

Considerations for Psycho-Educational Assessments Completed Outside of the Greater Victoria School District (SD 61)

At times, a parent/guardian may wish to have a psycho-educational assessment completed by a private psychologist or an outside agency, or a student may move to the district having previously completed an assessment. In those cases, the following should be taken into consideration:

Purpose for Assessment

The primary purpose of a psycho-educational assessment is to gather information about individual students, in a systematic manner, in order to answer specific questions and better understand their needs and abilities to guide programme planning. Additionally, an assessment may result in a range of diagnoses and/or B.C. Ministry of Education designations.

Diagnosis v. Ministry of Education Designation

Certified School Psychologists or Registered Psychologists who work outside of SD 61 may diagnose students, but the Ministry of Education requires that school district staff determine which students are *designated* in special education categories within a given school district.

File Reviews

As noted in the School Psychologist's *Further Information Regarding Informed Consent* document, "depending on the finances or services available to the parents or guardians, an assessment could also be completed privately, by individuals or agencies not connected to the school district". However, in order for students with an outside assessment to be considered for a B.C. Ministry of Education designation within SD 61, school district staff are required to review the assessment report, and supporting documentation, to determine if the student meets the criteria. Please note that outside assessment reports are only reviewed with parent/guardian written consent. In addition, when students transfer into SD 61 from other school districts, any previous psycho-educational assessments are reviewed to determine if they meet B.C. Ministry of Education criteria for a designation within the district.

Consultation

Before proceeding with an "outside assessment", it is strongly suggested that the parent/guardian involve School-Based Team (SBT) staff, so that the SBT is aware of and can try to support and possibly inform the process.

Consent to Review

Once the assessment is completed, and the parent/guardian decides to share the resulting report with the SBT, the parent/guardian will be asked to release the report to the district so that the district review process can begin.

Review Process

The review process involves having a team of district staff consider the assessment results in relation to the context of the student's current educational programme and their history, in order to inform and guide programme planning. Decisions regarding any potential B.C. Ministry of Education designation (e.g., Learning Disability, Intellectual Disability, Gifted) are made by the team.

Outcome of Review

The team's decisions are then shared with the SBT. It should be noted that not all assessments completed within or outside of the school district lead to a designation and, if previously designated, it is also possible that updated results lead to a change in designation or a "de-designation". The primary purpose of assessment within SD 61 is to gather information about individual students, in a systematic manner, in order to answer specific questions and better understand their needs and abilities to guide programme planning. Therefore, follow-up may include: suggestions regarding programme planning and/or additional interventions, discussion as to what supports, services and adaptations the student will be able to access, or if any follow-up or additional assessments may be beneficial. At times it may be recommended that the file be re-submitted for review once additional steps are taken. If a student is given a Ministry of Education designation, designation paperwork will follow, which will prompt the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP). If a student is not formally designated, learning support staff may choose to create a student support plan.

It should be noted that students within SD 61 do *not* require a designation or associated IEP in order to access a range of available supports, including interventions and adaptations.