

The Principal's Role

Regulation 181/98 designates the school principal as the individual responsible for ensuring that transition plans are developed and maintained in accordance with the regulation. That is, the process must include consultation with:

- the parent (and the student, if age 16 or over); and
- such community agencies and postsecondary educational institutions as the principal considers appropriate.

As well, the *plan* must:

- take into consideration IPRC and/or Special Education Tribunal program and service recommendations (if any);
- be completed within 30 school days of the commencement or confirmation of the student's placement and a copy must be sent to a parent of the student and the student, if age 16 or older;
- be filed in the student's OSR.

To facilitate the implementation of transition planning, the principal may choose to:

- develop school-level procedures;
- create a transition-planning staff resource group; and/or
- develop orientation strategies to help staff, students, families, and community representatives become familiar with the transition-planning process.

The principal should also monitor the implementation of transition planning to ensure that it complies with the requirements of the regulation, ministry policy, and school board policy (where applicable).

Developing School-Level Procedures

The procedures used by schools for developing transition plans, unlike those for developing Individual Education Plans, call for outreach into the wider community. Whether or not school board transition-planning procedures are in place, specific school-level procedures can therefore be helpful to the staff responsible for developing student transition plans.

School-level transition planning procedures could be developed by a small group of staff, appointed by the principal, who have an interest in exceptional children. This group might include representatives of the school's:

- special education staff;
- guidance and career education program;
- cooperative education program;
- teacher-advisers; and/or
- classroom teachers.

To acquaint themselves with the concepts of transition planning, group members could:

- participate in school board transition-planning in-service sessions, if available;
- review school board, ministry, and other resource documents (including this guide);
- consult material from the resource list of this guide; and/or
- find out what other schools are doing.

In developing the school's transition-planning procedures, the group could address questions such as the following:

- Who should have responsibility in practice for individual student transition plans?

- How could the process be made flexible enough to accommodate the diverse needs of all exceptional students?
- How can transition planning be coordinated with other individualized planning processes such as the annual education plan (AEP)?
- How can transition planning be coordinated with other programs, including the teacher-adviser program, the guidance and career education program, and the cooperative education program?
- How should the process be monitored and improved?
- What should be done to familiarize teachers, students, and parents with the transition-planning process?

In preparing to implement transition planning, the staff group could identify and contact various resource personnel, including:

- school board resource persons;
- key staff in other local schools (to coordinate efforts);
- local further education institutions or programs;
- local employment committees, boards of trade, service clubs, unions, and chapters of professional associations;
- local health and community service agencies;
- local parent associations (e.g., Association for Community Living; Learning Disabilities Association).

Links established with community agencies at the school board level can assist schools in contacting and setting up cooperative arrangements with these resource persons or groups. (See “Establishing and Maintaining Links With Other Organizations” under “The School Board’s Role”, p. 7.)

Creating a Transition-Planning Resource Group

In most schools, a core group of staff may be called on to serve on a number of transition-planning teams. These will likely (but not necessarily) be the same people who assisted in developing the school-level transition-planning procedures. The principal might formally designate these staff persons as the school’s Transition-Planning Resource Group and expect them to provide leadership in transition planning within the school.

Over time, certain staff from external organizations (such as health care and social service agencies, employer groups, and further education programs or institutions) may come to be closely involved with the school in transition planning and could be included as external members of the school’s Transition-Planning Resource Group.

Providing Orientation Sessions for Transition-Planning Teams

To avoid explaining the transition-planning process individually to each participant, schools could organize one or more orientation sessions each year for:

- teachers;
- students;
- family members;
- students’ support providers; and
- anyone else who is new to the transition-planning process.

The goal of the orientation session(s) would be:

- to ensure that all of the participants on each student’s transition-planning team are familiar with the purpose of transition planning and the process to be followed;
- to provide detailed information about the range of services and programs available to support students after they leave school.

Alternatively, orientation sessions could be sponsored by:

- the school board;
- the board's Special Education Advisory Committee;
- the school council.

Monitoring Implementation

Monitoring requirements for Individual Education Plans are set out in the Ministry of Education policy document *Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation, 2000*. Because the transition plan is part of the IEP, these standards for IEP monitoring also apply to transition plans. In particular, the principal must ensure that the staff member assigned to coordinate the development and implementation of the plan has:

- reviewed the plan with the principal;
- met with appropriate staff to discuss implementation of the activities described in the plan;
- informed appropriate teachers, parents, and the student of any changes to the student's learning expectations resulting from the plan;
- discussed with the appropriate teachers the importance of parental (and student) involvement in implementing the plan;
- established a plan and timetable for evaluating and monitoring the student's progress; and
- shared information about this monitoring plan with appropriate staff, parents, and the student.

The principal could include procedures for evaluating and monitoring the student's progress in the statement of school-level procedures for transition planning. For example, the school-level procedures related to monitoring might:

- assign monitoring responsibility to transition-planning team leaders;
- require that monitoring occur at least once during the year and more frequently where appropriate (e.g., for students whose learning expectations, as set out in the IEP, are revised during the school

year or whose needs and goals change significantly during the school year);

- require that monitoring occur early enough in the year to allow for changes to be made if needed;
- encourage involvement of the student and his or her family wherever this is possible and reasonable (e.g., in monitoring the actions in the plan for which they are responsible);
- require phone calls or face-to-face interviews with parents (and with students, where appropriate);
- require team leaders to assess whether the actions specified in the student's transition plan are occurring within the stated timelines and are of an acceptable quality.