

**Lakehead Public Schools
Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies**

1. Objective

The External Agency Protocol provides a framework for the board and/or schools to enter into partnership agreements with external agencies that provide services from regulated health and social service professionals. The external professionals augment programs and services offered to students, including those with special education needs. Additionally, they may offer services currently not provided by school board professionals.

Successful partnerships adhere to the intent of policies and regulations within the Education Act, Ministry of Education guidelines and the Lakehead District School Board Policies and Procedures and are built upon mutual trust, respect, and an appreciation of all employees.

2. Guiding Principles

- 2.1 A partnership agreement with a community service provide may augment or enhance (not duplicate) the work of board professional staff while respecting the rights, responsibilities, and interest of both students and staff.
- 2.2 A written, signed partnership agreement between the parties will help clarify expectations, roles and responsibilities, timelines, procedures, accountability, service quality, compliance with professional standards, integration/coordination, and dispute resolution process.

3. Definitions

3.1 External Partnerships

An on-going, mutually beneficial and supportive arrangement between a school board and external mental health, physical health or social service agency to enhance or expand opportunities for student success and who share values, objectives, resources and responsibilities to achieve desired learning outcomes.

3.2 Board Staff

- 3.2.1 Board employed personnel who are members of a regulated professional college in Ontario including Social Workers, Speech-Language Pathologists, Audiologists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Psychologists, and Psychiatrists.
- 3.2.2 Board employed personnel including Educational Assistants, Early Childhood Educators, and other educational support workers who provide mental health, physical health or social services.

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3.3 External Providers

The external mental health, physical health or social service agency (including its staff) providing services within the parameters of the Partnership Agreement.

3.4 Partnership Agreement

A formal, written document which outlines the terms and conditions of an external partnership that must be signed prior to the implementation of the partnership activities.

3.5 Para-Professionals

Individuals with relevant post-secondary or on the job training who work under the supervision of a member of a relevant regulated professional college in Ontario, e.g. behaviour therapists, child therapists, art therapists, youth counselors, child and youth workers, occupational therapy assistants or physiotherapy assistants, and communication disorders assistants

3.6 Board Improvement Plan (BIP)

A document that outlines the methods teachers, principals and senior board staff will employ to promote improved student achievement.

(Modified from: EQAO Improvement Planning)

3.7 Professional Student Services Personnel (PSSP)

Professional Board staff of Support Services, which includes Social Work, Speech-Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy and Physio-therapy and/or Psychological Services.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Board Administrative Position(s) or Designates(s) Responsible For Managing the Protocol:

Superintendent of Business

Superintendent responsible for Special Education

4.2 Board Staff or Designate(s) Responsible For Consulting With the Board:

Special Education Officer

Manager of Planning

OSSTF Educational Assistant Representative

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- 4.3 The Principal is responsible for the operational activities of the external agency staff within their school.

5. Procedures

- 5.1 Establishment of a Board External Agency Partnership Committee consisting of those personnel identified in 4.1 and 4.2 above, and other personnel as required.
- 5.2 The Board External Agency Partnership (BEAP) Committee shall:
- Delineate programs and services currently delivered by unionized school board staff and programs and services that could be delivered by school board staff that are currently not delivered by said staff due to financial capacity, job descriptions or qualifications of PSSP and Educational Support Staff.
 - Be responsible for setting out the terms of the partnership agreement using the template (Appendix A). The agreement will clearly define activities, roles and responsibilities, including responsibilities in the case of participant crisis situations.
 - All sections included in the template form must be included in the Partnership Agreement. The terms of Partnership section should reflect needs identified in the Board Improvement Plan.
 - Ensure that long-term duplication of services already provided by school board staff does not occur.
 - Ensure that services provided by external providers are not in conflict with provisions of collective agreements with Board staff.
 - Ensure annual review of the protocols and projected services in consultation with the community partners and school board unionized staff.
 - Ensure the following information is completed by the external provider:
 - Copy of the proposed informed consent process for parent/legal guardian(s) or student who is of age for services to be provided.
 - School Board Consent to Release of Confidential forms (to allow the two-way exchange of confidential information) prior to any involvement with students.

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- Criminal Background Check that meets the school board's criteria with direct contact with students, is compliant with the standard check used by the school board and dated within the past 12 months (with annual review).
- Proof of Insurance – external providers must obtain their own insurance which includes professional malpractice coverage (minimum \$1,000,000) to insure against civil litigation alleging incompetence, professional errors, omissions or charges laid by professional colleges or parents/legal guardian(s). The external provider must provide assurance that their staff is covered while working on Board property.

5.3 Appropriate signing authorities for Lakehead District School Board and the external agency will:

- Sign the agreement after it has been reviewed centrally. One copy of the signed agreement will be kept on file at the Board Office and a copy will be sent to the external provider.
- Ensure that the terms of Partnerships Agreement are met and communicated to School Board unionized staff and community partners staff.

5.4 The Partnership Agreement shall:

5.4.1 Provide the following:

- The identification of potential parameters;
- Description of service/program;
- History of external provider including ownership, staff qualifications and funding base of the external provider;
- Names of representatives of external agencies;
- Anticipated outcomes of programs and services provided;
- As required, develop a training plan for Board support staff;
- Qualifications/Supervisory relationships for external staff providing the service. For external staff who belong to a regulated Professional College, evidence of current qualifications appropriate to the services provided (e.g. current membership in the relevant regulated College of Ontario and a declaration that services will be delivered in accordance with professional standards of practice) is required;
- For external agency staffs that are unregulated, evidence that they are working under the clinical supervision of staff from the external agency that currently hold membership in the relevant regulated college. This should include the agency staff's role, responsibilities, name of immediate

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supervisor, supervision plan with time and supervisor's qualifications;

- Articulate space and materials requirements from the external agency and ensure that space for Board Staff to execute their duties is ensured prior to offering space to external providers;
- Record any fee or payment required by external agencies;
- Articulate roles and responsibilities of both Board and External Agency staff;
- Include confirmation of the documentation outlined in 5.2;
- State terms of termination of a Partnership Agreement with input from the external agency and Board Staff;
- State and maintain a process to resolve disagreements or disputes that may arise.

5.4.2 Include statements by the external provider assuring:

- Adherence to School Board standards of confidentiality, equity and the Ontario Human Rights Code.