Recommendations for referrals to Student Support Services specialists are made in consultation with Schools Based Team and relevant Student Support Services specialists after school based interventions have been tried and learning concerns still remain. In the event that a parent wishes a referral to be made, and this is in conflict with the judgment of the School Based Team, the school administration must make the referral. The referral form should indicate that the referral has been made in accordance with section 16(3) of the *Yukon Education Act*.

A school based team member will fill out the referral outlining the primary concern requiring support for the student and submit the referral to Student Support Services. School Based Team has the responsibility of prioritizing the students in their school referred to Student Support Services.

The referred specialist will contact the parent/guardian of the referred student prior to initiation of service and to get informed consent (Division 2, Section 16 (2) (c).) In the event where parents do not wish to provide consent the referral or parent signatures cannot be acquired, schools may still submit a referral to Student Support Services. At the request of the school administrator or the School Based Team, the relevant consultant will contact the parents and explain further the purpose of the referral and any recommended services. Where a parent signature still cannot be obtained, the relevant consultant may consult informally about the student’s behavior or academic performance in the school setting for the purpose of supporting the referring school with program planning.
Informed Consent

The information should include:

- The purpose and nature of services;
- What types of services may be included and how results will be communicated to parents and school personnel;
- That consent is voluntary (i.e., legal guardian has ongoing right to refuse or withdraw consent for services);
- The benefits of Student Support Services (e.g., gaining a better understanding of a student’s learning strengths and challenges in order to develop educational programming);
- Identification of possible risks (e.g., time away from the classroom, identification of needs that will require follow-up treatment or interventions);
- The mutual responsibilities of student, parent, school-based personnel and Student Support Services consultants;
- Any alternatives to service and possible outcomes;
- Time limits of consent;
- Privacy and confidentiality procedures (e.g., how the information can be used or shared).

Informed consent is the result of a process of reaching an understanding with parents and education personnel to work collaboratively. Therefore, informed consent must be obtained by the professional for the administration of specialized services not routinely used by teachers.

In the case of separated and divorced parents who have a legal agreement regarding custody, parents must provide documentation to the school regarding who has signing authority.
The legal guardian(s) must sign the consent form. If no legal custody agreements are in place, only one parent is required to sign the consent form. When a student is in the care of the Director of Family and Children’s Services, the signature of the social worker (not foster parent) is required as legal guardian. The laws concerning custody and access to children are covered by the *Yukon Children’s Act* and the *Federal Divorce Act*.

**Consultation**

Student Support Services staff provide consultation to schools on learning needs of individual and groups of students through informal means of phone, email and conversation as well as through attendance at School Based Team meetings. Student Support Services staff can provide recommendations for observed and school based assessed needs to help develop targeted and/or intensive strategies, interventions for programming to support student needs.

**Assessment**

Student Support Services consultants use several types of assessments that can be used to identify a student’s learning needs. Specialized assessments will only be used when there are reasonable grounds to believe the information collected will assist in the development of a student’s educational program.

*Psycho-educational Assessment*

Psychoeducational assessments provide information about a student’s current level of functioning across the following domains: cognitive, academic, social, emotional and behavioural. Learning difficulties, memory, executive functioning, reasoning, and/or social skill development may be assessed. This type of
assessment applies a psychological and developmental framework to a student's learning in order to assist with educational planning.

**Speech and Language Assessment**
A Speech-Language Pathologist (S-LP) will conduct assessments to assist teachers in understanding the oral language and social communication needs of students, and the interrelationships between listening, speaking, reading and writing. A student may be referred if there are any questions concerning a student's ability to: follow directions; participate in classroom conversations; understand and retell stories; socialize with peers; organize ideas sequentially; speak on topic; use appropriate vocabulary, word order and grammar; speak clearly and fluently; and learn sound skills necessary to read and write.

**Occupational Therapy Assessment**
Occupational therapy assessments provide information about a student's current level of fine motor abilities, visual-perceptual skills, visual-motor integration, sensory-processing and self-regulation abilities, and level of independence with self-care tasks. Following the assessment, the ultimate goal of occupational therapy is to improve the student's performance of tasks/activities necessary for successful school participation by providing recommendations, strategies, assistive technologies, sensory solutions and more.

**Physiotherapy Assessment**
Physiotherapy assessments provide information about a student's current physical and gross motor function. Functional activities such as posture, seating and gait as well as specific
gross motor skill areas such as balance, coordination, strength and agility may be assessed. The physiotherapist will assist teachers in understanding the physical needs of students and how these needs may impact on school performance.

**Deaf/Hard of Hearing Assessment**

The teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing may conduct systematic observations and data collection, informal and formal assessments to determine communication, academic progress, social emotional functioning and well-being of the deaf and hard of hearing students as it impacts learning. He/she can advise teachers and other consultants on recommended adaptations for a particular student that may impact the assessment process. The teacher for students of the deaf/hard of hearing may screen hearing at the school level. However, parents must take their child to Hearing Services (Health and Social Services) for full hearing assessment.

**Blind/Vision Impaired Assessment**

The teacher of the Blind/Vision Impaired may conduct systematic observations and data collection as well as informal and formal assessments to determine academic progress and social emotional functioning for visually impaired students as it impacts learning. The Teacher for Blind/Visually Impaired will conduct a functional visual assessment to determine if specialized adaptations or equipment is required. He/she can advise teachers and other consultants on recommended adaptations for a particular student with vision loss. If the school or nursing station personnel identify students with vision concerns, parents will be advised to take the student to an optometrist or ophthalmologist.
Reporting

The results of direct service, including results of assessment if they were administered, shall be provided and explained to the parent as per Division 2, section 16 (2) (e) of the Yukon Education Act. Where schools have experienced difficulties in contacting the parents in order to provide the results of an assessment, the school administrator will inform the parents by mail of the availability of qualified professionals to interpret the results of the assessment.

Student Support Services staff will interpret and communicate assessment findings to the parents, the student and staff in a timely manner. Assessment reports by Student Support Services staff are made available to the parents, the school staff and, when appropriate, the student, in accordance with the provisions of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPP).