**Provincial Parent Associations Advisory Committee (PAaC) on Special Education Advisory Committees (SEAC)**

# **BACKGROUND**

1. **What is OnSIS**

The Ontario School Information System (OnSIS) is a web-based application, which integrates and collects board, school, student, educator as well as course and class data, at the elemental level. The purpose of this application is to gather more accurate and reliable data, which is protected by Ontario's strict privacy legislation and a rigorously controlled security system. This data is subsequently stored, integrated and depersonalized in the Elementary/Secondary Data Warehouse (ESDW), where it will be utilized to develop and promote information practices for analysis, policy development, and evidence-based decision-making in the education sector, to ultimately improve student achievement.

1. **How do boards verify and validate the data**

The data that is collected through OnSIS is validated, verified and signed-off at both the school and board levels. In addition, Boards have access to OnSIS verification reports to verify the accuracy of the data they have submitted.

1. **Special Education Data Collection**

Following are the data elements that are collected for special education in OnSIS at the student level.

* Special Education Flag that indicates if the student is receiving special education program and/or services
* Individual Education Plan (IEP) flag
* IPRC flag
* IPRC/Review Date
* Exceptionality Code
  + Deaf/Hard of Hearing/Pre-school
  + Autism
  + Deaf/Hard of Hearing
  + Learning Disability
  + Speech Impairment
  + Language Impairment
  + Behaviour
  + Physical Disability
  + Blind/Low Vision
  + Developmental Disability
  + Giftedness
  + Mild Intellectual Disability
  + Multiple Exceptionalities
* Main Exceptionality flag
* Non Identified Student flag
* Special Education Placement/ Instructional Setting
* Fully Self-Contained
* Indirect Service
* Partially Integrated
* Resource Assistance
* Withdrawal Assistance

1. **What information is publicly reported?**

On the Ministry of Education website, School Information Finder (SIF)

* Percentage of students who receive special education programs and / or services by school and province
* Percentage of students identified as gifted by school and province

On the “Safe and Accepting Schools” Ministry website

* Provincial statistics showing the percentage of students receiving special education programs and/or services who have been suspended or expelled during the academic year.

## **PAAC on SEAC Questions**

Question 1 - What can SEACs do if their board refuses to provide data on the numbers of students who have been identified, who have an Individual Education Plan, or who are receiving special education services, but don’t have An IPRC nor an IEP. Can ESAB provide data to SEACs?

Response – SEACs should contact the board’s Superintendent of Special Education if they have not received this data. Suggested dialogue could include discussion around the Board and SEAC’s shared goals of supporting students with special education needs.

The Ministry encourages SEACs to work directly with their school board partners to obtain a dataset related to their board’s special education data.

Question 2 - Does the Ministry validate school board special education data in any other way, besides OnSIS?

Response – The Ministry does not validate school board special education data in any other way.

Question 3 – How do boards that offer less than the 5 placement options, report this information in OnSIS?

Response - OnSIS does not restrict the reporting of data based on the number of placement options offered at Boards. Boards report placement information about individual students to OnSIS. For example, if a given board only offers 4 placements then OnSIS collects data at the student level for those 4 placement types.

Question 4 - Is the data collected about student placements accurate and reliable at the provincial level?

Response – The data that is collected through OnSIS is validated, verified and signed-off at both the school and board levels. In addition, school boards have access to OnSIS verification reports to verify the accuracy of the data they have submitted.

Question 5 – In order to establish better data collection, what can the Ministry do to ensure that the data school boards provide is based on actual IPRC Placement decisions?

Response – The data that is collected through OnSIS is validated, verified and signed-off at both the school and board levels. In addition, school boards have access to OnSIS verification reports to verify the accuracy of the data they have submitted.

Question 6 – Does OnSIS show how many students have neither IPRCs nor IEPs?

Response - Yes, OnSIS collects the following data elements about students receiving special education programs and / or services at the student level:

- IEP status

- IPRC status

- IPRC/Review Date

- Exceptionality Code

- Main Exceptionality

- Non Identified Student

- Placement/Instructional Setting

The total number of students reported to be receiving special education programs and / or services includes those students that have neither IPRCs nor IEPs.

Question 7 – Is the Ministry tracking any changes in the number of students without an IPRC or an IEP as the new DSENA formula has been phased in? If so, could you please provide provincial data showing changes in numbers of students who have neither IPRCs nor IEPs?

Response – The total number of students reported to be receiving special education programs and / or services includes those students that have neither IPRCs nor IEPs. The data is collected at the student level, thus the Ministry has the ability to track any changes related to this group of students.

Question 8 – Does the Ministry gather information about the programs and services received by students with neither IPRCs nor IEPs, for which special education funds are spent? If so, please provide further information.

Response – The Ministry of Education does not collect this information.

Question 9 – Can the Ministry encourage schools to write IEPs for all of the students who receive “special education programs/services” that are purchased with funds from the special education envelope?

Response –There is no legislative requirement for students who have not been IPRC’d and who are receiving special education programs and / or services to have an IEP, unless they are receiving accommodations on EQAO or the OSSLT. The ministry encourages that boards consider developing an IEP for students receiving special education programs and/or services who haven’t been identified as exceptional by an IPRC after an appropriate period of assessment.

Question 10 - Can the Ministry provide annual statistics on the numbers/percentages of Identified students in regular class Placements? (or conversely, provide data on the numbers / percentages of Identified students in self-contained class Placements?)

Response - The following data elements about Special Education Placement/ Instructional Setting at the student level are collected in OnSIS:

- Fully Self-Contained – Special Education Classes

- Partially Integrated – Special Education Classes

- Indirect Service – Regular Classes

- Resource Assistance – Regular Classes

- Withdrawal Assistance – Regular Classes

The ministry uses the data collected in OnSIS for reporting of statistics and analysis related to education in Ontario.

These Special Education Placement/ Instructional Settings are:

**Special Education Classes** – Students with special education needs for whom more than 50 per cent of instructional time is delivered in a special education class:

* **Self-Contained** – Students with special education needs who are enrolled in and attending a self-contained special education class, where the maximum enrolment in that self-contained class conforms with Regulation 298 (R.R.O. 1990, section 31), for the entire school day.
* **Partially Integrated** – Students with special education needs who are enrolled in and attending a self-contained special education class, where the maximum enrolment conforms with Regulation 298, for at least 50 percent of the school day, but are integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.

**Regular Classes** -- Students with special education needs for whom more than 50 per cent of instructional time is delivered in a regular class:

* **Withdrawal Assistance** – Students with special education needs who are enrolled in a regular class and are receiving instruction outside the regular classroom for less than 50 per cent of the school day from a special education teacher.
* **Resource Assistance** – Students with special education needs who are enrolled in a regular class and are receiving direct specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a special education teacher.
* **Indirect Service** – Students with special education needs who are enrolled in a regular class and are receiving direct instruction from a regular classroom teacher to whom the board provides specialized consultative services.

Question 11- When they will update the files to include the 2015/16 and 2016/17 school years?

Response - Data for the 2015 -16 is available for reporting purposes.

Question 12 – There is a note at the bottom of the facts by year that the methodology has changed. What was changed and why?

Response – The note in question refers to a change in data collection method. The ministry implemented student level data collection through OnSIS in 2005-2006 and began using this system as the primary data source as of 2006-07 and onwards. Prior to 2006-07, data was collected at an aggregate board level. This change in collection method should be taken into consideration when comparing legacy data collected before 2006-2007 with student-level data collected in and after 2006-2007.

Question 13 – Since numbers are reported as a percentage of "students with special education needs" and that category is not defined, how can the Ministry make sense of the data, considering the variability among boards in those numbers?

Response - The following are the data elements that are collected for special education in OnSIS at the student level.

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Students receiving special education programs and / or services are those that are identified as such in OnSIS reporting. With regards to the percentage of students receiving special education programs and / or services in a regular class, this is collected via OnSIS and through the Special Education Placement/ Instructional Setting data element. With respect to placement decisions, each school board uses its total funding allocation, Special Education Grant and other Grants for Student Needs allocations, to provide programs and services to meet the special education needs of its students. The flexibility in resource allocation remains with the boards because they are in the best position to respond to local needs when setting budget priorities and determining what special education programs and services are needed to meet the needs of their students.

Question 14 - How does the Ministry use this data?

The Ministry of Education uses data on “students receiving special education programs and/or services” for program and policy development/decision making, program monitoring and evaluations, funding and to disseminate it publically.

Question 15 - How does the Ministry respond to the wide variation among boards?

Response – The Ministry of Education recognizes that school boards have different practices with respect to the provision of special education programs and services.

Question 16 - Is provincial and school board data also kept concerning the Exclusion of students with special education needs?

Response – The Ministry of Education does not collect this information.

Question 17- Preliminary data on informal suspensions?

Response – The Ministry of Education does not collect this information.

Question 18 – Does the Ministry track school board policy and statistics concerning "refusal to admit" students?

Response – The Ministry of Education does not collect this information.