

Student-Specific Planning

A Guide for Parents & Guardians

Brandon School Division

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INTRODUCTION

The Role of Parents, Guardians and Students in Student Specific Planning

Student-specific planning is a collaborative process in which families, educators, support staff, and other professionals work together to support students who require accommodations, adaptations, modifications, or individualized programming. The goal is to help each student reach their full potential.

A Student-Specific Plan (SSP) may include one or more of the following documents: an Adapted Education Plan (AEP), a Curriculum Modification Plan (CMP), an Academic Individual Education Plan (IEP-A), an Individual Education Plan (IEP) addressing non-curricular areas, a Behaviour Intervention Plan (BIP), or an English as an Additional Language Student-Specific Plan (EAL-SSP).

An SSP is a written document developed by a collaborative team. It outlines strategies and supports tailored to the individual needs of the student and incorporates the voices of both the student and their parent or guardian.

Parents and guardians bring essential insights and understanding about their child that serve as a vital foundation for student-specific planning. When families are familiar with the school's philosophy, build relationships with staff, and engage in school activities, they are more likely to feel confident and satisfied with their child's educational experience.

We acknowledge parents and guardians want meaningful opportunities to be involved in all aspects of their child's education. Schools value parents and guardians being a part of the decision-making process and are committed to ongoing communication, access to information, and collaborative dialogue. Please note that the SSP is a flexible, working document. Since students learn in different ways and at different paces, goals may shift during the term to ensure their individual learning needs are met.

As key partners in education, parents, guardians, and students play an integral role in the student-specific planning process. They contribute unique perspectives, informed by past experiences, individual goals, interests, and personal insights. The support and efforts provided at home significantly enhance the achievement of the goals developed through this collaborative process.

Who Needs a Student Specific Plan?

A Student-Specific Plan (SSP) is created when a school team identifies that a student has additional learning and/or social-emotional needs that require targeted support to meet curricular or individual outcomes.



Types of Student Specific Plans and When They Apply

It is important to note that a child may have one or multiple different student-specific plans to best meet their individual needs.

Adapted Education Plan/Adaptation Plan (AEP) used when:

- The student requires changes to teaching methods, materials, assignments, or products to help achieve expected learning outcomes.
- Clinical assessments or professional recommendations support this need.
- The student works toward grade level outcomes. Progress is reported using the provincial report card.

Curriculum Modification Plan (CMP) used when:

- The student has a **mild or moderate intellectual development disorder** (diagnosed by a certified clinician).
- The student **cannot achieve a passing mark** on the provincial curriculum **even with support**.
- Instruction must be *modified* beyond simple adaptations.
- The student is assessed on the expected learning outcomes outlined in the CMP. Progress is reported using the provincial report card and IEP box is checked.

Individual Education Plans (IEP) (two types)

Academic IEP used when:

- The student has a **severe or profound intellectual development disorder** diagnosed by a certified clinician.
- The student is **unable to meet or come close to meeting** the provincial learning outcomes, even with ongoing support.
- The focus is on **achieving individualized academic goals**.
- Progress for students with an Academic IEP is reported using the IEP document. The front page of the report card should be completed and accompany the IEP-R (IEP Report). In certain circumstances there may be additional anecdotal reporting provided- i.e. in Physical Education, Music, Art, etc.

Non-Academic IEP used when:

- The student needs support in **non-curricular areas** such as:
  - Social-emotional development
  - Communication
  - Fine motor skills
  - Independence
  - Other functional life skills
- Academic progress for students with a Non-Academic IEP is reported on the provincial report card. Progress towards their individual non-academic goals will be commented and reported on the IEP document.

Behaviour Intervention Plan (BIP) used when:

- The student has **social, emotional, or behavioural** challenges that require structured and intentional support strategies.
- BIPs are reviewed, assessed and reported on by the team at regular intervals.

English as an Additional Language Student-Specific Plan (EAL-SSP) used when:

- The student is in Stage 1 or Stage 2 of their English Language Learning.
- Subject-area curriculum must be significantly adjusted to accommodate for English language learning.
- The student is assessed on the expected learning outcomes outlined in the EAL-SSP. Progress is reported using the provincial report card and EAL box is checked.



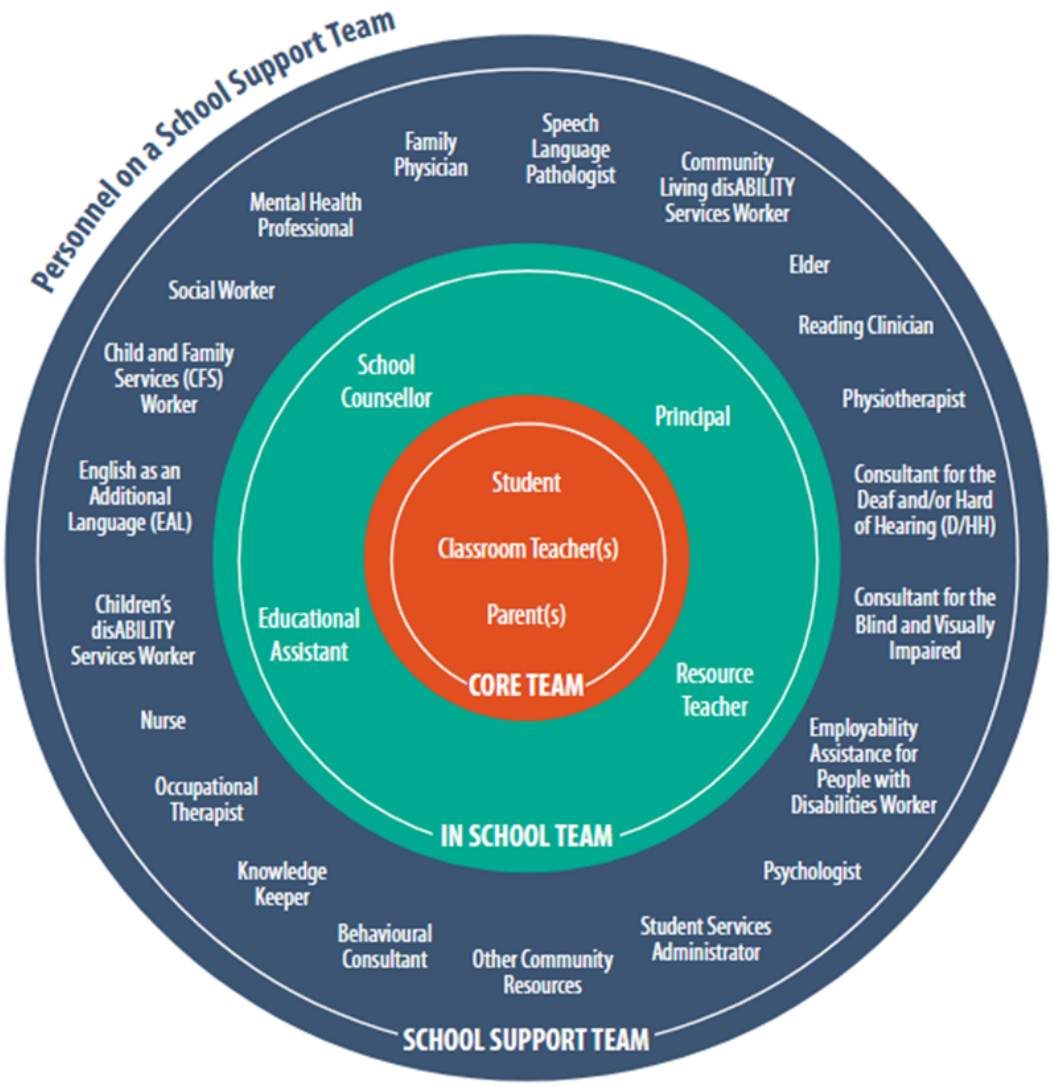
Components of an SSP

All SSPs, contain the following essential information and components:

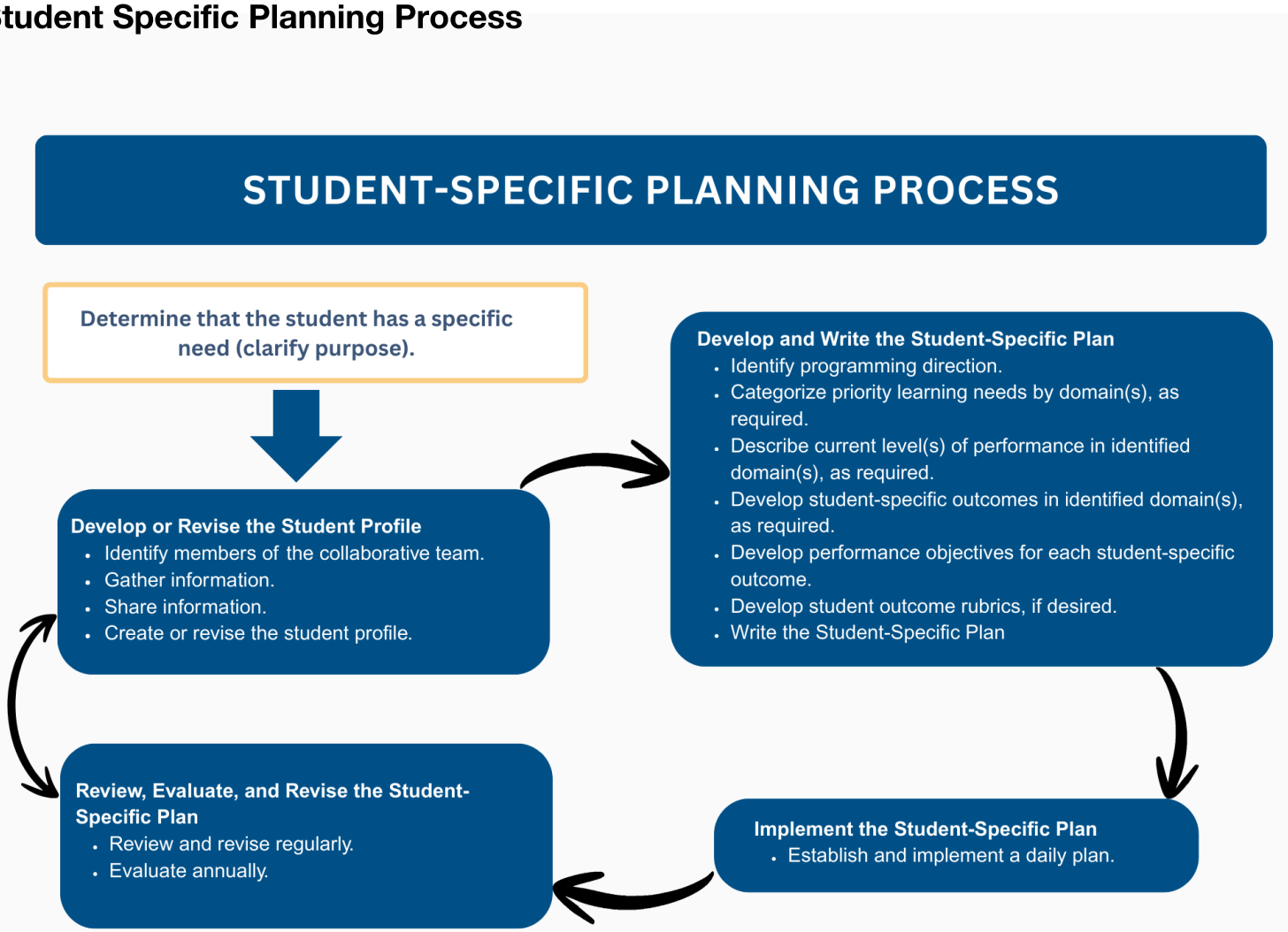
- Student identification and strength-based student profile and information.
- The name of the case manager and a list of the team members who will contribute to the planning and implementation of the SSP.
- Current levels of performance that reflect team consensus on the student's abilities and needs.
- Student-specific outcomes/Performance objectives are outlined for (CMP, IEP, BIP, EAL-SSP).
- Teaching methods, materials, and strategies.
- A timeline of evaluation and review.
- Signature from guardian.

Collaborative Planning Team

A team is formed for students who have learning needs that require support. For students, who have many learning needs, a variety of support people may be involved. The number of people on a student's team will depend on the needs of the student and expertise required to develop and implement an education plan. Some possible team members include:



Student Specific Planning Process



The Student-Specific Planning (SSP) process is designed to be flexible, allowing guardians to participate meaningfully and collaboratively at all stages of the plan's development.

Stage 1: Develop or Revise the Student Profile

- Identify members of the collaborative team. It is important to note that parents/guardians are welcome to invite other family members or support people to be a part of the team. Please let your child's case manager know if there are additional people you would like invited to the meeting.
- Gather information
- Share Information
- Create or revise the student profile

A student profile summarizes relevant history, background information, assessment, and diagnostic information. Using a strength based approach, the team identifies the student's strengths, interests, preferences, and learning style, and works together to identify the priority of needs.



A Parent/Guardian may want to contribute in the following ways:

- Suggest additional participants who know the child well, such as extended family members, community mentors, or outside service providers (e.g., therapists or tutors).
- Inform the child's case manager about anyone they wish to include, ensuring everyone important to the student's success is represented.
- Provide background information about the child's learning history, health, interests, routines, and behaviors at home.
- Share relevant reports, documents, or observations that might not be available to the school team (e.g., private assessments, medical updates, or progress from extracurricular programs).
- Share changes in the home setting that may cause emotional responses.
- Offer insights about how the student learns best, responds to challenges, and demonstrates strengths outside the classroom.
- Review and contribute to the student profile by sharing personal observations about the child's interests, motivations, and learning preferences.
- Participate in prioritizing needs and goal setting to make sure that the profile reflects the student's whole development — academic, emotional, and social.



A Parent/Guardian may want to ask questions in this stage about:

- Who will be part of my child's collaborative team, and what is each person's role?
- What types of information or assessments will the team use to understand my child's strengths and needs?
- Are there any additional reports or insights from home that would be helpful for the team to have?
- How can I share what I notice about my child's learning and behaviours at home?
- What are the best ways for me to stay in communication with teachers and staff?
- What are the top priorities the team has identified, and do they align with what I see at home?

Stage 2: Develop and write the SSP

- Identify the programming direction
- Categorize priority needs
- Describe current levels of performance
- Develop student-specific outcomes
- Develop performance objectives for the individual student



All students are capable of learning; however, they do not all learn the same content, at the same pace, or in the same way. Recognizing and addressing these differences is essential in designing effective educational programs. Establishing a clear programming direction ensures that performance objectives are well-defined and that specific steps for achieving student goals are outlined. An initial SSP can be created at any point during the school year. Once a CMP, IEP, BIP, EAL-SSP is created, reviews and assessments are ongoing.

At this stage, the team:

- Identifies appropriate assessment strategies to monitor progress and guide instruction.
- Clarifies the roles and responsibilities of each team member to ensure collaboration and accountability.
- Develops detailed plans that align instructional methods, resources, and supports with each student's unique learning needs.

Through this structured approach, the team ensures that every student receives an equitable opportunity to achieve success according to their individual strengths and learning profiles.

A Parent/Guardian may want to contribute in the following ways:

- Provide examples of what the student enjoys, excels at, or shows curiosity about at home and in the community.
- Describe preferred activities that motivate the child and can be used to support learning goals.
- Share how the child learns best (e.g., visual, hands-on, structured routine, technology-supported).
- Communicate strategies that work well at home to help the child stay engaged, organized, or calm.
- Give descriptions of what the child can currently do independently or with help in areas such as academics, communication, self-regulation, or social skills.
- Reveal any recent changes in behavior, attitude, or skill level noticed outside of school.
- Report the family's perspective on the most important areas for growth (academic, social, emotional, or life skills).
- Present insights into challenges or barriers the child faces that the school team should consider when setting priorities.
- Share hopes and aspirations for the student's short- and long-term future (e.g., transition goals, independence, relationships, future learning).
- Explain cultural or family values that should inform programming decisions.
- Suggest ideas for how home and school can work together to reinforce goals.
- Ask for ways parents can support skill development at home or in the community.

A Parent/Guardian may want to ask questions in this stage about:

- Are there any new assessments, observations, or reports that have been completed or that the team is looking at administering?
- Would you be able to provide clarification regarding the scores listed on my child's report card or IEP reports?
- How can I support these goals at home?
- How is our child's relationships with peers and friends?



Stage 3: Implement the Student Specific Plan

Effective implementation of the plan facilitates the students' learning by:

- Providing the student with opportunities to develop and practice skills
- Monitoring student's progress and achievement
- Identifying changing student needs
- Reviewing and revising the daily plan and goals (if needed)

A Parent/Guardian may want to ask questions in this stage about:

- How will I reinforce the skills being taught at school while at home?
- What communication methods will be used between school and home (emails, journals, meetings)?
- How will my child's progress toward their goals be measured?
- What types of assessments or observations are being used to track improvement?
- How often will progress be reviewed and communicated to us?
- Who will be communicating the progress to us?
- How can we work together to ensure consistency between school and home strategies?
- What will success look like for my child in this plan?
- If progress is slower than expected, what steps will be taken?

Stage 4: Review, Evaluate, and Revise the Student Specific Plan

As a part of the ongoing instruction and assessment cycle, the student support team meets to review, evaluate, and revise a student's educational programming.

- Review and revise regularly
- At least annually, a formal team meeting will occur
- SSPs are reviewed and reported on at regular reporting times (with the report card).

A Parent/Guardian may want to ask questions in this stage about:

- If goals and objectives were not met, were new ones set?
- Are supports tailored to the strengths and needs of the student?
- Have social and behavioural needs been addressed by the plan?
- Does the SSP outline a transition plan (if appropriate)?



Transition Planning

Students with SSPs may benefit from additional support during transitions. New life changes bring unfamiliar situations which require a specialized plan.

There are many types of transitions:

- Entering the school system
- Moving between activities and settings
- Moving from level to level
- Entering or leaving a school (elementary to high school to adulthood)
- Preparing for adult life

A transition plan involves identifying the skills that need to be in place for the students to be successful in future settings and developing a plan of action to ensure students acquire these skills and attitudes.

Parents/Guardians play an essential role in planning and supporting transitions. The transition plan will be included in the transition domain of the student's SSP.



Glossary of Terms

The terms listed in this glossary may or may not be used during the SSP meeting. They are, however, used regularly within the school system.

- **Accessibility:** Removing physical or other barriers or obstacles to ensure access to buildings, facilities, media, materials, electronic systems, and environments, and to ensure equality for all individuals.

- **Accommodation:** A means of identifying, preventing, and removing barriers that impede students with disabilities from participating fully in the educational environment in a way that is responsive to their own unique circumstances. The principles of accommodation involve three factors: dignity, individualization, and inclusion.

- **Adaptation:** A change made in the teaching process, materials, assignments, or pupil products to help a student achieve the expected learning outcomes (Manitoba MR 155/05).

- **Adaptive Functioning:** Refers to a person's ability to meet "community standards of personal independence and social responsibility, in comparison to others of similar age and sociocultural background. Adaptive functioning involves adaptive reasoning in three domains: conceptual, social, and practical" (APA 37)

- **Adapted Education Plan (AEP):** Specialized assessments and recommendations from clinicians or other clinical professionals indicate that the student requires a change in the teaching process, materials, assignments, or pupil products to assist them in achieving the expected learning outcomes.

- **Appropriate Educational Programming:** A collaborative school-family-community process focused on creating learning environments and providing responsive resources and services that address the lifelong learning, social and emotional needs of all students.

- **Assessment:** The systematic process of gathering information about what and how a student has learned in order to make decisions about what to do next to continue the learning.

- **Assistive Technology:** Any item, piece of equipment, product, or system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capability of individuals with disabilities.

- **Behaviour Intervention Plan (BIP):** An intervention plan developed by a team to meet a student's social/emotional and behavioural needs.

- **Case Manager:** A member of the school-based student support team designated by the principal to coordinate the team's collaborative work to meet individual student needs through the student-specific planning process and student-specific plan (SSP) development and monitoring.

- **Catchment or Home School:** The school students would usually attend with their siblings and neighbours.

- **Clinician:** An individual trained in the provision of support services within the school setting who provides services for students with exceptional learning needs and consultative services for school personnel and parents/guardians.

- **Curriculum:** The curriculum prescribed or approved by the Minister of Education, outlining expected learning outcomes.

- **Curriculum Modification Plan (CMP):** A student-specific plan for students with modified subjects or courses.

- **Daily Plan:** A plan that outlines how a student's student-specific plan (SSP) will be implemented daily, the student's daily timetable, and the learning expectations, outcomes, or goals.

- **Differentiated Instruction:** A method of instruction or assessment that alters the presentation of the curriculum for the purpose of responding to the learning diversity, interests, and strengths of students.

- **Domain:** The specific area of development that may be targeted in the IEP. Examples of domains include communication (verbal and non-verbal), cognitive/academics, recreation/leisure, self-help (dressing and feeding), community functioning, vocational, physical (mobility and gross/fine motor), independent living (money and time management), social skills/relationships (play skills, sensitivity to others, and responsibility taking), and transition.

- **Educational Assistant:** Is a broad term that encompasses paraprofessionals hired to assist teachers in the access and delivery of educational programming in schools.

- **Inclusion:** A way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued, and safe. An inclusive community constantly evolves to meet the changing needs of its members.

- **Inclusive Education:** Providing all students with the supports and opportunities they need to become participating members of their school communities.

- **Individual Education Plan Academic (IEP):** Programming intended for students whose diagnosed intellectual disability/intellectual developmental disorder is so severe or profound that they do not benefit from participating in curricula developed or approved by Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning. Appropriate educational programming would involve identifying high individualized functional learning experiences related to building independence in domains outside the provincial curriculum.

- **Individual Education Plan Non- Academic (IEP):** A type of Student-Specific Plan that documents student-specific outcomes (SSOs) that are in domains outside of the provincial curriculum. For example, a student can have IEP goals around communication, social emotional, independence, and so on.

- **Individual Transition Plan (ITP):** A formal plan developed to help a student with additional learning needs as they prepare to exit the school system. The plan is developed by the student's SSP team. A transition domain is added to the SSP and reviewed annually.

- **Informed Consent:** An individual's voluntary consent to participate in an activity (assessment, intervention, or program) after first being fully advised of the benefits and risks. It can be withdrawn at any time.

- **Intersectoral Services:** Services provided for students with exceptional learning needs that involve the collaboration of a variety of government departments, agencies, and local organizations.

- **Level of Performance:** A specific description of a student's skills, needs, and strengths in each domain or subject area.

- **Modification:** Changes made by the school support team in the number, essence, or content of the learning outcomes a student is expected to meet in the provincial curriculum, made by the teacher or school team.

- **Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH):** A planning process often used at transitions to identify goals for the student.

- **Performance Objectives:** Student-specific outcomes broken down into small, manageable components or steps.

- **Pupil File:** A collection of written information about a student's education, stored in a file in the school or school division office in paper, electronic, or other form.

- **Resource Teacher:** A teacher whose principal duties are to assist in determining appropriate instructional strategies when a mismatch in instruction and student needs occurs, to give direct assistance to teachers and students when required, and to provide school personnel, parents, and guardians with consultative services.

- **School-Based Team:** The people who may be involved with a student on a daily basis at school—key decision-makers in the SSP process who may include the student, parents or guardians, teacher, resource teacher, counsellor, educational assistant, and principal.

- **School Counsellor:** Teachers who provide support for activities that involve providing students with personal, career, social development, and referral assistance, and working with other staff members in planning and conducting guidance programs for students.

- **Specialized Assessment:** An individual student assessment completed by divisional personnel or community professionals that extends the information acquired by the in-school planning team through school-based assessment. The purpose of a specialized assessment is to collect specific information regarding the exceptional learning needs of students across a variety of domains and contexts. Specialized assessment areas may include exceptional learning, social/emotional, sensory, behavioural, physical, cognitive/intellectual, adaptive, communication, academic or health-care needs, and other factors relevant to student performance and learning. A specialized assessment identifies other methods of differentiated instruction and assessment, as well as adaptations and/or modifications that can be used to assist the student in meeting grade-level or student-specific outcomes.

- **Student Services:** Staff and services provided by the school division to meet the needs of students who have exceptional learning, social/emotional, behavioural, sensory, physical, cognitive/intellectual, communication, academic, or health-care needs.

- **Student-Specific Outcome:** Another term currently used for "goal" in an SSP—states what the student will learn and when this will be accomplished.

- **Student-Specific Plan (SSP):** The written documentation of a specific plan to support a student's exceptional learning needs. It may range in length from one page documenting student-specific adaptations (AEP) to a lengthier documentation of a student's programming, outlining student-specific outcomes developed by a larger team.

- **Student with Additional Learning Needs:** A student who requires specialized services or programming, when deemed necessary by the in-school team, because of exceptional learning, social/emotional, behavioural, sensory, physical, cognitive/intellectual, communication, academic, or healthcare needs that affect their ability to meet learning outcomes.

- **Transition:** Moving a student from one environment to another at key points in their development from childhood to adulthood (i.e., entry into the kindergarten or nursery school years, from one grade to the next, or from high school to post-secondary education or employment or to adult services).

- **Universal Design:** The process of creating systems, environments, materials, and devices that are directly and repeatedly usable by people with the widest range of abilities operating within the largest variety of situations.

References

Portions of this document have been adapted from the following Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning documents:

- **Standards for Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba**
  - https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/aep/pdf/standards_for_student_services.pdf

- **Student-Specific Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Individual Education Plans**
  - https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/iep/pdf/planning/student_specific_planning.pdf

- **Supporting Inclusion: Modification and Individualized Programming in Manitoba Schools**
  - https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/pdf/supporting_inclusion_m_i.pdf

- **Working Together: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs in School**
  - https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/parent/pdf/workingtogether.pdf

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