



Protocol for Collaboration Agreements with External Agencies for the Provision of Services in Schools

Purpose

To provide a process when forming collaboration agreements between Grand Erie District School Board (Grand Erie) and external agencies for the provision of services in schools by regulated health professionals, regulated social service professionals, and paraprofessionals.

Guiding Principles

1.0 Overview

Grand Erie supports the implementation of community-based collaboration agreements with agencies that enhance the learning experiences of students.

1.1 A collaboration agreement with an external agency may not duplicate the work of the Grand Erie Professional Support Services Personnel (PSSP), educators or other paraprofessionals employed by Grand Erie.

1.2 Collaboration agreements support short-term (time-limited) partnerships to ensure that long-term duplication of services already provided by Grand Erie PSSP and paraprofessionals does not occur.

1.3 Collaboration agreements will respect the rights, responsibilities, and interests of students and employees.

1.4 Service provision should not occur during instructional time. If this cannot be avoided, service provision should not occur during the literacy or math instructional blocks.

1.5 A written, signed collaboration agreement between the parties will clarify expectations, roles and responsibilities, referral and consent process, integration and/or coordination of service provision, and a dispute resolution process. Other factors such as timelines for service provision, service quality, and compliance with professional standards will also be considered when entering into a collaboration agreement with an external agency.

1.6 All collaboration agreements will be reviewed annually.

2.0 Expectations

2.1 This protocol applies to situations in which there is a request for an external agency to provide a service to individual students, or to provide small group and/or whole class programs/services in schools within Grand Erie.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Grand Erie employs individuals that provide direct service to students with the following backgrounds and expertise:

- Education – Elementary and Secondary
- Psychology
- Speech and Language
- Behaviour
- Mental Health

3.2 External agencies may employ individuals with the following backgrounds and expertise:

- Medical professionals such as, but not limited to, audiologists, nurses/nurse practitioners, occupational therapists, ophthalmologists, otolaryngologists, pediatricians, physicians, physiotherapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, and speech-language pathologists
- Social service professionals such as child and youth workers, social service workers and social workers
- Paraprofessionals such as behaviour analysts, behaviour therapists, communication disorders assistants and special services at home workers



Protocol for Collaboration Agreements with External Agencies for the Provision of Services in Schools

- 3.3 Collaboration agreements may be supported for services and that supplement, but do not duplicate, the services of Grand Erie staff.
- 4.0 Referral and Consent Process
- 4.1 Parent(s)/guardian(s) consent to access community services at a Grand Erie school is required for students up to the age of 18 to participate in any external agency services taking place at any Grand Erie site. Student consent should also be obtained for students over the age of 11. In cases where a student has requested not to have parent(s)/guardian(s) consent or if there is a perceived risk to the well-being of the student should parent(s)/guardian(s) consent be sought, the school will contact Child and Family Services and the School Social Worker. The Administrator will work in collaboration with Child and Family Services.
- 5.0 Integration and/or Coordination of Service Provision
- Regulated health and social service professionals and paraprofessionals may either be employed by a publicly funded government organization, such as a hospital or a social service agency, or they may operate an independent private practice.
- Publicly Funded Service Providers:
Publicly funded regulated health and social services providers may be accessed, at no cost to parent(s)/guardian(s), by any student who meets the eligibility criteria. These services are accessed in one of two ways, either through Grand Erie with informed written consent from a parent(s)/guardian(s) or directly by the parent(s)/guardian(s)
 - Privately Funded Service Providers:
Privately funded service providers are services purchased by parent(s)/guardian(s) on a private basis or funded by insurance carriers. These services are not normally carried out in schools, but instead in the professional's or paraprofessional's office/clinic or the student's home, including but not limited to services such as behaviour therapy, psychological assessment and therapy, social work counselling and therapy, speech- language assessment and therapy.
 - Direct Therapy:
Grand Erie is obligated to provide access to schools for publicly funded School Based Rehabilitation Services to provide direct therapy for students. Otherwise, direct therapy is not provided to students by external agencies in schools. The external agency provides direct therapy or treatment for a student either in their office/clinic, in another community space, or in the student's home.

In the majority of cases, Grand Erie PSSP staff provide direct therapy to students in schools. Requests for private practitioners to provide the same service will not be granted. In some cases, the request for private service providers may arise from a gap in service provision that Grand Erie and publicly funded service providers cannot address. In such instances, requests for private service provision must include a clear statement about the gap in existing service provision that will be addressed. Intensity of service provision is not considered a gap in service provision.

If a student requires ongoing therapy/treatment from a publicly funded or privately funded external agency, that student may be excused from school to attend the therapy session as is permitted under the *Education Act*.

When a collaboration agreement between a privately funded service provider and Grand Erie is being considered for services other than direct therapy, the external agency and Grand Erie must establish a Collaboration Agreement. All steps outlined in the Guidelines for Forming a Collaboration Agreement must be followed.



Protocol for Collaboration Agreements with External Agencies for the Provision of Services in Schools

- 6.0 Criteria for approval of Collaboration Agreements
- Enhancements and supplemental services to improve the quality and effectiveness of education for students
 - Interventions that involve groups of students, classroom programs or school-wide initiatives, in areas that could not be provided by Grand Erie staff
 - Not a duplication or replacement of services provided by Grand Erie staff and/or paraprofessional staff
 - Not in violation of collective agreements
 - Ability to provide space, equipment or other resources of the external agency without infringing on the ability of Grand Erie staff to complete their duties
- 7.0 Criminal Background Checks – Vulnerable Sector Screening
- 7.1 Criminal Record Checks and Vulnerable Sector Screening must be in place before any service is provided. In accordance with the Education Act and Regulation 521/01 "Collection of Personal Information", Grand Erie shall collect a criminal background check in respect of an individual before the individual becomes a service provider at a school site of the board and an offence declaration from the individual each year. Proof of satisfactory criminal background and vulnerable sector screen check will be provided by the external agency staff members to the school upon arrival at their first visit.
- 7.2 Provincial organizations that provide services to schools and have standards and practices in place which meet the requirements of Regulation 521/01 may present a valid photo identification card from the provincial organization in lieu of providing a copy of the criminal background and vulnerable sector screening check. The following organizations are in this category:
- Public Health Departments
 - Victorian Order of Nurses
 - Ontario Health at Home
 - Children's Mental Health Ontario
 - Provincial Schools Authority
 - Day Nurseries
 - Children's Aid Societies
 - St. John's Ambulance
 - Big Brothers
 - Big Sisters
- 7.3 Under the terms of the Agreement, Grand Erie has sole and unfettered discretion to prohibit external agency staff members from entering the schools and to terminate the Agreement if the external agency fails to obtain or renew criminal background and vulnerable sector screening checks.
- 7.4 All costs associated with obtaining criminal background checks are paid by the external agency
- 8.0 Proof of Insurance
- 8.1 External agencies must provide a certificate of insurance to Grand Erie on an annual basis, naming the Grand Erie District School Board as an additional insured, evidencing General Liability as well as Professional Liability. Liability coverage must be in the amount of five million (\$5,000,000.00) per occurrence and to include cross-liability and severability of interest as well as 30-day cancellation notice clause. External agencies must provide assurances to Grand Erie that their staff is covered while working on Grand Erie District School Board property.



Protocol for Collaboration Agreements with External Agencies for the Provision of Services in Schools

- 9.0 Qualifications/Supervisory Relationships
- 9.1 External agency staff who are members of a regulated professional college must include:
- Current qualifications as relevant to the services to be provided
 - Current membership with the relevant regulated college
 - Declaration of delivery of services in accordance with professional standards of practice
- 9.2 Paraprofessionals must provide evidence of work under the clinical supervision of staff who currently holds membership in the relevant regulated college and details of the paraprofessional's role, responsibilities, name of immediate supervisor, supervision plan with time, and supervisor's qualifications.
- 10.0 Dispute Resolution Process
- 10.1 Student achievement and well-being through a collaborative approach to service provision for students and families, is the goal of a successful collaboration agreement. Collaborative relationships are characterized by mutual respect, coordination of services, clear communication, and consistent collaboration with a common goal of working towards the best interests of the student.
- 10.2 Periodically, disagreements may arise between community service providers from external agencies and Grand Erie employees. The following dispute resolution process will be used to identify solutions for individual cases and at the system level. This process is not intended to be an appeal or a legal process.
1. The professional/paraprofessional from the external agency and the school Administrator will be the first level of dispute resolution authority.
 2. If the dispute is not satisfactorily resolved, the matter will be referred to the Manager of the external agency and the Specialized Services Supervisor within Grand Erie.
 3. If the dispute continues to be unresolved, the matter will be referred to the Senior Manager/Supervisor of the external agency and the Superintendent of Education-Specialized Services.
 4. If the dispute cannot be resolved satisfactorily, the matter will be referred to the Grand Erie District School Board for final determination.
- 11.0 Collaborative Relationships that do not Require a Collaboration Agreement
- 11.1 Collaborative relationships may occur between schools and external agencies that do not require a formal collaborative agreement and can be operationalized in three different ways:
- Consultation: Assessment information and remedial strategies are shared with Grand Erie employees by the community service provider through a written report or a face-to-face meeting, usually at the student's school, to determine if the remedial strategies could be adopted and utilized in the school setting.
 - Observation: The community service provider from the external agency observes the student in the school setting to obtain information to assist with the assessment process. These observations will occur in a space when other students are not present. The privacy of students is maintained at all times.



Protocol for Collaboration Agreements with External Agencies for the Provision of Services in Schools

- Demonstration: The community service provider from the external agency demonstrates for the Grand Erie employee(s) a strategy or technique that they are providing for the student to determine if the same strategy or technique could be adopted and utilized in the school setting. The Administrator, in consultation with educators, makes the final determination concerning the utilization of the strategy/technique in the school setting and, if appropriate, the inclusion of the strategy/technique in the student's Individual Education Plan. Since the Individual Education Plan is reviewed once each term in elementary school and once each semester in secondary school, demonstration would need to occur with the same frequency. No more than two (2) demonstration sessions should occur per term/semester.

12.0 Process for Forming Collaboration Agreements

12.1 New Applications

1. Student/School needs are identified by the school team or parent(s)/guardians) that are impacting educational and well-being outcomes that currently cannot be addressed by Grand Erie staff. Wait lists and intensity, frequency and duration of service are not considered gaps in service provision.
2. The service delivery plan is discussed with the Supervisor of Specialized Services including roles, frequency, measuring and monitoring of desired outcomes, documentation, and supervision.
3. The external agency completes the Collaboration Agreement Application Form (available via email at collaborationagreements@granderie.ca).
4. The Superintendent of Education and the Supervisor of Specialized Services will review the proposed service provision.
5. If approved, the external agency will complete the MoU (available at collaborationagreements@granderie.ca).
6. If applicable, the school will gain consent from parent(s)/guardian(s) or adult student for the service to be provided (available at collaborationagreements@granderie.ca). A pupil who is at least 16 years old and has withdrawn from parental control, has the same rights and obligations as parent(s)/guardian(s).
7. Service provision will commence once the MoU and parent/caregiver/adult student consent, if applicable, are complete.

12.2 Renewal Applications

1. Student/school needs are identified by the school team or parent(s)/guardian(s) that are impacting educational and well-being outcomes that currently cannot be addressed by Grand Erie staff. Wait lists and intensity, frequency and duration of service are not considered gaps in service provision.
2. The service delivery plan currently in place is reviewed by the specialized services supervisor including roles, frequency, measuring and monitoring of desired outcomes, documentation, and supervision.
3. The external agency completes the Collaboration Agreement Renewal Application Form (available at collaborationagreements@granderie.ca).
4. The Superintendent of Education and the Supervisor of Specialized Services will review the proposed service provision.
5. If approved, the external agency will complete the MoU (available at collaborationagreements@granderie.ca).
6. If applicable, the school will gain consent from parent(s)/guardian(s) or adult student for the service to be provided (available at collaborationagreements@granderie.ca).



Protocol for Collaboration Agreements with External Agencies for the Provision of Services in Schools

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7. Service provision will commence once the MoU and parent/guardian/adult student consent, if applicable, are complete.

- 13.0 All collaboration agreements will be reviewed annually and either approved or not approved by the Superintendent of Education Specialized Services and the Specialized Services Supervisor. External agencies and labour partners will be consulted with respect to the annual review. A list of approved external agency service providers and accompanying programs will be available on the Grand Erie website.