

ELEVEN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Policy

In order to ensure that assessment and evaluation are valid and reliable, and that they lead to the improvement of student learning, teachers must use assessment and evaluation strategies that:

1. address both what students learn and how well they learn;
2. are based both on the categories of knowledge and skills and on the achievement level descriptions given in the achievement chart;
3. are varied in nature, administered over a period of time, and designed to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning;
4. are appropriate for the learning activities used, the purposes of instruction, and the needs and experiences of students;
5. are fair to all students;
6. accommodate the needs of students with special education needs, consistent with the strategies outlined in their Individual Education Plan;
7. accommodate the needs of students who are learning the language of instruction;
8. ensure that each student is given clear directions for improvement;
9. promote students' ability to assess their own learning and to set specific goals;
10. include the use of samples of students' work that provide evidence of their achievement;
11. are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the course or the school term and at other appropriate points throughout the school year.

Ontario curriculum documents (revised)

Context

These eleven principles, identified in Ontario curriculum policy documents, ensure that assessment, evaluation, and reporting are fair, valid, reliable, and focused on improving student learning. They are the backbone of all assessment, evaluation, and reporting policy. Each of the succeeding sections of this document can be seen as a reflection of one or more of these principles.

They are rich, challenging statements that need to be unpacked so that they can come alive in the classroom. If they are understood and implemented we will have more meaningful data to support student learning.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS: MODIFICATIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Principle 4: Teachers must use assessment and evaluation strategies that are appropriate for the learning activities used, the purposes of instruction, and the needs and experiences of students.

Principle 5: Teachers must use assessment and evaluation strategies that are fair to all students.

Principle 6: Teachers must use assessment and evaluation strategies that accommodate the needs of students with special education needs, consistent with the strategies outlined in their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Policy

Elementary Report Card Policy for Students with Special Education Needs

If the student has an *Individual Education Plan* that applies to a particular strand/subject, it is not necessary, nor is it advisable, to check the IEP box on the student's report card when a student has received only accommodations for that subject/strand.

Deputy Minister Memo dated November 19, 2004

If the expectations in the IEP are based on *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8* but vary from the expectations of the regular program for the grade, the following statement must appear in the "Strengths/Weaknesses/Next Steps" section: **"The (grade/mark) for (strand/subject) is based on achievement of the expectations in the IEP, which vary from the Grade ____ expectations."**

Guide to the Provincial Report Card, Grades 1–8, 1998

Secondary Report Card Policy for Students with Special Education Needs

If the student has an *Individual Education Plan* that applies to a particular course, it is not necessary, nor is it advisable, to check the IEP box on the student's report card when a student has received only accommodations for that course.

Deputy Minister Memo dated November 19, 2004

If some of the student's learning expectations for a course are modified from the curriculum expectations, but the student is working towards a credit for the course, it is sufficient simply to

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check the IEP box. If, however, the student's learning expectations are modified to such an extent that the principal deems that a credit will not be granted for the course (see section 7.12 of *Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9–12: Program and Diploma Requirements, 1999*) or if the expectations are alternatives to the curriculum expectations, the following statement must be included in the "Comments" section (along with comments about the student's achievement): **"This percentage grade is based on achievement of the expectations specified in the IEP, which differ significantly from the curriculum expectations for the course."**

Guide to the Provincial Report Card, Grades 9–12, 1999

Context

It is exceptionally important that all educators understand the distinction between modifications and accommodations and the importance of providing them to students with special education needs. It is not only a matter of fairness and social justice but a legal right established by regulation.

The obligation of school boards and schools to provide accommodations for students with special needs is reinforced by both legislation and Ministry of Education policy. Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, 1981, which sets out provisions on the "duty to accommodate" all persons with disabilities, school boards have the responsibility to provide appropriate accommodations that will enable students with special needs to participate in the educational setting.

"[I]f the purpose of a lesson is the development of reading skills, the student should work with materials that are consistent with his or her instructional level. The student may have modified learning expectations that are drawn from a lower grade. *In this case, the lesson would be modified.*

However, if the purpose of the lesson is to appreciate and respond to a particular story, poem, or other piece of literature, the materials might be consistent with the student's listening comprehension or grade placement levels. In this case, the teacher may have to ensure only that the student can easily access the text. The student might need supports, or 'accommodations', in the form of a taped text, a reading buddy, assistive technology, or the voice of the teacher. *In this case, the lesson would be accommodated.*"

Education for All: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students With Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6
(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005)

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS: MODIFICATIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Illustration

Modifying Expectations and Providing Accommodations

The process for modifying expectations includes the following steps:

- The teacher looks at the strengths and needs of the individual student with special education needs in relation to the subject/course.
- The teacher reviews the overall and specific expectations in the curriculum policy document.
- The teacher distils the learning expectations found in the Ontario curriculum policy document to outline a measurable performance task for the particular student.

All learning expectations listed in the IEP should represent what a student can reasonably be expected to achieve during each reporting period. The student's Provincial Report Card or alternative report card for the term/semester must include his/her achievement of the learning expectations listed in the IEP.

Example of a modified elementary expectation:

Grade 5 Mathematics: Number Sense and Numeration: Term 1

Overall Expectation:

(Students will) read, represent, compare, and order whole numbers to 100,000, decimal numbers to hundredths, proper and improper fractions, and mixed numbers.

Modified Overall Expectation for IEP:

(The student will) read, represent, compare, and order whole numbers up to 10,000, decimal numbers to hundredths, proper fractions, and mixed numbers, and complete five sample problems in each of quantity relationships, counting, operational sense, and proportional relationships.

Example of an elementary accommodation:

The student will have access to a study carrel and access to a calculator in mathematics class.

Example of modified secondary expectations

Grade 9 Applied English: Reading and Literature Studies

Overall Expectation:

(Students will) read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literacy, informational and graphic texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS: MODIFICATIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Illustration

Specific Expectation:

(Students will) read student-and teacher-selected texts from diverse cultures and historical periods, identifying specific purposes for reading.

Modified Specific Expectation for IEP:

(The student will) read five teacher-selected texts from diverse cultures and identify two purposes for reading each text.

Example of a secondary accommodation:

The student will have access to teacher-selected texts in audio format and present performance tasks in oral and/or written format.