2.5: Educational and Other Assessments

A range of assessment strategies is used by teachers and the Psychology Department staff in order to gather information regarding a student's strengths and needs. Valuable information can be gathered through this assessment process to assist in determining appropriate teaching strategies, program accommodations and curriculum modifications that should be made. It also assists with the determination of which students are in need of Special Education programs and services.

Informal Assessment

Informal assessment provides valuable information for the School-based Team to use in making decisions about appropriate programming for students. Using observation of the student in the classroom, review of the day to day work, examination of student products and tests, and interviews with the teacher, parent and/or student, information is gathered on the child's strengths, weaknesses and needs.

Upon referral for resource assistance the Resource Teacher may use information listed above and may use any one or combination of:

- informal assessments such as teacher checklists, surveys of skills in language and mathematics, reading inventories or other diagnostic tools
- norm-referenced tests such as Brigance Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills,
- standardized tests such as the Canadian Achievement Test

All of the assessment information is shared with the parents, and is used in planning and decision making for the student.

Prior to a referral for a Psychological Assessment a Brigance assessment or a Canadian Achievement Test is completed, if the student has the necessary skills. Prior to an initial Identification Placement and Review Committee, reading and mathematics subtests of the Canadian Achievement Test are administered. Prior to an IPRC review, an educational assessment is administered (may be informal, norm-referenced or standardized test.)

Psychological Assessment

To provide schools with a more in-depth analysis of a student's strengths and needs a request for psychological assessment may be made by the school principal. The assessment may include a review of the school history as contained in the Ontario Student Record, and interviews with the parent and relevant school personnel. It may involve classroom observation, and use of measures assessing academic, intellectual and the social/emotional functioning of the student. The test battery used by the Psychology Department includes:

TEST BATTERY FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Social Emotional/Behavioural

STANDARD	***OPTIONAL***
Children's Depression Inventory (CDI)	Manifestation of Symptomtology Scale (MOSS)
Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale	Student Perception of Ability (SPAS)
Conners	Sentence Completion Test
Comprehensive Behaviour Rating Scale (CBRS)	Anger Regulation and Expression Scale (ARES)
Achenbach Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL)	Deveraux Behavior Rating Scale
Multidimensional Anxiety Scale for Children (MASC)	Gilliam Asperger's Disorder Scale (GADS)
Beck Depression Inventory for Children and Youth	Gilliam Autism Rating Scale (GARS)
Personality Inventory for Children (PIC)	Basic Personality Inventory (BPI)

Intelligence

STANDARD	***OPTIONAL***
Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI)	Test of Nonverbal Intelligence (TONI)
Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC)	Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)
Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS)	Peabody Expressive Vocabulary Test (EVT)
	Echelle de Vocabulaire en images Peabody (EVIP)
Wechsler Non-Verbal Scales (WNV)	Leiter-R (non-verbal)
Wechsler Abbreviated Scales of Intelligence (WASI)	Delis - Kaplan
	Cognitive Assessment System (CAS)

Achievement/Processing

STANDARD	***OPTIONAL***
Wechsler Individual Achievement Test - (WIAT)	Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP)
	Burns and Roe Test of Reading Inventory
	Process Assessment of the Learner (PAL)
	The Canada French Immersion Achievement Test (FIAT)
	Children's Psychological Processes Scale (CPPS)

Visual Perceptual/Visual Motor

STANDARD	***OPTIONAL***
Visual-Motor Integration Test (VMI)	Jordon Left-Right Reversal Test
Test of Visual Perceptual Skills (TVPS)	

Memory

STANDARD	***OPTIONAL***
Children's Memory Scale	Wide Range Assessment of Memory and Learning

Adaptive Functioning

STANDARD	***OPTIONAL***
Adaptive Behaviour Assessment System (ABAS)	Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales (VABS)

Executive Functioning

STANDARD	***OPTIONAL***
Behaviour Rating Inventory of Executive Functioning (BRIEF)	
Comprehensive Executive Functioning Inventory (CEFI)	

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See Appendix 2.5.3 for "Brief Description of Psychological Tests and Terminology"

Qualifications of Staff who Conduct Assessments and/or Provide Diagnoses

Special Education teachers conduct educational assessments (i.e., Brigance, Canadian Achievement Test) prior to making a referral for Psychological Assessment.

Psychological assessments are conducted by Psychoeducational Clinicians with Master's level training in psychology, which includes coursework in child development and assessment practices. A Registered Member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario supervises their assessment practices, report writing, and communication of results. The Regulated Health Professions Act and Psychology Act limit the communication of a diagnosis to Registered Psychologists/Psychological Associates. Consequently, Psychoeducational Clinicians do not communicate a psychological diagnosis in their written reports and/or parent-teacher conferences. Where appropriate, psychological diagnoses are communicated by the school board's Registered Psychological Associate.

Average Waiting Time for Psychological Assessments/Methods for Managing Waiting Lists

Waiting times for psychological assessments vary depending on each school. Some schools have long lists of students they wish to refer for assessment while others have shorter lists. From the time the Psychoeducational Clinician agrees to conduct an assessment and signs consent, the waiting time may range from 2 weeks to 3 months. Consents are signed for only a small number of students at a time, in order to keep the process manageable, and so that parents and schools are not waiting too long for an assessment after all the paperwork has been completed. In emergency situations or unusual circumstances, a student may be assessed within a couple days of obtaining parental consent. The Psychology Department works collaboratively with parents, school staff, and special education staff to manage and prioritize assessment lists. As members of the School-based Team, Psychoeducational Clinicians help to ensure that early intervention strategies (e.g., educational assessments, classroom observations, medical appointments) are used to support students prior to making a referral for Psychological Assessment. The Psychoeducational Clinician also works with the School-based Team to set priorities for assessment. Accordingly, the ranking of students on assessment lists is based on urgency of the need for assessment, the severity of each student's circumstances, and the purpose of the assessment.

Consent for Psychological Assessment

The Consent to Treatment Act and its successor, the Health Care Consent Act, and the Education Act govern consent to psychological assessment in Ontario school boards. In accordance with relevant legislation and the standards and guidelines of The College of Psychologists of Ontario, the Lambton Kent District School Board requires written permission from the student, or the parent of the student if the student is a minor (under the age of 18), before administering psychological tests. The consent form used by the Lambton Kent District Board describes the assessment procedures in detail (see Appendix 2.5.1).

Protocol for Sharing Information with Staff and Outside Agencies

The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Personal Health Information Privacy Act, the Health Care Consent Act, the Education Act, and the Psychology Act all govern the confidentiality and disclosure of an individual's information and records. These Acts state that information contained in a student's clinical record cannot be shared with outside agencies until written consent is obtained from the parent/guardian or adult student. The document used by the Lambton Kent District School Board to obtain client consent for disclosure of assessment results is attached (see Appendix 2.5.2).

Communication of Results

The policies and procedures for communicating test results are in accordance with both relevant legislation and the standards and guidelines of The College of Psychologists of Ontario. Results of psychological testing are communicated to parents and school staff in both written and oral form. The written report is reviewed and signed by a Registered Psychological Associate before being presented by a Psychoeducational Clinician in a parent-teacher conference. The Regulated Health Professions Act and Psychology Act limit the communication of a diagnosis to Registered Psychologists/Psychological Associates. Any psychological diagnosis made by the Manager of Psychological Services, as written in the report, is communicated directly to parents via a telephone conversation by this registered member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.