

STATE OF MINNESOTA
Department of Education
Special Education Section

Code XVI-B-66a

TO: Superintendent of Schools

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Special Education

SUBJECT: CHANGE IN STANDARDS RELATING TO THE ENROLLMENT OF PUPILS IN CLASSES FOR
THE TRAINABLE MENTALLY RETARDED

In recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of classes for the mentally retarded throughout the state. Because of this, it has been necessary to develop a more efficient and convenient system of reporting pupils enrolled in the classes and approving the programs for reimbursement.

Beginning with the current (1961-62) school year, the special class card, which was required in the past, will no longer be used. Code XVI-C-13a, "Special Class Medical Report Form" replaces the medical information portion of the Special Class Card. However, it is not to be sent to the Special Education Section. The forms listed below will be required from each school district operating a special class for trainable retarded children:

1. Code XVI-C-30: "Information on Special Classes for Mentally Retarded Children".
2. Code XVI-C-30a: "Notice of Change in Enrollment in Special Classes for Mentally Retarded Children".

This memorandum outlines the procedure to be followed in using these forms, including standards and procedures relating to (1) eligibility and admission of pupils; (2) trial placement; and (3) approval of the program for reimbursement.

A supply of each of the new forms is enclosed with this memorandum. Also, additional copies of this memorandum are included for distribution to principals, supervisors and special class teachers.

I. ELIGIBILITY OF PUPILS

A. Responsibility

1. A child's eligibility for special instruction and services must be determined by the administrative officer of the school district, prior to admission, based on the results of a careful individual study of the child.
2. Each child being considered for placement must be given (1) a medical examination by a licensed physician, and (2) an individual psychological examination by a certified psychologist. Additional information relating to the child's personal history is also required. See Item B-3 following.

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B. Forms and Procedures

1. Medical Record Form. In the past, the reverse side of the Special Class Card included a medical record form to be completed and signed by the physician. However, since the cards will no longer be used, the new form (Code XVI-C-13a) is to be used for recording medical information on newly enrolled pupils.
 - a. If a school district presently has a medical-health record form for general use in the school which would be adequate for the special class pupils, this may be used in lieu of the new form.
 - b. The medical record form or its equivalent is to be filed in the child's pupil record folder in the district, and is not to be sent to the Special Education Section unless requested.
2. Psychological Report Forms. Psychologists generally have their own forms for reporting test results to the district. This form is to be placed in the child's folder at school, and is not to be sent to the Special Education Section unless requested.

NOTE: Generally, special class pupils should be re-examined by a psychologist every two or three years, and more frequently if necessary in individual cases.

3. Personal History

- a. Information pertaining to the child's behavior and adjustment in the home and community may be obtained by a school social worker or some other person designated by the superintendent. In many cases the information may be available through county welfare departments.
- b. The personal history of each child is to include the following:
 - (1) Observations concerning toilet training, personal and social skills within the family and ability to communicate.
 - (2) Descriptions of any group experiences such as day-care programs.
- c. This information is to be on file in the child's record folder and is not to be sent to the Special Education Section unless requested.

C. Standards of Eligibility

1. To be eligible for placement in a class for the trainable retarded, a child must meet the following qualifications:

Score between 35 and 55 I.Q. on an individual intelligence test administered by a qualified psychologist;

be ambulatory and have no major physical or sensory defects which would require a disproportionate amount of the teacher's time;

be toilet trained;

be able to communicate his needs to others;

be socially adjusted to the degree that he will not endanger himself or others by his personal behavior;

be between the chronological ages of 5 and 21 years but within reasonable age range of the rest of the group.

2. In certain instances, a child who does not meet all of the above standards may be placed in the trainable program on a trial basis. For example, children with cerebral palsy or other physical handicaps usually will not meet all of the above requirements. For pupils in this category, a trial placement in the trainable class in addition to the differential diagnosis is necessary to determine whether their needs can be met through such a program.

II. ADMISSION TO CLASSES

A. Admissions Committee

Superintendents may find it useful to appoint a committee, or work through an existing group such as an inter-agency committee on mental retardation, for purposes of selecting children for placement in the trainable class.

1. Such a committee might consist of the professional personnel who have obtained the information on the children and other persons designated by the superintendent such as the special class teacher, the building principal and the school nurse.
2. Since placement and dismissal of pupils are continuing problems, it is recommended that this committee be established on a permanent basis.

B. Placement of Eligible Pupils

Children who meet all of the standards for admission to the trainable class, as outlined in section I-B (page 2) of this memorandum, may be placed in the program without prior approval of the Special Education Section.

NOTE: Minnesota Regulations relating to education require that each pupil enrolled in the special class must be approved by the Commissioner of Education. See Section III following.

C. Trial Placement

1. Generally, only children who meet all of the standards for admission are approved for placement in the trainable class. However, in some rare cases, a child who does not qualify completely may be placed in the trainable class for a trial period to determine if his needs can be effectively met through such a program.

NOTE: A child in this category may not be placed in the trainable class until notification of his approval has been received from the Special Education Section.

2. Procedure

- a. When the school administration wishes to place such a child in the trainable class, a written request for trial placement must be sent to the Special Education Section.
- b. A complete record on the child must be submitted with the written request, including all information outlined under section I-A (page 1) of this memorandum, and any additional information which may be helpful in making a judgment as to the feasibility of placing the child in such a program.
- c. Following review of the child's records by the Special Education Section notice of approval or non-approval of the request for trial placement will be sent to the district.

3. Trial Placement: Follow-up

- a. Notification of the school's final decision on the trial placement should be made to the Special Education Section after a period of four months unless circumstances make earlier contact necessary. At the end of the four month period, the following steps should be taken:
 - (1) The school administration is to review the child's progress to determine whether the child is benefiting from the program.
 - (2) Notice of the school's decision on placement is to be sent to the Special Education Section.
- b. If the trial placement has been satisfactory in the judgment of the school administration and continued placement is recommended, the Special Education Section will approve the child for regular placement.
- c. The placement of each pupil enrolled in the trainable class is subject to review at any time during the school year by the Special Education Section.

III. APPROVAL OF THE SPECIAL CLASS FOR REIMBURSEMENT

A. Basis of Approval

Reimbursement paid to a school district for its special education program is contingent upon approval by the Special Education Section. Such programs are approved when: (1) all pupils in the class have been approved; (2) the teacher of the class holds a valid Minnesota Certificate to teach mentally retarded children; and (3) all other standards relating to the operation of state-aided classes have been met.

NOTE: A new manual on "Directives Relating to Public School Programs for Trainable Mentally Retarded Children", will be distributed to school districts in October.

B. Forms and Procedures

1. Reporting and Approving the Program (and pupils)

- a. At the beginning of each school year a form entitled, "Information on Special Classes for Mentally Retarded Children", (Code XVI-C-30) will be sent to each school district operating a special class. This form contains spaces for including summary information on the program, the teacher, and the pupils.
- b. The form is to be completely filled out in triplicate for or by each special teacher and all three copies submitted to the Special Education Section by October 1.
 - (1) If the form is properly completed and all aspects (teacher and pupils) of the program are qualified, the program will be approved and one copy of the form will be returned to the district.
 - (2) If the form is not properly completed, or if all aspects of the program do not qualify, notification to this effect will be sent to the district.

2. Reporting Changes in Enrollment

- a. Information on children enrolled in or dropped from the special class after October 1 of each school year is to be submitted on Code XVI-C-30a, "Notice of Change in Enrollment in Special Classes for Mentally Retarded Children".
- b. This form is to be completely filled out and submitted in duplicate to the Special Education Section at anytime during the school year when enrollment changes occur. One copy will be returned to the school district.