing Community Care Teams § Verbal or written communication with community and provincial specialists: Doctors, Paediatricians, psychiatrists, Psychologists, Child and Youth Mental Health therapists, Social Workers, community counsellors, OT/PT, C&YC Counsellors, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Support/planning re: social responsibility performance standards § Behavioural observations § Gathering information and maintaining case files § Coordinating community agency/services – referring out § Parent/Family counselling § Support for teachers and principals: consultation, counselling and planning § Monitoring students’ progress: Behavioural plans, IPP goals and evaluation § Working with Zone Education Assistants: consulting, programming and planning § Student advocacy: placement, programming and services. § Screening for Child and Youth Care Services and follow up consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Non-crisis Individual student counselling § Professional updating regarding other agencies and best practice § Classroom presentations: personal safety and violence prevention programs § Locate and/or supply resources for teachers and others § In-service and support regarding: “Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect” for teachers § Transition planning for K and grade seven students requiring student support services in schools § Home visits § Teaching related subjects § Parenting Groups § Peer Counselling / mediation programs

Can be a priority 2 or 3 depending on the circumstances and need.

Can provide student support regarding:

- § Peer relations, social skills, anger management, self-esteem, bullying, violence, school adjustment, decision making, family concerns, death, depression, self-abuse, separation/loss, suicide, drugs and alcohol, sexual abuse, school phobia, stress management, emotional abuse, racism, harassment, teacher/student motivation, self-defeating behaviours, social responsibility, communication skills, assertiveness, problem solving, conflict resolution.

Criteria/guidelines for making referrals:

- § Pre-referral consultation is recommended but not always possible.
- § Referral can be made by the Program Planning Team, school staff, parent or through student self-referral.
- § Referrals from community agencies will be directed to the Program Planning Team for consideration.

Speech and Language Pathology Program

Who is a Speech and Language Pathologist?

Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) hold a master's degree or equivalent in communication disorders and are eligible for membership/registration in BCASLPA/CASLPA. SLPs have expertise in language development and the connection between oral language and literacy. They have additional coursework in reading acquisition, learning disabilities, and social/emotional development and its connection to language development. Understanding the typical developmental path of speech and language learning allows the SLPs to make a unique contribution to the student's program and team.

Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) provide consultation, assessment and intervention for students with speech and language difficulties and to minimize their impact on student learning and social interaction.

Description of Services:

- provide pre-referral collaborative consultation;
- provide direct assistance to students;
- participate on Program Planning Team (PPT);
- provide specialized assessment ;
- assist in the planning and development of IPPs;
- provide in-service for parents, educators and support staff;
- advocate for students with communication needs;
- assist with adaptation and modification of the curriculum; and
- liaise with ancillary agencies.

Referral Process:

- *Pre-referral consultation:*
 - Liaison with PPT
 - Please consult with the SLP prior to completing the district referral form.
 - This consultation could include file review, observation, and/or parent contact.
 - The SLP will clarify the concern and determine whether a referral is warranted.
- *Referral:*
 - Complete the referral form with the three necessary signatures and send it directly to Student Services.
 - When necessary, the SLP may initiate referral to another agency.
- *Presenting concerns that would necessitate pre-referral:*
 - Appears to hear, but does not seem to remember or listen to what is said
 - Is passive or silent in classroom conversations
 - Is difficult to understand
 - Speaks clearly but uses atypical grammar and sentence structure
 - Speaks well in single sentences but is hard to follow when a long explanation/direction is required
 - Has trouble finding specific words to express ideas and concepts
 - Demonstrates marked difficulty with reading and writing
 - Stutters
 - Has a chronically hoarse or unusual voice

Assessment:

The assessment process may include both formal and informal measures that strive to answer the following questions:

- What can be done to help this child participate more effectively?
- How can the team support more effective inclusion for this student?

- What strategies will assist teachers/parents to be more successful in teaching or interacting with this student?

Assessment may include some or all of the following practices:

- Observation
- File Review
- Consultation
- Assisting with the interpretation of communication reports
- Kindergarten screening
- Administration and interpretation of "A and B-Level" tests

Reporting:

- Assessment findings are documented in a written report which is shared with the parent/guardian, relevant school-based personnel and, when appropriate, with the student.
- In keeping with best practices and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOI/POPA), all reports are confidential.
- An annual progress report

Best Practice:

Services are available to every school in the district on a needs basis. A priority is assigned to each student, depending on a severity rating which is based on factors such as impact, prognosis for improvement and follow-up support. A waiting period may be necessary before service can be accessed.

I (severe): The child's communication difference prohibits typical social interactions or participation in the academic or social curriculum.

II (moderate): The child's communication difference limits social interactions or participation in the academic or social curriculum.

III (mild): The child's communication difference does not interfere or minimally interferes with social interactions or participation in the academic or social curriculum.

Availability of service may vary across the district; however, staff strive to follow this delivery model:

Grades K-2 (Majority of Service Delivery)*	Grades 3-7 (Limited Service Delivery)*	Grades 8-12 (Minimal Service Delivery)*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct kindergarten screening • Provide direct support to students with severe to moderate speech, language or communication difficulties as well as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaching TAs/parents and/or teachers ○ Working with classroom teachers to align, adapt and modify curriculum ○ Implementing strategies for augmentative and alternative communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direct support to students with severe to moderate speech, language, reading or writing difficulties as well as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaching TAs/parents and/or teachers ○ Working with classroom teachers to align, adapt and modify curriculum ○ Implementing strategies for augmentative and alternative communication • Assist students to develop insight and awareness about their learning needs. • Assist students to develop strategies for learning and social interaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direct or indirect support to students with severe to moderate speech difficulties or augmentative and alternative communication needs as well as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaching TAs/parents and/or teachers ○ Implementing strategies for augmentative and alternative communication • Assist students to develop insight and awareness about their learning needs. • Assist students to develop student self advocacy skills.

