



Sharing Information with Schools

The Diagnosis Verification Form

For many years, medical specialists have sought direction about how to best share diagnostic information with schools. To this end, the **Diagnosis Verification Form** has been developed by a working group of the **BC Pediatric Society** to improve understanding, and to streamline the process of information sharing. This form is recommended for use when a child is referred to you for learning and/or related problems in school.*

The purpose of this brochure is to provide a clear picture of how the medical and educational systems can work together to improve the supports for students and families.

Communicating with the School

Sometimes the parents and child arrive at your office with a lack of understanding about the difficulty in school. In this package we've included a form letter you could use to request further information from the school.

Once you have seen and assessed the child, it is recommended that you fill out the **Diagnosis Verification Form** (*copy enclosed*) indicating a clear diagnosis or diagnoses and associated educational/functional impacts for that child. If it is not yet possible to provide a diagnosis or diagnoses, then please explain the circumstances and provide information about the educational/ functional impacts. A correctly filled out Form eliminates the previous practice of writing a letter.

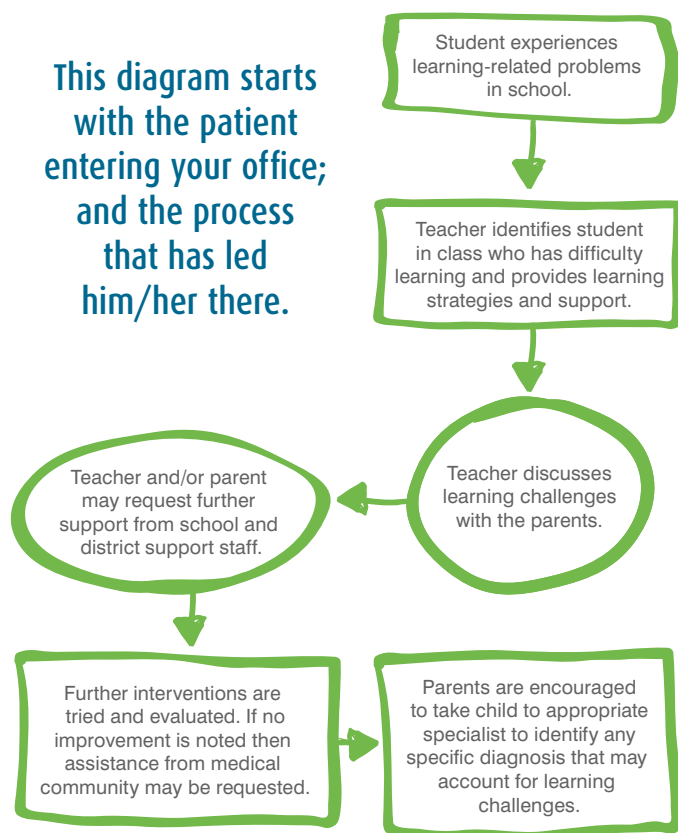
The Form should be addressed to the school contact as identified by the family and the Director/District Principal of Student Support Services for the school district. Contact information for these individuals in each school district is posted on the Ministry of Education website: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/SN.do

What Happens at the School

Identifying a student with special needs is a decision made by the school based on specific criteria, student performance, and available assessment information, including yours.

In most cases, if a student is identified as having a special need, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed as soon as possible, in consultation with the parents. The IEP will include goals, strategies, and measures for tracking student achievement

This diagram starts with the patient entering your office; and the process that has led him/her there.

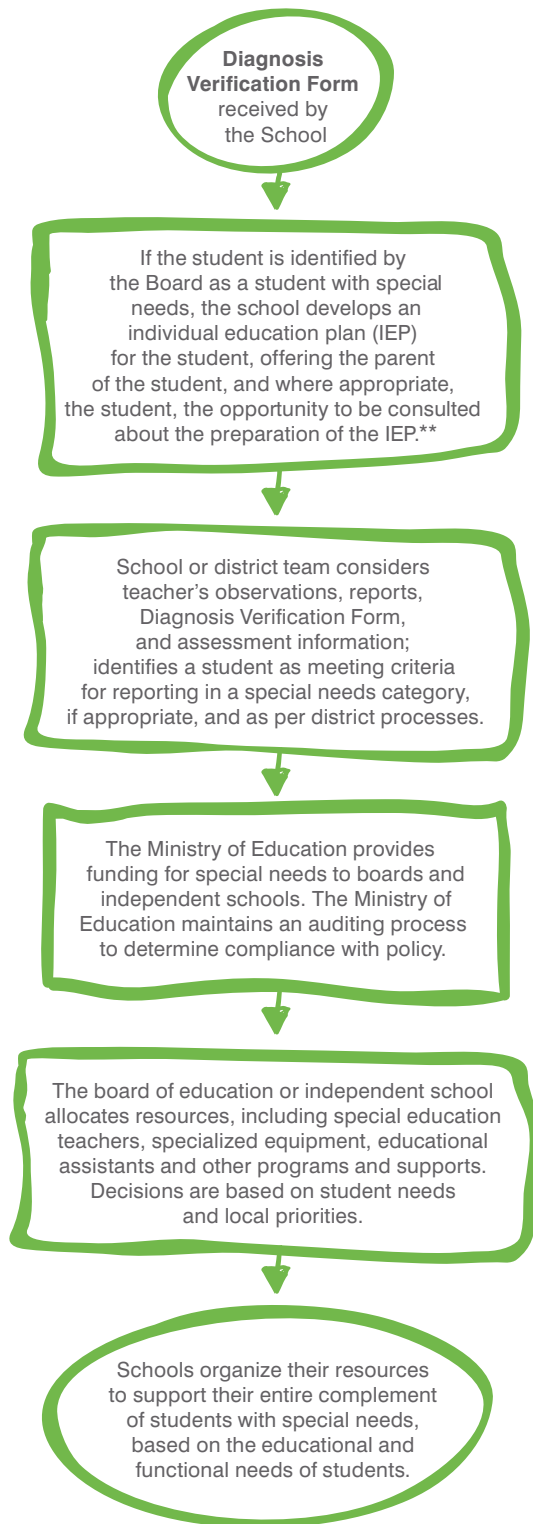


in relation to the goals. It also documents any special education services being provided as these relate to the student's individual needs. Assessment information provided in the **Diagnosis Verification Form** can be very useful in the development of the annual IEP.

To provide equity and accessibility, some students with special needs are also eligible to receive accommodations for writing provincial exams.

*In the public k-12 system, schools are governed by local boards of education. Likewise in the independent k-12 school system, independent schools are governed by a governing body (Authority).

The Diagnosis Verification Form - the new way to easily share diagnostic information with schools.



Did you know?



Parents and physicians often assume that funding received for students with special needs is dedicated to the individual child. In fact, the Ministry of Education provides untargeted funds to boards of education or independent schools. Decisions regarding the planning and delivery of supports and services for all students, including the allocation of funds, are made by boards of education based on the needs of students and schools in their district (or Authority of independent schools).

The Ministry of Education provides a Basic Allocation per school age student enrolled in a school district or independent school eligible for Provincial funding. The Basic Allocation includes funds to support the learning needs of students who are identified as having learning disabilities, mild intellectual disabilities, students requiring moderate behaviour supports or who have mental illness, and students who are gifted.

Additionally, the Ministry provides supplementary funding for unique student needs to recognize the additional cost of providing programs for students with special needs in the following categories: dependent handicapped, deaf/blind, moderate to profound intellectually disabled, physically disabled/chronic health impaired, visually impaired, deaf/hard of hearing, autism spectrum disorder, and intensive behaviour interventions/serious mental illness.

**Supplemental funding
for unique student needs,
provided in addition to
the Basic Allocation,
is not targeted to
specific students.**



**Schools and district staff are guided in their decision making by the Individual Education Plan Order (Ministerial Order 638/95): www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e/m150-89.pdf and the Ministry of Education document: *Special Education Services, A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines*: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg.htm.



Specific information regarding supplementary funding for the Physical Disability/Chronic Health Category:

A student is considered to have a physical disability or chronic health condition based on the need for special education services due to one or more of the following:

- Nervous system impairment that impacts movement or mobility
- Musculoskeletal condition
- Chronic health impairment that seriously impacts students' education and achievement

The medical diagnosis or diagnoses should correspond to these areas.

The medical diagnosis or diagnoses must be clearly documented (for example, for FASD include and integrate information from multiple sources and various disciplines). There must also be evidence that the student's functioning and education is **significantly** affected by his/her physical disability/chronic health impairment.

Appealing a Decision

Decisions about identifying students with special needs are made by the school and the school district. The Ministry of Education encourages those with concerns about the needs of a student to consult with school district administrators responsible for student services. Contact information for these individuals in each school district is posted on the Ministry of Education website: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/SN.do. These individuals will be able to respond to concerns in light of the legislative and reporting requirements described above.

Under Section 11 of the School Act, if parents are not satisfied with decisions made by school district officials that significantly affect the education, health and safety of a student, they may appeal to their local board of education. The office of the superintendent in each school district will be able to provide information about this formal appeal process. In the case of Independent Schools, contact should be with the governing body operating the school (Authority).



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The BC Pediatric Society has worked with the following partners in order to provide you with assistance in writing these reports:

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- Bob Eslinger** District Principal, Student Support Services, SD 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith)
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- Bill Standeven** Manager, Diversity and Equity Branch, Ministry of Education, Governance & Accountability Division
- Diane Sugars** Executive Director, BC Learning Disabilities Association Vancouver
- Jennifer Tong** Director of Special Education, Catholic Independent Schools (on behalf of the Office of Independent Schools, Ministry of Education)

We hope that you have found the information contained in this brochure helpful to your practice.

Please forward any comments you have about this material to:

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BC Pediatric Society & The American Academy of Pediatrics (BC Chapter)