



## **STUDENT SERVICES TEACHER**

### **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: SERVICES**

#### **Purpose**

Learning assistance services are school-based, non-categorical resource services designed to support classroom teachers and their students who have mild to moderate difficulties in learning and adjustment.

#### **Description of Services**

Learning assistance provides a coordinated and integrated set of support services which include school-based consultation, collaborative planning and co-ordination with the school-based team and instruction. It also includes assessment and evaluation to Level B.

Student Service Teachers typically help to organize, maintain and integrate services in the school and, as part of a school-based team, provide the major link with support services available at the district level. Students who have severe disabilities usually require access to more specialized programs and services described in Section E of this manual.

Some schools combine learning assistance with other special education services to create a 'Resource Teacher' model. Where this model is used, it means that one resource teacher works with a number of classroom teachers to provide support for all students in their classroom: those who are in the high and low incidence groups; those who have mild learning difficulties; those who may need enrichment; and in some cases, those who are learning English as a second language. There are no territorial lines drawn in service delivery. The ministry considers this appropriate provided the support available to the students served is consistent with guidelines and appropriate to the needs of the students.

#### **Collaborative Planning and Co-ordination**

The Student Service Teacher plays an active role in the identification, assessment, planning, implementation, reporting and evaluation process. He/she is a member of the school based team, provides collaborative consultation, assists with pre-referral interventions and works closely with teachers and the school based team to plan for, organize and access support services for students with special needs.

## **Instruction**

Instructional services include:

- teaching students to develop learning strategies for use in classroom settings or for independent learning
- skill development or remediation, and
- development of compensatory skills to minimize the effect of a disabling condition on learning.

Students receiving ongoing instruction in a learning assistance program should have an Individual Education Plan.

The setting in which the direct instruction provided by Student Service Teachers takes place (the classroom, the learning assistance centre, or some combination of both) should be determined in collaboration with the classroom teacher based on student needs and the instructional goals to be achieved.

## **Consultation**

Consultative services include:

- collaboration with classroom teachers to design or implement instructional strategies or to adapt instructional content or materials
- advising teachers concerning adjustments to curriculum, instruction, or environmental factors in the classroom which may facilitate learning for a student or group of students
- consulting with parents and students regarding learning strategies and organizational skills, consulting with district and community resource personnel.

## **Assessment**

The purpose of assessment and evaluation is to plan and implement an educational program to help the student learn. The assessment support may include:

- criterion-referenced or norm-referenced assessment to Level B as required to answer specific-instructional questions
- systematic observation and collection of behavioral data to establish baseline/progress data, or describe functional behaviors
- synthesis of information from parents, student records, other service providers and health-related information to aid the assessment process, and
- in-depth interviews with students to determine their knowledge of the learning process and/or thinking strategies.

## **Access to Learning Assistance Services**

Each school should establish procedures for teachers, students and parents to access learning assistance services consistent with the overall purpose stated above. Schools should also decide the focus for learning assistance services, considering the nature of the needs and range of other school-based supports.

## **Personnel**

Teachers providing learning assistance should possess:

- strong interpersonal, communication and collaborative skills
- expertise in a wide range of teaching and management strategies
- knowledge of methods for evaluating and selecting instructional materials suitable for students with a variety of special needs
- ability to carry out a variety of assessments, including classroom observation, administration and interpretation of norm-referenced assessment instruments to Level B, curriculum-based assessment and diagnostic teaching methods; and
- ability to contribute to the development, implementation, and evaluation of an IEP in consultation with classroom teacher(s), parents, students and district and community resource personnel.

Learning assistance teachers should meet, at minimum, the following qualifications:

- A Bachelor of Education degree or equivalent.
- A minimum of two years of successful classroom teaching experience.
- University-level course in the following areas:
  - Introduction survey course in teaching students with special needs
  - Assessment/testing theory and practice