

## Comprehensive Assessment

One of the criteria that must be met prior to proceeding with the development of an annual Individual Program Plan (IPP) is that a *comprehensive assessment* of individual student learning needs has been completed in the current school year.

### A Comprehensive Assessment of Individual Learning Needs.....

- assumes that the learner has had multiple, varied, and equitable opportunities to demonstrate their skills, knowledge, and understanding;
- provides program planning teams with valid and reliable data to create a profile of student's specific strengths, challenges, and interests which will inform appropriate programming;
- establishes a sound basis upon which to make programming decisions, including when appropriate, the development of an IPP;
- is guided by a consistent understanding of exceptionalities that recognizes individual differences, range of severity, the importance of culture and race in student learning and engagement, as well as, the need for specialized instruction and adaptations to guide instruction; and
- recognizes that no single data source is sufficient for identifying students with special needs and making effective programming decisions.

### Assessment Evidence that Program Planning Teams should consider:

#### School Level

- Examples of classroom teachers' ability to transform strong understanding of pedagogical content knowledge into proficient teaching practices that are responsive to and incorporate the student's abilities, race, culture, and background:
  - Principles of Universal Design of Learning (UDL);
  - Differentiated instruction (DI);
  - Assistive Technology (AT);
  - Culturally responsive teaching and assessment practices;
  - Document Adaptations (DA)
- Classroom assessments (for/of/as learning), observations, progress monitoring of student response to teaching and interventions provided over time, student self-reports, and parent/guardian input;
- Assessment data collected and interpreted by Resource and Learning Centre teachers;
- Program Planning Team findings.

*"Assessment must be in the service of learning, be supportive of variability, accessible for all students and provide evidence of learning through a balance of formative and summative assessment."*

## Board Level

- After a student has been identified as requiring additional planning and supports to meet their needs, there is evidence that classroom teacher(s) has accessed available material and human resources to explore a variety of strategies in the learning process. This may include both formal and informal consultations and assessments of appropriate board specialist personnel, such as:
  - Curriculum Consultants/Mentors;
  - Student Services Facilitators;
  - Program Planning Specialists;
  - Assistive Technology Specialists;
  - Autism Specialists;
  - Learning Disabilities Specialists;
  - Behavior Specialists;
  - Guidance Counselors;
  - Speech-Language Pathologists;
  - School Psychologists;
  - Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights Coordinators;
  - Student Support Workers and Aboriginal Student Advisors;
- Board level common assessments: boards may develop, implement, and interpret assessments based on identified goals.

## Provincial Level

- Grade 1: Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement
- The **Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia (PLANS)**, administered by the Student Assessment and Evaluation Services Division, is responsible for the administration of provincial, national, and international assessments. PLANS provides reliable and accurate data to assist in educational decision making at all levels: student, home, school, school board, and province.
- Provincial Report Cards, including Learning Profile and IPP Reporting Template from previous year(s).

## Outside Agency and Community Partners

- SchoolsPlus Facilitators and Community Outreach Workers
- Mental Health Clinicians
- IWK and Community Health Boards
- Designated Special Education Private Schools Reports
- Other

*The quality and effectiveness of the IPP will depend largely on the relevancy and breadth of evidence gathered and how this information is used when developing the plan.*

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<sup>i</sup> The Atlantic Canada Framework for Essential Graduation Competencies in Schools, Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training, October, 2014