Delta
School
District
Inspired Learning

Special Education in Delta

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
(Revised January 2012)

Frequently Asked Questions

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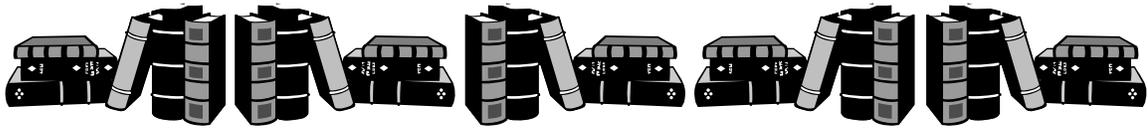
Student diversity in Delta classrooms is an ongoing reality! Some have been officially diagnosed and others just present with difficulties. As well, inclusion of all students is both a Ministry and District policy. When Special Programs surveyed parents and staff several years ago, both groups raised the issue of needing more information about how best to address student learning in Delta classrooms.

To this end, we have updated our Frequently Asked Questions document. As is typically the case in supporting students with special needs, answers are seldom definitive and clear cut. Decisions are almost always made on an individual student basis, still, we hope you find the general information in this document to be a useful reference.

We have framed the answers in the context of Ministry and District policy as outlined in the Ministry of Education's Special Education Manual of Policies and Guidelines and the Delta School District Special Programs Resource Binder available at each school. Please consult these references for further information.

We hope you find this information useful in helping you develop an inclusive classroom where all students are active, successful learners.
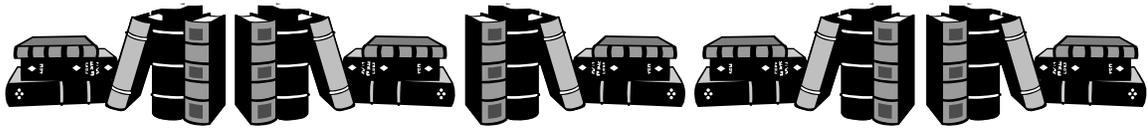
Should you have any specific questions please don't hesitate to contact any of the following support people in Special Programs by phone (604 952-5339) or by email:

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Special Education in Delta
Frequently Asked Questions

ASSESSMENT	
Each school in Delta should have a School-Based Team consisting of an administrator, learning support teacher, counsellor, speech and language pathologist (elementary only) and a school psychologist. When students in the classroom present with challenges that are beyond the expertise of the classroom teacher, the teacher can access the School Based Team for assistance. Sometimes the School Based Team recommends that a student has a psycho-educational and/or behavioural assessment to determine the best course of action to assist the student. The school psychologist commonly completes the assessment.	
What is the process for getting a student assessed by the psychologist?	❑ If a parent would like his/her child to be assessed, they should contact the child's teacher who may bring the student forward to the School Based Team for discussion and consideration for assessment.
Who gets tested and on what priority schedule? **How long is the waitlist for assessment?**	❑ The School Based Team decides which students will be assessed and, in consideration of the school psychologist's schedule, when they will be assessed. ❑ Delta school district is staffed similarly to other districts in the province with regard to the ratio of school psychologists to school population. ❑ As in other districts, school psychologists struggle to keep up with the demands for student assessments.
What testing needs to be completed before placement in a special program?	❑ In Delta, we require that all students be assessed before placement in a special resource program. This assessment is required to ensure that student placement is accurate.

Why does the Ministry require so many assessments?	□ The Ministry of Education requires that all identified students (i.e. all high & low incidence students) be assessed to ensure that they meet the requirements for that designation. □ All assessments are aimed at providing fair and equitable service to students. □ Some students are assessed by medical practitioners, mental health clinicians or multi-disciplinary teams such as the BC Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN).
Can tags (Ministry designations) be taken away?	□ In the event that a previously identified student no longer meets the requirements for a specific designation, the designation is removed, both from the Delta School District and the Ministry of Education records.
Can a student be tested outside of the district? How much is it? Will it be recognized? Who can do it?	□ Assessments completed outside the district are generally acceptable, as long as they are done by a registered psychologist. The cost for this service varies.

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FUNDING

How are funds for special needs students allocated? (i.e. Counsellors, Supportive Learning, Education Assistant, etc….)
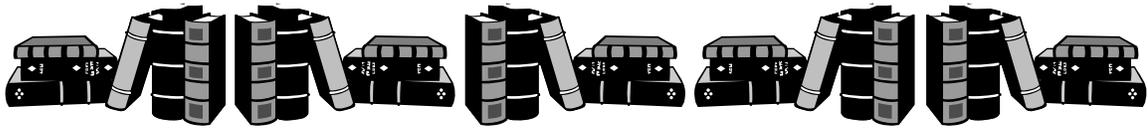
How much money does a student's designation generate and does it all go to that specific student? If not, why not?

How much money is generated by each Ministry tag? And how is that money used/spent?

- There are two sources of Ministry funds for students with special needs. Some students qualify for individual funding and others are included in the general per student amount from the ministry.

- The district receives funding for individual students which is used to provide Special Education teachers and Education Assistant time. These resources are provided to the school to organize in a way that best supports the students in the classroom

- In Delta we have about 650 students who qualify for individual funds. These students are considered "*low incidence*" meaning that there is a relatively low incidence or small number of them in the larger school population. They are as follows:

| BC Ministry of Education Special Education Funding Levels and Categories		
Level	**Category**	**Funding**
☐ **Level 1**	☐ (A) Physically Dependent	$36,600
	☐ (B) Deaf/Blind	
☐ **Level 2**	☐ (C) Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabled	$18,300
	☐ (D) Physical Disabilities or Chronic Health Impairments	
	☐ (E) Visual Impairments	
	☐ (F) Deaf or Hard of Hearing	
	☐ (G) Autism Spectrum Disorder	
☐ **Level 3**	☐ (H) Intensive Behaviour Intervention/Serious Mental Illness	$9,200

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- The rest of the students with special needs are not individually funded. They were until 2001 when the Ministry of Education changed the funding formula. These students are identified as:
    - (Q) Learning Disablility
    - (K) Mild Intellectual Disability
    - (R) Moderate Behaviour Support/Mental Illness
    - (P) Gifted
- As there are a comparatively large number of students with these disabilities within the typical school population, they are termed "*high incidence*" disabilities.
- The funds to support these students and other special education services (counselling, psychological assessment, speech and language therapy, learning support, educational assistant support) are included in the per student funding we receive for each of the 15,600 Delta students.

How are secondary teachers for the Learning Disabled (LD) funded? **What is the school allocation?**	- Secondary students with Learning Disabilities (LD) are supported through the LD support teacher or the learning support teacher. There is usually EA time assigned to one or both of their programs to assist as well. - The secondary school allocation for LD teachers is about 1.0 fte teacher + 1.0 fte EA for each 25 to 30 students.
Why do "H" students get more funding than "R" students when, by definition, "H" students are already receiving extensive support?	- "H" students receive individual funding because theoretically they require more support and planning than a moderate behaviour student (R). - Integrated Case Management Planning means that these students require support and planning both during school and outside of school hours. Often they have behaviour and emotional challenges in school, home and community settings. - In reality, moderate students (R) could benefit from community agency involvement but for various reasons are not accessing these services.

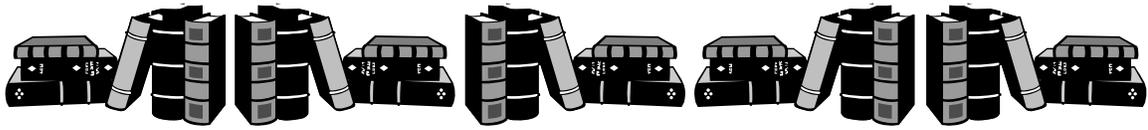|	
How is funding allocated for students with learning disabilities? What does this look like at a school?	❑ Most students with learning disabilities at the elementary level receive assistance and IEP case management from the learning support teacher and the school based education assistant.
How is it that students with the same tag can have different resources allocated to them?	❑ Resources are allocated by both tag and demonstrated need. Some students require more support than their funds generate.
If a student has 2 tags (Ministry Designations), do they receive funding in both categories?	❑ Students with special needs are funded under one category only. Thus, if a student has autism and is hearing impaired he/she would be funded for one of these categories and receive service from the appropriate teachers.
Where does funding for Child and Youth Care Workers (CYCW) come from?	❑ Community LINK funding is provided by the Ministry of Education. ❑ In Delta this funding is also used to fund the Food grants to support hungry students in many of our schools.
Who is responsible for providing class sets of textbooks?	❑ The first person to ask for textbooks at secondary is the textbook coordinator at the school level. All students assigned to a school (including Supportive Learning (Alternate) Programs) generate funds for textbooks at the school level. The textbook coordinator may be able to access copies from within the building or from other schools. ❑ If textbooks are not available at the school level, Special Programs will ask the district learning resources committee for additional textbooks.

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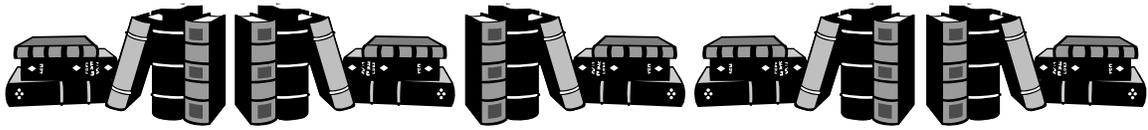
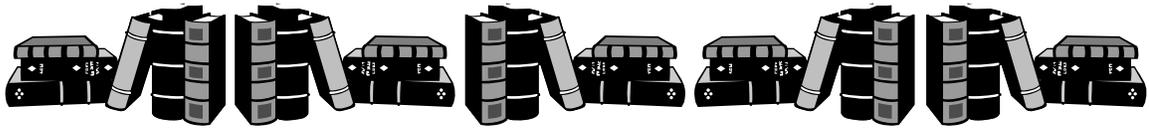| BEHAVIOUR	

What is the difference between low and high incidence?	❑ ***Low Incidence*** and ***High Incidence*** refer to funding categories from the Ministry of Education.
	
	❑ ***Low Incidence*** students qualify for individual funding while ***High Incidence*** students are included in the general per student amount from the ministry
	
	❑ The term "*low incidence*" refers to the fact that there is a relatively low incidence or small number of these students in the larger school population. They are as follows:
	
	    ○ Physically Dependent (A)
	    ○ Deaf/Blind (B)
	    ○ Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability (C)
	    ○ Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment (D)
	    ○ Visual Impairment (E)
	    ○ Deaf or Hard of Hearing (F)
	    ○ Autism Spectrum Disorder (G)
	    ○ Intensive Behaviour Intervention /Serious Mental Illness (H)
	
	❑ The rest of the students with special needs are not individually funded. These students are identified as:
	
	    ○ Learning Disability
	    ○ Mild Intellectual Disability
	    ○ Moderate Behaviour Support/Mental illness
	    ○ Gifted
	
	❑ As there are a comparatively large number of students with these disabilities within the typical school population, they are termed "*high incidence*" disabilities.

What's the difference between an "R" and "H" designation?	❑ Students with Intensive Behaviour Intervention/Serious Mental Illness (H designation) are in the Low Incidence category and are individually funded, as they require more support than students in the Moderate (R designation). ❑ IBI students have behaviour and emotional challenges in school, home and community and therefore require Integrated Case Management Planning to coordinate all services.
Do "R" and "H" students need to see the counsellor?	❑ Elementary students identified as Moderate or Intensive Behaviour usually have the counsellor as case manager of their IEP. They may be seeing the counsellor as part of their educational program. ❑ At the secondary level "R" + "H" students who are not assigned to a Supportive Learning (Alternate) Program or other support teachers, may be receiving support from their school counsellor.

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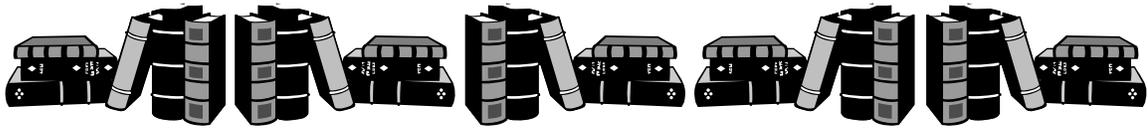| SUPPORT AND SERVICES	
What are the criteria to be identified as a student with special needs?	❑ The Ministry of Education has set out specific criteria for a variety of special needs (see website below). Some categories are funded per student, others by school allocation. http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg.htm See Funding – Appendices H, Pg. 31
When is a student moved to a resource room? **Why is this student in my class?**	❑ Delta's philosophy is that all students have an opportunity to belong and learn in a regular class with age-appropriate peers. ❑ The first goal is always to support the student in their neighbourhood school with additional programming, services, staffing and expertise. ❑ Only when the school has exhausted all options and there is still a significant need for additional support, such as full time emergency EA support, or if there is significant impact on the learning of the other students, would it be necessary to move a student to a specialized program or resource room.
Do parents have a choice about whether to send their child to a resource room?	❑ District staff may recommend a specific setting, but it is up to the parents to decide where they would like their child placed.
If a student goes into a resource room, will he/she have to stay?	❑ Student placement will be discussed at the end of each school year. Some students may move to a mainstream classroom, with support from the mainstream support teachers. Others may be supported by Learning Support Teachers. Each student's placement is reviewed on an individual basis.

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Can a student in a resource room receive LAT support for his/her academics?	❑ Schools do not generally have enough Learning Support time to support students in resource rooms. This is done through the lower pupil/teacher ratio in the resource room.
How can I advocate for my student/child?	❑ Parents – Ask questions, be informed and approach school and District Special Programs staff for assistance. ❑ The Parent Advocacy program is available through DPAC. http://dpac.deltasd.bc.ca/ ❑ Teachers – Bring concerns and questions to the School Based Team, your building administrator or to District Special Programs staff.
The school has advised that a student see a counsellor/ therapist in the community, but the child refuses to go. What should a parent do?	❑ Have the student's teacher or school counsellor speak to him/her, and see if they can explain to them why it is suggested that they go to see a counsellor or therapist outside of school. Parents should keep the school informed about their child's progress regarding the request for outside intervention.
What is the main purpose of any Supportive Learning Program (junior or senior?)?	❑ To provide students who are capable of meeting Dogwood or Evergreen requirements with a school experience which addresses their various social/emotional/behavioural needs.
If a student goes to a Supportive Learning (Alternate) Program, will he/she graduate with a Dogwood?	❑ All academic courses required for Graduation with a Dogwood are taught within the Supportive Learning (Alternate) Program.
Is there a school program for students with attention problems?	❑ There is no district program for students with attention difficulties. ❑ Best practice is for these students to receive the assistance they need in their regular classroom placement with specific strategies implemented for their needs.

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How does Itinerant teaching time get decided?	❑ Different itinerant teachers have different caseloads. ❑ Mainstream Support Teachers tend to work with approximately 30 students. ❑ Hearing Teachers tend to work with approx 18 students. ❑ Vision teachers tend to have caseloads around 8 dependent on the number of students using Braille. ❑ These numbers are based on a full time teacher, anything less is pro-rated.
How do I refer a student for Visiting Teacher Services?	❑ Referrals to the Visiting Teacher Program are made through the school counsellor or school administrator. Fill out the Referral form found on First Class, Special Programs, Forms, Referrals. Send completed form to Special Programs. ❑ Generally students are referred who may be away from school due to long term hospitalization or illness and/or students who are under a doctor's care for emotional difficulties and are not able to attend school.
How many years can I have Visiting Teacher services? **Can a Visiting Teacher course be completed without going to school?**	❑ Visiting Teacher support is available for as long as the student requires the service. ❑ Students who are enrolled in Delta and receiving services from the Visiting Teacher are offered these services due to health or behavioural concerns. ❑ They may complete courses at home under the direction of a Visiting Teacher.

Do I need to let the counsellor/principal know I want to call the Ministry for Children and Family Development (MCFD)?	❑ All staff have the responsibility and right to call MCFD to report concerns about student abuse or neglect. ❑ Delta policy states that you should also let the administrator know that this has been done. It is also good practice to consult with the school counsellor as well. ❑ Any general calls to MCFD do not require consultation with a counsellor or principal.
Who qualifies for SET-BC? (Special Education Technology – BC) **When does the district committee meet and how are the requests evaluated?**	Students who have a diagnosis of: Visual Impairments, Dependent Handicaps, Deaf/Blindness, Autism and Moderate to Profound intellectual Disabilities. ❑ As the allocation of technology is limited, districts must prioritize their requests. ❑ All requests go through the SET-BC District Committee. Forms on First Class. ❑ Districts are allocated a certain number of points per year which are like a budget. ❑ Varying pieces of technology 'cost' a varying number of points. ❑ Requests are reviewed three times per year – with the first being the end of September.
How is it determined who gets "easy writer" types of machines for output support at the elementary school level? **Why doesn't my student get a laptop?**	❑ The district does provide a limited number of Netbooks for students who have written output difficulties. ❑ Fill out the request form found on First Class under Forms, Applications, Request for Netbook. Send the completed application to Special Programs. ❑ Unfortunately there is not enough funding available to provide laptops or other technology for all students who would benefit.

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Why does special education (life skills) seemingly get more resources?	❑ The specialized curriculum for these students entails different costs than the typical programs. They often require additional equipment, (i.e.: wheelchairs, technology) materials and staffing for a variety of medical, behavioural and academic needs. ❑ The school district receives additional funding over and above the general funding to meet the unique needs of these students. ❑ Students in Resource Rooms require specialized resources to meet their educational goals and therefore, do not access general district learning resources.
Where can parents find resources, information, funding for their child when they graduate?	❑ Teachers of specialized programs and high school counsellors usually have a good deal of information about services available. ❑ Parents should have received a copy of *'Your Future Now – Transition Planning and Resource Guide'* binder in their child's Gr. 10 year. If a student does not have a copy, contact your Coordinator or download from the district website. ❑ The Career Centre in the high schools have information about services and resources available. ❑ All post-secondary institutions have a Support Services department. ❑ For Low Incidence students, the social worker, through Community Living BC (CLBC), can provide guidance. ❑ For students with specific diagnoses, the individual Associations would have the best information. For example: students with Autism would contact the Autism Society.

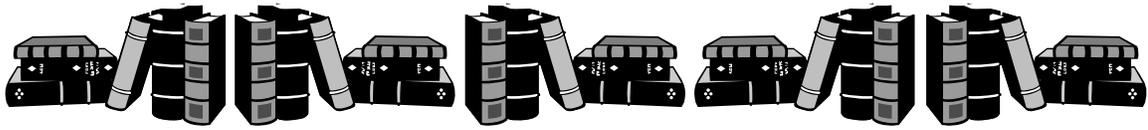|	
Why can't a teacher refer directly to a counsellor without the school team knowing?	❑ At many schools, referrals for specialized services are made through the School-Based Team in order to coordinate and prioritize these limited resources. ❑ Teachers are always welcome to speak to counsellors on a consultative basis about any student.
Why aren't there more hours of counselling time?	❑ As with Speech Language services, Delta's guidelines for counselling support are consistent with other districts. ❑ The staffing for counselling has not declined in the past few years even though we have had a reduction in the number of students in the district. Our ratio is consistent with most other districts and more favourable than some.
What does early intervention look like in Delta?	❑ There has been a significant increase in the awareness and availability of early intervention support in the last few years. ❑ Services are available at the community level for students from 6 months to 5 years through the Fraser Health Units, Infant Development programs and specialized Preschools. ❑ At the school level we have increased efforts to identify students who may be at risk early in their primary years and to provide intervention and support.
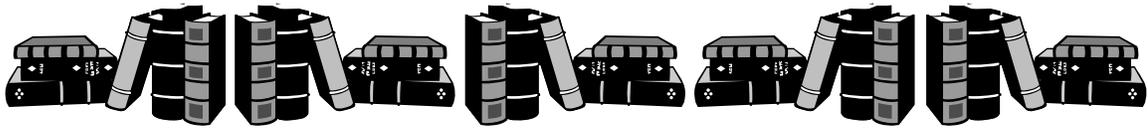
EDUCATION ASSISTANTS

For more details on Scheduling of Education Assistants, refer to the Special Programs "Guidelines for Scheduling and Supervising EA's" Document on First Class.

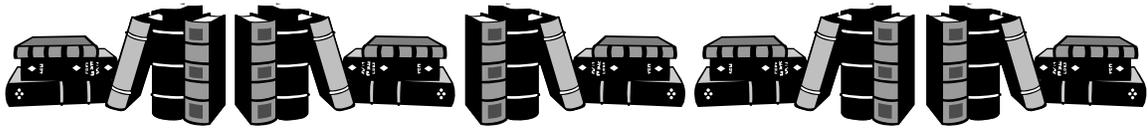|	
How is EA time decided?	❑ EA time is provided to implement the support plans as set out in the student's IEP. This would include physical, personal care, behavioural and learning needs.
Are LA programs entitled to EAs? If so, how much time?	❑ Each school is allocated a certain amount of school-based EA support, which is usually attached to the Learning Assistance program.
How are the EA hours (attached to LA) distributed among students?	❑ The allocation is based on the number of students in the following categories (Q, R, H, K).
How do EAs get allocated to classrooms?	❑ Utilization of the school-based EA's time is usually coordinated by the Learning Support teacher, with input from the School-Based Team and the administrator.
	❑ Allocation of the EA time is decided by the school team with priority given to the Ministry designated students.
How will EA time be used and does it carry on? **Why is there no EA coverage for lunch and recess time?**	❑ How EA time will be used is largely determined by the teacher, the team of supporting professionals and parents of the student.
	❑ Specific tasks and schedule are decided by the School-Based Team, Administrator and teacher(s) at the school.

	❑ Education Assistants in Delta work under the direction of a teacher. EAs often:
	    ○ provide personal care
	    ○ supervise at unstructured times such as recess and lunch
	    ○ provide behaviour support in or out of class
	    ○ adapt or create materials
	    ○ implement programs designed by support personnel such as Speech Language Pathologists or Occupational

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	Therapists
	o provide direct learning support to individuals or small groups of students
	o supervise larger groups to enable the teacher to work with designated students
	o other duties as designed by the support team
	❑ Whether EA support carries on depends on the source of funding and the needs of the student. Quick Response funding is available for short periods only. If ongoing support is required the student's file needs to be reviewed to determine a more effective way of providing service.
	❑ Funding for low incidence students is likely to continue year to year according to needs.
What diagnosis gives you additional EA support? **How much time do behaviour students receive in terms of EA time?** **How is EA time for mainstream support allocated?**	❑ For high-incidence students (i.e.: Learning Disabilities, Moderate/Severe Behaviour, etc.) EA support is assigned through the school-based Learning Assistance allocation and is assigned to classrooms based on the individual needs of the students in the class. ❑ For low-incidence students the amount of EA time allocated to individual students will depend on their diagnosis and individual needs. ❑ Generally low-incidence students are allocated anywhere from 5 to 13 hours per week.
If a student has a Ministry designation (tag), don't they automatically come with EA time?	❑ A Ministry designation or medical diagnosis does not automatically generate EA time. ❑ Students who are designated low incidence, have individual funding, and students who are designated high incidence don't necessarily have individual funding, therefore, they would utilize school-based EA support.

Do students with a designation of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) receive additional EA time automatically?	❑ Students who have a diagnosis of *Autism* receive additional EA time (10 -13 hours per week).
How much EA support a week do low incidence students get? **How much EA support does a student with a behaviour or LD, MID designation receive?** **How much EA time does LD/Vision/ESL, etc. get?**	❑ Typically, vision and hearing impaired students do not receive EA support. ❑ Most schools do not have ESL EA time ❑ Students in high incidence programs (LA, LD, MID, moderated behaviour) generally receive support from the EA attached to the LA program.
How does EA time get allocated for Supportive Learning (elementary or secondary) programs?	❑ Generally, all elementary Supportive Learning programs have an allocation of two EA positions. ❑ Secondary Supportive Learning programs have an allocation of one EA.
Why is it that supportive learning students do not get EA support when transitioned in the regular class?	❑ High incidence funding is not given to students with this designation therefore, if a student has an 'H' designation, EA support is considered on an individual basis, but it is not automatic. Ideally, students will be integrated in the school of their supportive learning class into regular classes to ease their eventual transition to their home school.
Will the EA time be shared?	❑ Sharing EA time is a school decision. Low incidence students bring in specific funding and therefore specific allocation of time would be allotted to them. Many times schools will cluster students to maximize EA support.
Can a parent request that their child keep the same EA?	❑ EA appointments must follow the CUPE collective agreement, which requires accommodation of seniority and qualifications. ❑ Every effort is made to maintain continuity when possible.

How do I get a Quick Response Education Assistant? **What is Quick Response?** **How do I get additional support quickly?**	❑ Quick Response applications are made by the school principal to Special Programs. ❑ Quick Response requests are typically made for behavioural situations that arise unexpectedly and are beyond a school's capacity to manage after having explored all possible options. ❑ They are intended to be a short term solution and are reviewed regularly throughout the school year. ❑ The request must include a plan for utilization of the EA and subsequent systematic withdrawal of the support as the behaviour becomes manageable. ❑ The requests are reviewed by a district committee and allocations subsequently made.
If we know in June that a student has needs, why do we have to wait until September to apply for Quick Response?	❑ Quick Response is available to respond to emerging needs, not on-going needs. ❑ Any student that is identified as low incidence through the school year usually has EA time assigned through the EA time which has been allocated to the building. ❑ Generally behaviour students who require intensive ongoing support should be placed in a resource room setting. ❑ Those who are not in a specialized setting and are in their neighbourhood school will require thoughtful planning to meet his/her needs.
Is there a provision for gender specific posting?	❑ Yes, there are provisions for a gender specific posting due to privacy and personal care needs for a very small number of students.

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Why does the student have different EAs across the week?	❑ Ideally, most students would benefit from working with the same EA throughout the week. However, sometimes scheduling does not allow for that continuity.
Can the EA be changed?	❑ If there is a conflict between an EA and teacher or student, the school administrator and district staff will make every effort to mediate an amicable solution
	❑ Misunderstanding or lack of communication often result in tension between staff and student and a mediated approach often resolves these issues.
Why can't the student have EA support for 2 hrs/day instead of 2.5 hour days?	❑ The EA pool is allocated to the school, and it is up to the administrator, with the assistance of the Learning Support teacher and Mainstream Support teacher, to decide the best scheduling to optimize learning needs for each student. There is a requirement for a 4 hour minimum to be worked every day for each EA. Allocations need to accommodate this requirement. Often EA allocations for students are combined to allow EA support on a daily basis while meeting the 4 hour minimum requirement.
Why can't EAs keep the same position each year?	❑ According to the school district/CUPE collective agreement, EAs are involved in a seniority based and qualifications staffing process. Therefore, EAs with the most seniority usually remain in positions they have had the previous year should they choose to do so.
	❑ EAs with the least amount of seniority are more frequently posting in to new positions.
Why does the student have 5 different EAs?	❑ Sometimes the staffing process has not been completed until October, or possibly even later, and therefore casual education assistants are put in place until the process is finished and a successful candidate remains with the student for the rest of the year.

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