



Parent Guide to Special Education

You belong here



A Parent Resource Guide

LPS Mission, Vision, Values

Territorial Acknowledgement & Commitment

Lakehead District School Board is located on the traditional territory of the Ojibwe people of Fort William First Nation, signatory to the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850. We acknowledge all of the First Nations, Metis and Inuit who reside in this territory and across our Nation; we are committed to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and respect for all Canadians.

Our Vision

We provide equitable and inclusive environments where everyone belongs and succeeds.

Our Mission

We are committed to the success of every student.

Our Values

Belonging Empathy Integrity Respect

Our Commitment to Reconciliation

We commit to the following four principles of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities throughout every aspect of Lakehead Public Schools.

Relationality

Relevancy

Respect

Responsibility

Our Principles

Lakehead Public Schools strives to embody the following three principles:

Belong

We provide environments where everyone belongs.

Succeed

We hold high expectations for all learners.

Reconcile

We commit to a spirit and journey of reconciliation.

You belong here



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IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC)

Accessibility Statement: The Lakehead District School Board is committed to providing accessible communication for all individuals. This document will be made available in accessible formats upon request.

** The purpose of this guide is to provide parents(s)/guardians(s) and students with information about the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC), and to provide an overview of the procedures involved in identifying a student as exceptional, deciding the student's placement or appealing such decisions, if required.*

IPRC stands for:

I – Identification **P** – Placement **R** – Review **C** – Committee

Committed to the success of every student

What is an IPRC?

Identification Placement and Review Committees (IPRCs) are responsible for the identification of exceptional pupils and their placement in special education programs.

The role of the IPRC is to:

- Decide whether the student should be identified as exceptional
- Identify a specific exceptionality, or exceptionalities, if applicable
- Identify the areas of strength and need of the student
- Decide an appropriate placement for the student
- Review the identification and placement at least once each school year

Who attends the IPRC? The Committee:

- Has a minimum of three members, one of whom shall be a principal, vice-principal or supervisory officer.
- Two other members may include the child's teacher, the Special Education Facilitator, or system staff members (e.g., Special Education Resource Teacher).

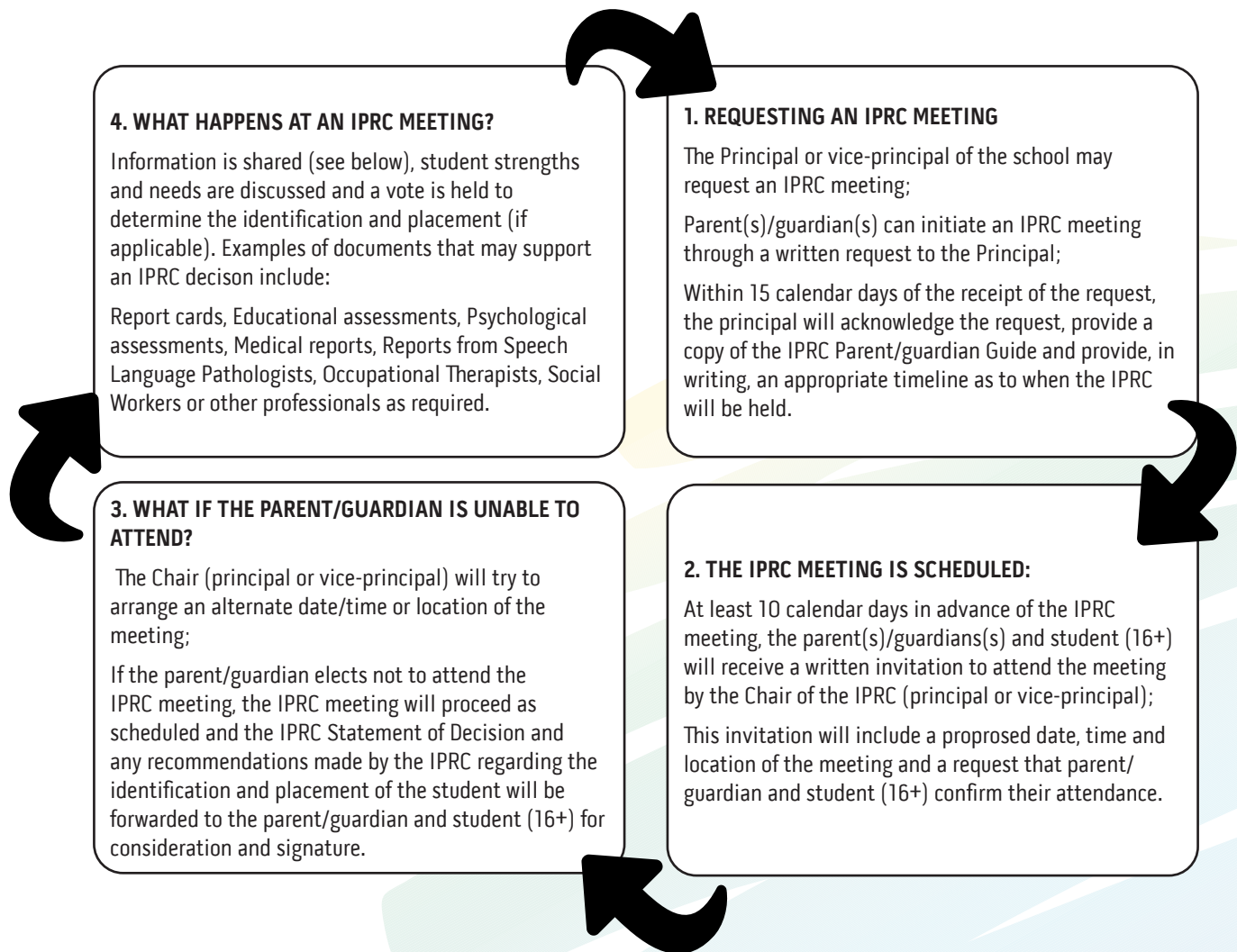
Participants at the IPRC include:

- parent(s)/guardian(s) (as per Reg. 181/91)
- the student (16 years of age and older)

Additional participants at the IPRC may include:

- a representative of an agency, who may provide further information or clarification of information to the committee;
- a selected representative or advocate for the parent(s)/ guardian(s)/student(16+), that is, a person who may support conversation or represent the parent(s), and/or student; and
- an interpreter and/or translator if one is required. (A request for the services of an interpreter may be made through the school principal).

THE IPRC PROCESS



Who is identified as an exceptional pupil?

The Education Act defines an exceptional pupil as “a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that they are considered to need placement in a special education program.” Students are identified according to the categories and definition of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education, with criteria outlined in the LDSB Special Education Plan

Ontario Ministry of Education Categories of Exceptionality:

Behavioural

Communicational (Autism, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Language Impairment, Learning Disability, Speech Impairment)

Intellectual (Developmental Disability, Giftedness, Mild Intellectual Disability)

Physical (Physical, Blind Low Vision)

Multiple (Two or more exceptionalities)

What are the placement options provided by the board?

The Lakehead District School Board aligns with Regulation 181/98, which indicates that regular classrooms should be the first placement of choice for all students throughout their education career and that most exceptional children should have their needs met using a variety of strategies, techniques, and resource support in regular classes, in their home schools.

Placements with the LDSB include:

Placement Determined by IPRC	Identification determined at IPRC* (may include students identified under the category of multiple)	Specialized Classes and Programs Offered
Regular Class with Indirect Support	All exceptionalities	
Regular Class with Resource Assistance	Blind and Low Vision Deaf and Hard of Hearing	
Regular Class with Withdrawal Assistance	Deaf and Hard of Hearing Blind and Low Vision	
Special Education Class with Partial Integration	Autism Physical Disability Developmental Disability Mild Intellectual Disability	Elementary Special Needs Class Secondary Special Needs Class Pre-workplace Program (secondary)
Full time Special Education Class	Autism Developmental Disability Physical Disability	Elementary Special Needs Class Secondary Special Needs Class Elementary Multi-Needs Class
Full time Special Education Class at a Provincial and Demonstration School	Learning Disability Deaf and Hard of Hearing Blind and Low Vision	

What are the Ministry's Provincial and Demonstration Schools?

The Ministry operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools throughout Ontario for students who are deaf, blind, deafblind, and severely learning –disabled. Residential programs are offered at the schools Monday to Friday, for students who live too far from school to travel daily. For more information, please visit the following website: <https://pdsbnet.ca/en/schools>.

What is the process to access specialized class/program placements?

- All schools utilize a tiered approach in determining how best to support students with special education needs. Students being considered for special class placements typically have an extensive history of interventions by the school.
- Specialized placement options are discussed with parent(s)/guardian(s).
- All specialized placements require a referral to the Special Class Placement Committee.
- Each specialized program/class has different criteria, with class size limits determined by the Ministry of Education. Classes are staffed by educators with additional qualifications in special education.

- Referrals and supporting documentation are reviewed by the Special Class Placement Committee, with recommendations provided to the IPRC.
- The IPRC makes placement decisions based on recommendations from the Special Class Placement Committee along with any other supporting documentation provided to the IPRC

The IPRC process at a glance:

Before	During	After
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication between home and school should be on-going ▪ A case conference at the school has occurred to support sharing of information and determining next steps ▪ The principal/vice-principal or the parent(s)/guardian(s) can request an IPRC meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The chair will lead the discussion and sharing of information ▪ Strengths and needs are confirmed ▪ The IPRC will decide if the student is exceptional and the placement in which the student's strengths and needs will be best met ▪ There will be a written statement of decision that will list the student's strengths, needs and will summarize the decision of the IPRC as to the student's Exceptionality and Placement ▪ Where the IPRC has decided that the student should be placed in a specialized program, the reasons for the decision will be documented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If the IPRC decision is to identify the student as an exceptional student, an IEP must be created within 30 schools days ▪ If the student already has an IEP, it will be updated. ▪ If the IPRC decides not to identify the student as exceptional, the school will continue to provide appropriate programming ▪ If the parent/guardian agrees with the decision, they will be asked to sign the Statement of Decision ▪ If the parent/guardian does not agree with the IPRC decision, review or appeal process may be initiated. (https://www.ontario.ca/document/special-education-ontario-policy-and-resource-guide-kindergarten-grade-12/iprc-appeal) ▪ If a placement change has been recommended, a transition process will be initiated to support the student's move to the new placement location.

Please ASK!

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with information about the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) and to describe for you the procedures involved in identifying a pupil as exceptional, deciding the pupil's placement or appealing such decisions.

If, after reading this guide, you require more information, please contact your student's Special Education Facilitator.

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INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

Accessibility Statement: The Lakehead District School Board is committed to providing accessible communication for all individuals. This document will be made available in accessible formats upon request.

** This guide is intended to help you understand the purpose of an Individual Education Plan. Parent involvement and input is valued in the development of your child's IEP.*

An IEP includes:

- An outline of your child's special education program and services
- Special education expectations
- An outline of how your child's progress will be measured
- A transition plan

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What is an IEP?

An IEP is....

- A written plan of action to support your child in their learning. The plan is based on the results of different types of assessments. It also contains learning goals and an outline of supports and services that help build the success of your child in their learning. The IEP is a working document which means it can be updated at any time.
- The IEP includes a transition plan that outlines goals for your child as they move from grade to grade, school to school and/or between school and the community once high school is completed.

Why does a student have an IEP?

- An IEP must be developed for all students identified as exceptional through the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process. An IEP must be developed within 30 days of the initial IPRC decision.
- An IEP must be developed for a student that requires assistive technology (such as a tablet or laptop computer).
- An IEP may be developed for a student upon the recommendation from the Learning Supports Team (LST). This recommendation is based on assessment information indicating that specific accommodations and/or program modifications are required for instruction and assessment purposes in response to the student's individual strengths and needs.
 - » Accommodations are changes to the way a program or course is delivered to enable a student to learn and to demonstrate learning. An IEP is NOT required for a student to receive most accommodations.
 - » Modifications refer to a change made to the grade level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs. Modifications to program should only be done when there is considerable assessment information that supports the need for program modifications. NOTE: Program modifications, especially when the student does not have a formal exceptionality, can impact the pathways and course offerings at secondary school and beyond. It is important to understand the impact of program modifications.

What is the role of the parent/guardian in the IEP process?

- You know your child best! You have valuable information about your child's personality, development and learning that can help to guide teachers in meeting their learning needs. You are encouraged to share information that can be used to help make decisions about your child's program.
- Open communication and cooperation between home and school will ensure similar expectations about your child's special education program and services.

Who else is involved in the development of the IEP?

- The IEP needs to be developed by a team of people who know your child best. Members of the team should include, your child's teachers, the Special Education Facilitator, the Principal and where appropriate, the student. The persons involved may include additional people, depending on the needs of your child.

Key Components of an IEP

Assessment Data

Relevant clinical and/or educational assessment data drives the special education program.

Assessments completed by a Psychologist, Speech-Language Pathologist, Special Education Facilitator, classroom teacher or other professional provide information about a child's individual strengths and needs.

Strengths and Needs

Student strengths and needs, as identified through assessments, are listed on the IEP.

The identified strengths and needs inform the special education program.

The Special Education Program

A child's special education programs consists of:

- An Annual Goal which is achieved by the end of the school year;
- If modified, Learning Expectations from the Ontario Curriculum that the child will be working on this term.

Accommodations and/or modifications are clearly identified.

Some students will have alternative expectations which are not derived from the Ontario Curriculum.

Gather Information

- gather information from various sources including: observation, assessments, parents, Ontario Student Record, IPRC (if applicable)

The IEP Cycle

Your input is welcomed and valued at each stage of the IEP cycle.

Set the Direction

- develop a common understanding of strengths and needs as they relate to learning
- consider possible transition needs

Develop the IEP

- identify subjects, courses or alternative program areas that will be included in the special education program
- set short and long term goals for learning

Implement the IEP

- provide learning opportunities specific to the child's learning strengths and needs and goals set out in the special education plan

Review and Update the IEP

- update learning expectations at the beginning of each reporting period
 - record changes on the IEP
- **changes can be made at any time throughout the year if/when necessary

For more information about the IEP Cycle, please see the LDSB IEP Parent Resource Guide.

Please ASK!

It is important to communicate with your child's school regularly. The process of developing an IEP is ongoing. If/when you have questions, please contact your child's school

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CATEGORIES OF IDENTIFICATION

This section of the guide is intended to help you understand the ministry of education categories of identification.

At present, approximately 16% of students with Lakehead Public Schools receive special education support as outlined in an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Exceptionality	Ministry of Education Definition
Category: Non-Identified/Non-Exceptional	
IEP Only, no identification/exceptionality	Students who require special education programs and services to address their learning needs but do not meet criteria for identification in a specific category. Accommodations, modifications, and/or alternative programming are provided to these students as outlined in their Individual Education Plan (IEP).
Category: Non-Identified/Non-Exceptional	
Behavioural	<p>A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships; ▪ excessive fears or anxieties; ▪ a tendency to compulsive reaction; ▪ an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination thereof. <p>Board criteria: Behaviour assessment by a qualified professional (M.D., psychologist), including the use of objective measures of behaviour.</p>
Category: Non-Identified/Non-Exceptional	
Autism	<p>A severe learning disorder that is characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ disturbances in rate of educational development; ability to relate to the environment; mobility; perception, speech, and language; ▪ lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language <p>Board Criteria: Diagnosis by a qualified professional (M.D., reg'd. psychologist).</p>
Deaf and hard of hearing	<p>An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.</p> <p>Board Criteria: Diagnosis by a qualified professional (audiologist, M.D.), which indicates a bi-lateral sensory neural loss that adversely affects educational performance.</p>

Language impairment	<p>A learning disorder characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or the use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; and ▪ include one or more of: language delay; dysfluency; voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based. <p>Board criteria: Assessment by a Speech Language Pathologist indicating a moderate to severe expressive and/or receptive language delay</p>
Speech impairment	<p>A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors; that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages; and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm, and stress.</p> <p>Board criteria: Assessment by a Speech Language Pathologist indicating a severe speech impairment</p>
Learning disability	<p>One of a number of neurodevelopmental disorders that persistently and significantly has an impact on the ability to learn and use academic and other skills and that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ affects the ability to perceive or process verbal or non-verbal information in an effective and accurate manner in students who have assessed intellectual abilities that are at least in the average range; ▪ results in (a) academic underachievement that is inconsistent with the intellectual abilities of the student (which are at least in the average range), and/or (b) academic achievement that can be maintained by the student only with extremely high levels of effort and/or with additional support; ▪ results in difficulties in the development and use of skills in one or more of the following areas: reading, writing, mathematics, and work habits and learning skills; ▪ may typically be associated with difficulties in one or more cognitive processes, such as phonological processing; memory and attention; processing speed; perceptual-motor processing; visual-spatial processing; executive functions (e.g., self-regulation of behaviour and emotions, planning, organizing of thoughts and activities, prioritizing, decision making); ▪ may be associated with difficulties in social interaction (e.g., difficulty in understanding social norms or the point of view of others); with various other conditions or disorders, diagnosed or undiagnosed; or with other exceptionalities; ▪ is not the result of a lack of acuity in hearing and/or vision that has not been corrected; intellectual disabilities; socio-economic factors; cultural differences; lack of proficiency in the language of instruction; lack of motivation or effort; gaps in school attendance or inadequate opportunity to benefit from instruction. <p>Board criteria: Assessment by a qualified psychologist that indicates at least average Verbal and/or Non Verbal ability, a reported processing deficit, and a clinically statistically significant discrepancy between average ability and academic achievement.</p>

Category: Intellectual

Giftedness	<p>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.</p> <p>Board criteria: A score at or above the ninety-eighth (98th) percentile or greater on the WPPSI – III / WISC V as indicated in a psychological assessment.</p>
Mild intellectual disability	<p>A learning disorder characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and support services; ▪ an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development; ▪ a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support. <p>Board criteria: This is NOT a diagnosis but is a Ministry of Education identification. Assessment would include a cognitive measure of intelligence that falls at or below the first (1st) percentile with no significant delays in adaptive functioning</p>
Developmental disability	<p>A severe learning disorder characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development; ▪ an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development; ▪ a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support. <p>Board criteria: Formal diagnosis by a registered psychologist or M.D. according to the DSM-V. Assessment would include a cognitive measure of intelligence that falls at or below the first (1st) percentile as well as significant delays in adaptive functioning.</p>

Category: Physical

Physical disability	<p>A condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of students without exceptionalities who are of the same age or development level.</p> <p>Board criteria: Medical diagnosis (M.D.) of a severe physical condition which affects mobility and/or motor skills and which will require special assistance in learning situations at school.</p>
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Blind and low vision	<p>A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.</p> <p>A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.</p>
Category: Multiple	
Multiple exceptionalities	<p>A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities that is of such a nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.</p>

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LPS Special Education Programs

This section of the guide is intended to provide more information about the LPS Special Education Programs available.

Specialized Classes and Programs	Locations
Elementary Special Needs Class	Algonquin Avenue Public School Westmount Public School Vance Chapman Public School
Elementary Multi-Needs Class	Algonquin Avenue Public School
Secondary Pre-Workplace Program	Hammar skjold High School Superior Collegiate and Vocational Institute Westgate Collegiate and Vocational Institute
Secondary Special Needs/Multi Needs Class	Hammar skjold High School Westgate Collegiate and Vocational Institute

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Special Education Advisory Committee SEAC

This section of the guide is intended to help you understand the purpose of the SEAC.

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is composed of representatives from local associations/agencies, parents/guardians and community members dedicated to furthering the interests and well being of exceptional children and adults. In addition, Lakehead District School Board appoints Trustees to sit on the committee. SEAC is established under Regulation 464/97 s. 2(1).

SEAC Vision Statement

SEAC members value and promote:

- Nurturing the individual child's unique potential; and
- Allowing full development of each child's innate personal integrity, love of learning, and creativity.

The Committee meets monthly to discuss and make recommendations to the Board in respect of matters affecting the establishment, development and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils. In addition, the committee participates in the annual review of the special education plan, takes part in the annual budget process and reviews financial statements that relate to Special Education. SEAC also provides information and advocacy for parents as requested.

Committee Members 2024-2025	
NAME	ORGANIZATION
Wendy Carrol	Anishnawbe Mushkiki
Brandon Robb (Alternate)	Anishnawbe Mushkiki
Scott McBean	Children's Centre Thunder Bay
Alina Cameron	Community Member
Sarah Niles	Dilico Anishinabek Family Care
Tara Ingram	Easter Seals
Miranda Myers	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Information Network (FASIN)
Michelle Blackburn	George Jeffrey Children's Centre
Andrea Stach (Alternate)	George Jeffrey Children's Centre
Liz Tod	Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
Carey Murphy (alternate)	Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
Suzanne Posthumus	OPTIONS Northwest
Rosemarie MacLean (Alternate)	OPTIONS Northwest
Trustee Leah Vanderwey	Trustee Member
Trustee Trudy Tuchenhausen	Trustee Member
Trustee Patricia Johansen	Trustee Member (Alternate)
Trustee Donica LeBlanc	Trustee Member (Alternate)