# Standard 9: Special Education Placements Provided by the Board

## Special Education Placements Provided By the Halton District School Board

The Halton District School Board believes in the need for a range of student placements to meet the varying degrees of interventions, supports and services that students with different abilities require. As part of the Board’s annual review of the Special Education Plan, the Board’s Special Education Advisory Committee is consulted on the range of placements offered by the HDSB.

In keeping with legislative requirements (Reg. 181/98), the principles of inclusion as outlined in the Ontario Human Right’s Commission’s Guidelines on Accessible Education, and the beliefs of the Halton District School Board, placement in a regular classroom setting is given first consideration when it meets the needs of the student and is consistent with parental preference.

## Range of Student Placements in the Halton District School Board

### Resource Support

Resource Support provides for special education supports and services within the regular classroom and most often at the student’s designated home school. There are three categories defining resource support, outlined below.

Resource Support may include accommodated, modified or alternate programs provided in the classroom by the classroom Teacher with direct intervention and assistance by other staff (e.g. Special Education Resource Teacher, Child and Youth Counsellor, Educational Assistant). Students in Resource Support placements may also be working on alternative curriculum.

Students in Resource Support placement remain the responsibility of the classroom Teacher first and foremost. However, recognizing that additional support and guidance is often needed to support students with exceptionalities, the Special Education Resource Teacher assigned to each school acts as a ‘key Teacher’ to assist staff and students with appropriate supports and services. They assist in the development of the Individual Education Plan and other plans that might be required to support the student (e.g. Behaviour Intervention Plan, Safety Plan).

It is sometimes advisable or even necessary for the student to attend a school other than their designated home school even though their placement is Resource Support. Factors may include location of specialized equipment at designated sites, building accessibility and environmental factors that may have an impact on the child’s ability to access an education (e.g. level of noise and activity due to size of student population, building design). In such cases a discussion will occur with the parents/guardians, home School Principal, Instructional Program Leader and any other Student Services staff. When it is determined that the student shall attend an alternate school site, transportation is provided as per Board policy.

Categories of Resource Support:

1. Resource Support – a Regular Class with Consultative Support.

The student is placed in a regular class for the entire day, and the Teacher receives specialized consultative services;

1. Resource Support – a Regular Class with Resource Assistance.

The student is placed in the regular class for most of the day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, from a qualified special education Teacher;

1. Resource Support – a Regular Class with Withdrawal Assistance

The student is placed in a regular class and receives instruction outside of the classroom, for less than 50% of the instructional time, from a qualified special education Teacher;

1. Resource Support – Secondary Gifted Placement

A congregated grouping of students with an identification of Giftedness at designated secondary (high) schools. Students will be scheduled with non-identified learners in particular courses at the secondary school level. The Ontario curriculum in each of the clustered classes will be differentiated in breadth, depth and pace from the curriculum being offered in the regular class.

Secondary students in grades 9 and 10 are timetabled together into the same class for the core academic subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, Geography and History. Students in grades 11 and 12 are timetabled together into the same University level courses as timetables permit

#### Process for Placement in Resource Support:

* Formal identification of exceptionality through the IPRC process;
* IPRC process reviews and confirms the request for placement;
* IPRC notifies the parent/guardian of the decision as per Regulation 181/98;
* Creation of an IEP no later than 30 instructional days following the placement date.

\* Note: Students may receive resource support services through the recommendations of the School SRT. The SRT may recommend the development of an IEP prior to or in lieu of a recommendation to IPRC. The decision to develop an IEP for a student is not limited by the student meeting the criteria for a specific exceptionality group. A parent/guardian may request that the School Resource Team consider the development of an IEP.

### Self-Contained Special Education Classes

A self-contained class provides a student identified as exceptional with an opportunity to:

* Access a more intensive intervention program in an appropriate class of a size as per Regulation 298, section 31 (see Appendix);
* Address areas of significant learning needs/strengths;
* Develop independent learning strategies relevant to their learning needs/strengths;
* Become a more self-directed learner;
* Experience success with the support of the parent, school and community in order to move towards increasing levels of integration into the regular classroom as appropriate.

Classes have been established with a particular focus based on the common needs of students within the class. The student’s learning needs are matched to the program focus of the self-contained class.

Every self-contained class is staffed by a Teacher with special education additional qualifications. Each program has access to a variety of supports from Student Services and other departments.

#### Categories of Self-Contained Placements:

1. Partial Integration: The student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class for more than 50% of the day. The student-Teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298 (Section 31);
2. Full-Time: The student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class for the entire school day. The student-Teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298 (Section 31).

#### Criteria for entry to a Self-Contained - Special Education Class:

* A student is registered and enrolled with the Halton District School Board;
* A student has been identified as exceptional through the area IPRC process;
* The IPRC makes a determination, based on the recommendation of the Principal and/or parent, that placement in a Self-Contained Class is the most effective option to address the student’s strengths and needs.

#### Process for Potential Placement in a Self-Contained – Special Education Class:

* All avenues of support have been explored at the home school as per the problem-solving pathway;
* Principal involves Area Instructional Program Leader and/or Senior Manager in problem solving, including at the SRT;The Request for Self-Contained Class Location is completed with the parents/guardians and the school staff;
* Area staff (i.e. Area IPL and/or Senior Managers) makes a determination regarding location. Factors considered include: age/grade level of student in comparison to those currently in a class; exceptionality of student; learner profile; and distance of class to home address;
* Sending School Principal is informed of most suitable location;
* The parents/guardians are invited to visit the class recommended by the Student Services Department;
* Parents/guardians confirm that they would like to proceed to IPRC or may ask to return to SRT for further discussion;
* If proceeding to IPRC, the IPRC process reviews the request and confirms if appropriate;
* The Principal, on behalf of the SRT makes a recommendation for a self-contained setting and a request is made to go to IPRC;
* IPRC notifies the parent/guardian of the decision as per Regulation 181/98.

## Types of Self-Contained Classes and Programs in Halton: Elementary

\*Note: The range of grade levels noted for each type of self-contained class/program represents general guidelines. The specific needs of individual students may result in some exceptions to the intended target group.

### Special Education Placements:

### Primary Language Class (Grade 1-2)

The Primary Language Class (PLC) is a self-contained placement for Grades 1 and 2 students that provides speech and language intervention integrated with a regular primary curriculum. It provides support for students with significant language needs who have at least average non-verbal cognitive ability. There is a multi-disciplinary approach in the design and delivery of the program. The goal of the PLC is to provide appropriate language-based interventions integrated into the primary curriculum. This would typically include, for example, grammatical instruction, phonemic instruction, language patterning, expanding on descriptive skills, and sequencing in both oral and written forms throughout the day. Instructional practice is based on research supported and differentiated instructional practices.

The program also provides some assistance to the parents/guardians and families of the students to help them understand the nature of their child’s speech/language difficulties. The program is designed, delivered and monitored by a Special Education Teacher in conjunction with intervention from a Speech-Language Pathologist. Upon demission from the class, the PLC team monitors transition to the student’s home school. Class size is 10 students.

### Behaviour Resource Centres - BRC (Grade 1-8\*)

This placement is for students whose primary identification is behaviour, who have difficulty meeting the expectations of the regular classroom setting and who would benefit from the approach and supports available in the BRC. The primary focus of this placement is to assist students through enhanced skill development in the following areas: a).social skills, b) emotional regulation; and c) executive functioning skills. Through a variety of programs and strategies, including evidence-based interventions such as Collaborative Problem-solving and Positive Action, students are provided opportunities to learn, practice and consolidate their enhanced skills.

The goal is to reintegrate students into a regular classroom setting. Integration into regular classrooms occurs when the student has demonstrated that there has been enhanced skill development that will allow for successful inclusion in the integration classroom. Integration starts with staff support from the bRC and then is faded when the student demonstrates success.

Most students will be supported in regular class placements by employing individualized program with support by support staff. Class size will be up to 8 students.

\*Although Behaviour Resource classes may accommodate students from grades 1 – 8, it is generally felt that the classes are most appropriate for students in junior and intermediate grades up to grade 7.

### Learning Disabilities (Grade 4-8)

The focus of the placement is to provide students with learning disabilities with additional support in the areas of reading/writing ( receptive language, language processing, expressive language), numeracy, technology and self-advocacy. Students in these classes are experiencing significant difficulties with grade level curriculum for a variety of reasons and may have additional exceptionalities in addition to a learning disability making their learning profiles very complex. The student suitable for this class requires a highly structured, differentiated and supported learning environment. Direct instruction that will promote remediation of skill gaps and the development of learning and coping strategies in the areas of literacy and numeracy will be used in the class along with evidence-based and differentiated instructional practices. Programming will address the development of individual learning strategies to access the curriculum. In addition one or more of the following areas will be addressed self-advocacy, self esteem, social skills, organizational skills, self-management or study skills. Technology skills addressed will focus on development or maintenance or enhancement of the use of assistive technology. Integration into regular classes will be minimal. The placement is optimally, but not limited to a one to two-year period with intensive support to address the areas of need and regular ongoing assessment and evaluation of growth. Ongoing communication will occur with the parent/guardian and the SRT of the home school to facilitate the transition for reentry to the home school setting, ideally before entering the intermediate division. Class size is up to 8 students.

### Life Skills (Grades 4-8)

This placement supports the learning needs of students who present with significant to severe developmental delays. The students in this type of Class have unique learning needs and benefit from carefully structured, concrete learning experiences. They often make a transition to a Community Pathway Program at the secondary level.

These classes use evidence-based and differentiated instructional practices, encompassing a range of programming, from alternative curriculum based on the student’s developmental stage to the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills based on Ontario curriculum. There is a focus on the development of independence in the skills of daily living, including communication, self-regulation, self-advocacy and social skills. In order to reduce transitions for students in the Life Skills placement, the board employs, where possible, to a 2 Life Skills class per school model (e.g.: a junior class and an intermediate class in a single school) rather than having single classes in individual schools. Class sizes will be maintained at 10 students or less. Students may be in this placement fulltime, or they may be partially integrated into mainstream classes within the school.

#### Classes for Students Identified as Gifted

Students identified as gifted and who are placed in an elementary self-contained setting require program modifications to meet their intellectual needs as well as the intellectual stimulation and challenge provided by congregation with peers of similar ability. Although the students will not necessarily receive instruction in all subjects from a Teacher with Special Education Additional Qualifications (i.e. Music, Visual Arts), by virtue of the fact that the class stays together as a whole throughout the timetable, it is deemed a “Full-Time” self-contained placement. Placement is available for students in grades one to eight. Classes for students identified as gifted tend to be clustered together in one school in each of the Halton areas: Georgetown/Halton Hills, Milton, Oakville and Burlington.

## Special Education Programs

#### Communication Program (JK – Grade 4)

The Communication Program is for students who are in kindergarten to early junior grades and who are severely limited in their communication skills. The focus of the program is the establishment of a functional communication system appropriate to the student’s specific needs. A total communication approach (e.g. oral, signed English, Picture Exchange, augmentative and alternative communication devices…etc) is used in the program. A Speech-Language Pathologist consults to each class on a weekly basis to establish specific communication goals for each student. Students transition from the program when functional communication goals have been addressed. It is expected that the student will continue to receive support to generalize these goals in addition to the other needs demonstrated by the student. These classes are located in all areas of the board and transportation is provided to the program.

## Types of Self-Contained Classes and Programs in Halton: Secondary

### The Community Pathways Program (Secondary)

The Community Pathways Program supports students identified as exceptional who have limited cognitive and adaptive skills. It is designed to meet the needs of students who require an Alternate Curriculum to meet their varied learning needs including communication, functional academics, skills of daily living, social skills, self-regulation, and motor skills. A holistic approach, based on individual strengths, needs, long-term goals and real-life experience of the student, is used to design and deliver an individual education program in a self-contained setting. Programs are non-credit goals to support students to develop independent/semi-independent living skills. Students complete their secondary schooling and transition out in June of the calendar year in which they turn 21 years of age. Students graduate with The Certificate of Accomplishment or The Ontario Secondary School Certificate. Within the Community Pathways Program there are also two Certificates available to support students with successful independent employment – the Employment Skills Certificate (ESC) and the Community Skills Certificate (CSC). Independent or semi-independent integration into the community is the major goal of the Community Pathways Program. Students may be in this placement fulltime or they may be partially integrated into mainstream classes within the school.

#### PROPS (Positive Return of Pupils to School) Program

This is a regional level program (not a placement). It is intended to support students with extreme social-emotional and behavioural challenges within a secondary setting. This program is currently located in two secondary schools, one in north Halton and one in Oakville and admission is facilitated through a Senior Manager of Professional Services. Class size is 1:6-8 students.

#### Locations for Special Classes, Programs or Placements

Locations for special classes, programs or placements are carefully considered so that they are offered in appropriate accessible buildings and classrooms that suit the purpose of the program. The Student Services department will recommend potential new special class /programs locations to Facility Staff to incorporate into their planning of new schools.

#### Regular Review

Each year the Halton District School Board will conduct regular reviews of its programs and placements to ensure they are being successful in meeting the needs of the students they were designed to serve. These findings will be reported as part of the Board Improvement Planning Process.

#### Student Needs Outside of the Board’s Range of Placements

The Halton District School Board offers a wide variety of programs at the elementary and secondary level. Where a student’s needs fall outside of the range of alternatives offered by the Halton District School Board, problem-solving with the parents/guardians, other Boards, other service providers and other support services will be undertaken to seek appropriate alternatives.

## Range of Special Education Placements and Services in Halton

### Placement and program of the child is dependent on individual strengths and needs.

**(Ministry of Child and Youth Services)**

**Care and Treatment Programs**

**(Ministry of Health)**

**Care and Treatment Programs**

**Only as far as** **Necessary**

**Decreased Intervention**

**Return as Appropriate**

**Interventions/ Additional Supports:**

* **MDST**
* **Itinerant Teachers**
* **Special Services Staff**

**Increased Intervention**

**Other**

**“Hard to Serve”**

(Case Resolution Function)

**Regional Residential/Day Schools Special Provincial**

(Deaf/Blind/Learning Disabilities)

**Residential/Day Treatment Facility**

(Education Programs in Care, Treatment, Custody and Correction Facilities)

**Self-Contained - Full Time**

A Special Education Class in which the student remains for 100% of the school day.

**Self-Contained - Partial Integration**

A Special Education Class in which the student remains for more than 50% but less than 100% of the school day

**Resource Support**

Secondary Gifted Placement (Gr. 9-12)

**Resource Support**

A regular class with withdrawalassistance

**Resource Support**

A regular class with resource assistance

**Resource Support -**

A regular class with consultative support

**Regular Class**

Individual differences met by Classroom Teacher (Accommodations, modifications, individualized instruction, etc.)

## Elementary Programs AND PLACEMENTS

| Exceptionality  (Class Size Ratio  Teacher: Student) | Resource Support | Self-Contained Placements | | | | | Programs |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Learning Disability (1:8) | Life Skills  (1:10) | Behaviour  (1:8\*) | Gifted  (1:20 - Primary)  (1:25 – Junior Intermediate) | Primary  Language Class  (1:10) | Communication. Program(1:6-8) |
| Learning Disability | **✓** | **✓**  Gr. 4-8 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Deaf and Hard of Hearing | **✓** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Language and/or Speech Impairment | **✓** |  | **✓**  Gr. 4-8 |  |  | Gr. 1-2 | **✓**  JK-4 |
| Autism | **✓** |  | **✓**  Gr. 4-8 |  |  |  | **✓**  JK-4 |
| Giftedness | **✓** |  |  |  | **✓**  Gr. 1-8 |  |  |
| Mild Intellectual Disability | **✓** |  | **✓**  Gr. 4-8 |  |  |  |  |
| Developmental Disability | **✓** |  | **✓**  Gr. 4-8 |  |  |  | **✓**  JK-4 |
| Behaviour | **✓** |  |  | **✓**  Gr. 1-7 |  |  |  |
| Physical Disability | **✓** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Blind and Low Vision | **✓** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Although Behaviour Classes may accommodate students from grades 1 – 8, it is generally felt that the classes are most appropriate for students in junior and intermediate grades up to grade 7.

This chart indicates the typical exceptionalities found in each placement. When recommending placements for students, however, the students learning profile is considered in addition to the student’s identification and therefore exceptions may be made on an individual student basis.

## Secondary Programs AND PLACEMENTS

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Exceptionality | Resource Support  Placement | Secondary  Gifted Placement | Self – Contained Placement | Program |
| Class Size Ratio Teacher: Student | Community Pathways Program  1:10-12 | PROPS  (Positive Return of Pupils to School)  1:6-8 |
| Learning Disability | ✓ |  |  | ✓ |
| Deaf and Hard of Hearing | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Language and/or Speech Impairment | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ |
| Autism Spectrum Disorder | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ |
| Giftedness | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ |
| Mild Intellectual Disability | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |
| Developmental Disability | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |
| Behaviour | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ |
| Physical Disability | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |
| Blind and Low Vision | ✓ |  |  |  |

This chart indicates the typical exceptionalities found in each placement. When recommending placements for students, however, the students learning profile is considered in addition to the student’s identification and therefore exceptions may be made on an individual student basis.