



## **Specialized Assessment**

### **Legal References:**

[Public Schools Act \(Manitoba\)](#), [Appropriate Educational Programming Regulation 155/2005](#)

Park West School Division values information gathered by the classroom teacher as the first source of information regarding student learning. The Division recognizes that some students may require services beyond those available within the school, including specialized assessments. Specialized Assessment provides additional information to support appropriate educational programming for students. If information from school-based assessments, differentiated instruction, adaptations and other school-based interventions is found to be insufficient in assisting the student to meet expected learning outcomes, the in-school team will initiate a request for service for specialized assessment.

### **Specialized Assessment**

Specialized assessment refers to an individualized assessment conducted by qualified clinicians or practitioners across a variety of domains and specific learning contexts to provide additional information on the special learning needs and abilities of students. This can include assessment of learning, social/emotional, behavioural, sensory, physical, cognitive/intellectual, adaptive, communication, academic or special healthcare needs relevant to students' learning and performance. The results of specialized assessments are used to guide programming decisions, develop Student-Specific Plans, and assign support services. A student must not be denied educational programming pending the conduct of an assessment or the preparation of a Student Specific Plan (SSP).

### **Professional Qualifications**

Specialized assessments are conducted by qualified clinicians or practitioners on an individual basis to determine what factors are affecting the student's learning and what approaches would assist the student to meet the learning expectations in the classroom. Individuals conducting specialized assessment will comply with [Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba, Standards for Student Services](#) (Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning, 2022) and the standards and guidelines set by their professional organization.



## **Referral Process for Specialized Assessment**

Principals are responsible for ensuring that a student is assessed as soon as reasonably practicable and that a request for service for a specialized assessment is initiated if:

- A student is referred for a specialized assessment if the in-school team cannot determine why a student is having difficulty meeting the curricular learning expectations.
- A student is referred for a specialized assessment if the in-school team determines that differentiated instruction and adaptations are insufficient to assist the student in meeting the curricular learning expectations.
- A student's parent (or the student, if 18+ years old) is informed before the student is referred for a specialized assessment, and no interviewing or testing as part of the assessment may occur without informed consent.
- The informed consent policy of the school division is followed.

## **Informed Consent**

Informed consent is an individual's or legal guardian's (substitute decision maker's) voluntary consent, when properly and fully advised of the procedures, risks, and benefits, to participate or not participate in an activity of assessment, intervention/treatment, or programming (or change in such). Consent may be withdrawn at any time.

Principals are responsible for ensuring that the informed consent process is followed. Once the principal, the in-school planning team and individual(s) responsible for conducting the specialized assessment have decided that specialized assessment is required, the following steps must occur:

- The need for specialized assessment must be explained by the case manager and or clinician to the parent(s)/guardian(s) in clear language to ensure that they have a good understanding of the process and expected outcomes.
- [Inter-Professional Collaborative Referral](#) will be initiated by the case manager in consultation with the in-school team and divisional team (clinicians and Director of Student Services) and case manager will gather required signatures. The completed form will be returned to the Director of Student Services to add their signature.



- A letter to parent(s)/guardian(s) confirming the specialized assessment will be mailed. A final copy of the Inter-Professional Collaborative Referral will be given to the clinician.
- In situations of joint or shared custody, both custodial parents must provide written consent for the assessment to proceed, unless otherwise stated in court documents.
- Once signed consent has been obtained, the clinician responsible for conducting the specialized assessment may contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) to begin the specialized assessment procedures.
- Appropriate timelines, including timelines for follow-up meetings, reporting of results and written reports, must be identified by the school team and or clinicians conducting the specialized assessment and communicated to the parent(s)/guardian(s).

### **Timeline**

- Requests for service for specialized assessment will be prioritized by the clinician in collaboration with the in-school team and Director of Student Services. Prioritization will be based on needs and/or requirements.
- Specialized assessment will be completed as soon as reasonably practical. Appropriate programming will continue while the student is waiting for specialized assessment.
- When required, divisional emergent issues will take precedence.
- Specific requests from parent(s)/guardian(s) will be addressed based on the above procedures.
- Direct requests for service for specialized assessment from physicians, other professionals will be addressed by the above procedures.

### **Conducting Specialized Assessments**

Specialized assessments will be conducted by a qualified clinician. In conducting the assessment, the clinician will:

- Follow principles of fair assessment practice
- Involve parent(s)/guardian(s), where appropriate



## Specialized Assessment Reports

- Specialized assessment reports will be written by a qualified clinician in a way that is clear and concise, and interpreted in a way that is respectful of the parent's/guardian's/adult student's language and literacy needs. The clinician and in-school planning team will make every reasonable effort to involve the parent/guardian/adult student in the development of a follow-up plan and to assist them in understanding it. [Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba, Standards for Student Services](#) (Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning, 2022).
- Specialized assessment reports will provide the parent(s)/guardian(s) or adult student and the in-school planning team with a summary of assessment findings and recommendations for programming. Recommendations may include other methods of curriculum access including differentiated instruction, assessment, adaptations and/or modifications to assist the student in meeting grade level or student-specific learning outcomes.
- In collaboration with the individuals providing the specialized assessment, the assessment data will be used by the in-school planning team to inform programming decisions and to monitor student progress for students with special learning needs and abilities. School teams, including parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student, when possible, are responsible for developing student-specific plans, where indicated by the assessment process.
- A copy of the specialized assessment report will be mailed to the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Results from specialized assessments will be released to individuals or agencies outside the school system only with signed consent from the parent/ or as required by legislation governing the sharing of personal health information. ([See Release/Exchange of Information form](#))