

## What happens when a student transfers from school to school or to another board?

- The Board has internal processes in place to move SEA purchased equipment when a student moves from one YRDSB school to another or when a student moves to another board;
- If the student transfers out of the York Region District School Board, the receiving school board can request the equipment to be transferred; and
- SEA equipment does not transfer to post-secondary institutions, employment settings, private schools, Home Schooling or outside the province of Ontario. In these cases the equipment is redeployed to another YRDSB student who meets the requirements for such equipment.

## Parent Guide to . . .

# Special Education Funding for Assistive Technology and Equipment for Students with Special Education Needs

### What is the Special Equipment Amount (SEA)?

- The Ministry of Education provides funds to school boards, through the Special Equipment Amount (SEA), to assist with the cost of equipment essential for students with special needs to access the Ontario Curriculum and/or alternative program. The need for specific equipment is recommended in an assessment or report by a qualified professional (i.e., psychologist, speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, etc.)
- The type of equipment eligible for SEA funding could include any items that are recommended by a qualified professional that are not available through the Board's regular day school, school based-textbook, supply and/or computer purchasing arrangements.

### Examples of eligible expenses include:

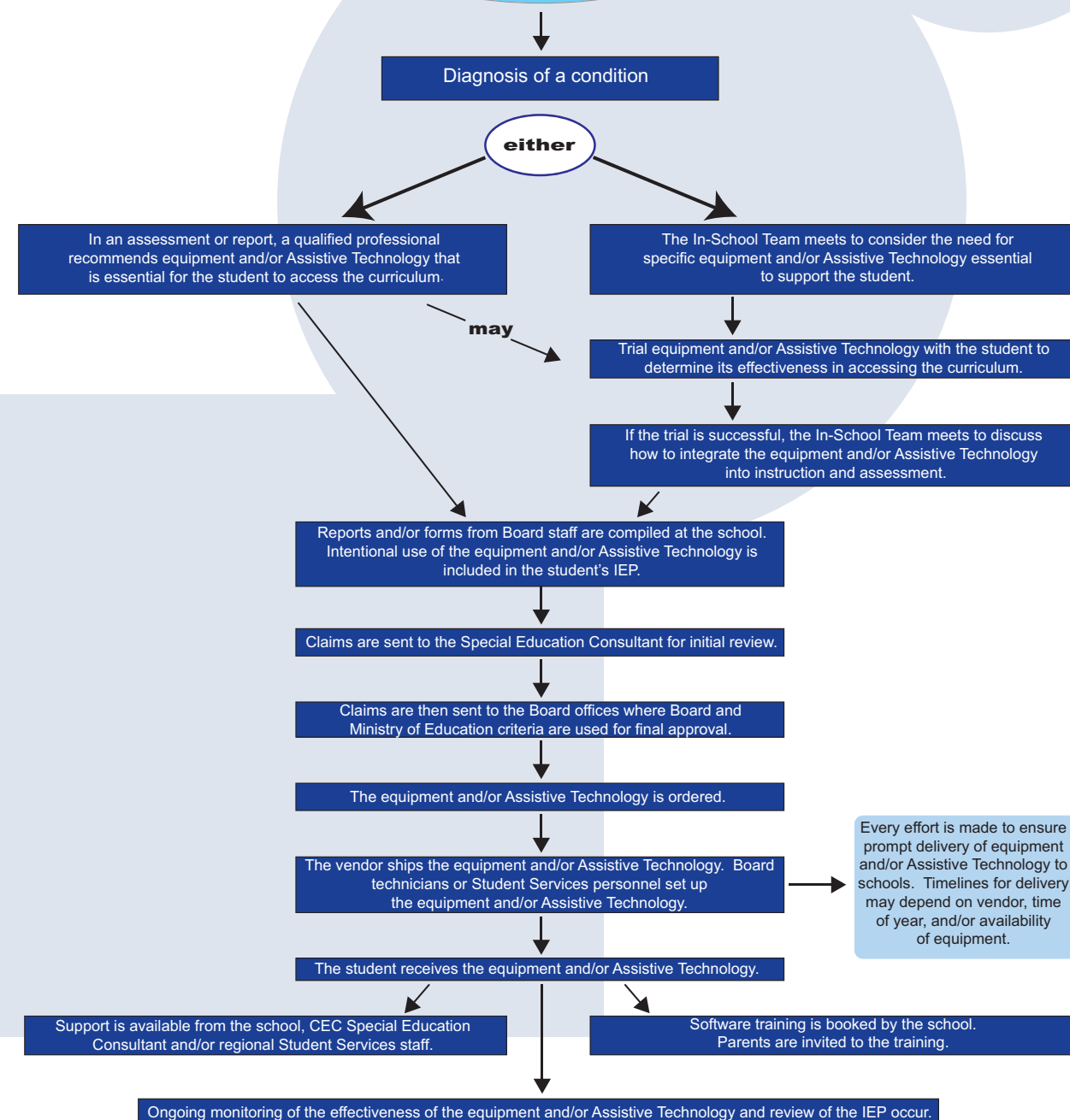
- speech analysers
- FM systems
- soundfield systems
- amplification systems
- print enlargers
- computer hardware
- software that provides access to curriculum (i.e., operating systems and accessibility programs)
- adjustable desks or computer tables
- brailers
- symbol or letter voice translators
- insulated booths and study carrels
- communication aids, such as speech synthesizers
- positioning devices for sitting, standing and lying
- personal care items
- lifts or harnesses for moving students

Special Education Funding Guidelines: Special Equipment Amount (SEA), Ministry of Education (2011)

### What is Assistive Technology?

- Assistive Technology is any technology that helps a student with special learning needs maintain or improve his/her academic performance.
- Its applications and adaptations can help open doors to previously inaccessible learning opportunities for many children with special needs (Judge, 2001).

### HOW DOES MY CHILD GET EQUIPMENT?





### What Assistive Technology is available to all students?

- All students have access to some Assistive Technology programs (including word prediction and organization software) which are available on school computers.

### What are the benefits of Assistive Technology?

Assistive Technology is necessary for some students in the same way that eyeglasses or other aids are necessary for some students. Its successful use in the classroom will depend on:

- the characteristics of individual students;
- the task the students need to complete; and
- the functional use of the hardware and software.

### Assistive Technology can effectively help students with special needs to:

- build on individual strengths;
- gain motivation;
- accomplish higher rates of learning and improved achievement; and
- complete academic tasks independently, including tasks they might not otherwise be able to handle unaided, leading to a greater sense of self-efficacy (Polloway, Smith, & Patton, 1988). *Education for All, Ministry of Education (2005).*

### What do I do if I think my child needs Assistive Technology specific to his/her learning needs?

- You speak to the principal. If appropriate, the principal will schedule an In-School Team meeting. At this meeting, your child's teacher, school psychologist and/or other support staff will consider if a trial of the Assistive Technology is appropriate.

### How does my child get his/her equipment?

- The Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) arranges for your son/daughter to trial the technology and collects work samples from the student. If the technology trial is effective, the school arranges an In-School Team meeting to initiate a submission of a SEA claim.
- If the technology is not helpful, the school reviews appropriate strategies and considers contacting special education support staff to review or update any recommendations.
- The claim is submitted to the Community Education Centre (CEC) or area Special Education Consultant for initial review.
- The Consultant forwards the claim to the Board offices in Newmarket where Board and Ministry of Education criteria are used for final approval.
- The equipment is ordered and the vendor ships the equipment.
- Once all of the equipment ordered for your son/daughter's use has arrived, a technician will visit the school to set up the equipment. Since students at York Region District School Board schools receive equipment on an on-going basis throughout the school year, equipment will be given set up priority according to the date received.
- During the set-up visit, curriculum and individually approved software will be configured. No additional software may be loaded onto the computer.
- The school arranges training for the student. Parents are invited to be part of the student-focussed training session.

### How does my child learn to use the equipment?

- After the equipment is set-up, school staff will schedule a time for the student-focussed training.
- Parents are encouraged to attend the student-focussed training session.



### Who is responsible for the maintenance and support of my child's technological equipment?

- After the initial setup, technical support for technology and equipment is provided to schools by the Information Technology Services department of the York Region District School Board. Parents should notify school staff if they become aware of any technical issues and the school staff will access support as needed.
- As student's needs change over time, the SERT and/or the Technology Resource Teacher can support the student and school staff in learning to use available tools appropriate to the student's IEP goals. When students transition from elementary to secondary school, the Technology Resource Teachers continue to be available to support the integration of Assistive Technology in the secondary school.

### What do I need to know about the loan of SEA equipment for home use?

- SEA equipment remains the property of the York Region District School Board. The Board supports the loan of portable Board-owned equipment to students for educational purposes as part of the school program (i.e., daily homework, projects, research).
- The loan of the equipment for home use is a school-based decision and is facilitated and monitored by the school principal.
- Parents/Guardians are asked to sign a permission form for home use.

### Responsibilities

#### Principals are responsible for:

- facilitating and carefully monitoring the loan of Board-owned equipment in accordance with Board policy and procedure; providing a letter to parents/guardians and the Equipment Loan form (according to Loan of Board-Owned Equipment Property Section Policy #441.0) for parental/guardian signature; and
- ensuring that loaned equipment is available for school program use during the regular instructional day.

#### Teachers are responsible for:

- providing necessary accommodations to meet individual student's needs based on the IEP;
- arranging student-focussed training; and
- monitoring the use of equipment while the student is at school.

#### Parents and students are responsible for:

- ensuring the signed Equipment Loan form is returned to the school; and
- treating the equipment with respect and ensuring appropriate use at all times.

### What do I need to know about Internet safety with my child's equipment?

- The York Region District School Board recognizes that students benefit from the use of computers, electronic mail and the Internet. The Board has developed an [Information Technology Acceptable Use Agreement](#) to help students manage this responsibility. Please refer to your son/daughter's agenda or to the Board website <http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/> for more information regarding Cyber Safety, Appropriate Use Agreement.
- To increase your son/daughter's Internet safety, the York Region District School Board filters student access to inappropriate web content when at school. When your son/daughter is not at school, it is the student's and parents' responsibility to ensure appropriate use of the computer and access to web content. Information on preventing electronic bullying is available in the Ministry of Education brochure *Bullying: We Can All Help Stop It!* located at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/bullying.pdf>.
- Your son/daughter is expected to exercise personal discretion and responsible choices at all times.
- With most Internet service providers, Internet access from home usually requires no further configuration; however, there may be some variation based on Internet service provider. Additional software may not be loaded onto the computer and no changes to the configuration are supported. When students have a need to print at home, USB keys or other media storage devices can facilitate the transfer of files from the SEA computer to the home computer.