

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: RESPONDING TO STUDENT NEEDS

Background

Livingstone Range School Division is committed to inclusive education based on the belief that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just society. The Division expects school communities to visibly demonstrate the qualities of an inclusive educational system in the design of their programs, operations, and practices.

Clarifying Principles

An inclusive educational system:

- ⇒ values diversity;
- ⇒ is about the presence, participation, and achievement of all students;
- ⇒ provides welcoming, acceptance, and belonging for all children and their parents/guardians;
- ⇒ involves an ongoing process for all partners, in learning how to live **with** difference and learning **from** difference;
- ⇒ eliminates social exclusion that is a consequence of attitudes and responses to diversity in race, social class, sexuality, religion, gender, ability, and language;
- ⇒ involves a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalization, exclusion, or underachievement;
- ⇒ works for the identification and removal of barriers for students through the evaluation of data from a wide variety of sources; and,
- ⇒ moves away from explanations of educational failure that concentrate on the characteristics of individual children and their families, towards an analysis of the barriers to participation and learning experienced by students.

Includes information from Ainscow and Miles, 2009

An inclusive learning environment:

- ⇒ insists upon and provides a safe and caring learning environment for all students;
- ⇒ requires the full, ongoing participation of a student and their family or support system in a student's learning;
- ⇒ involves students, parents, teachers, counselors, and other agencies working consistently in partnership for planning, problem-solving, and collaborative decision-making;
- ⇒ enables all students to make meaningful contributions to their school community;
- ⇒ designs strengths-based programming and assessment practices that address individual student interests (passions) and needs;
- ⇒ utilizes accessible and flexible student-centered curricula and learning materials;
- ⇒ utilizes effective classroom differentiation to enable all students to access core curricula successfully;
- ⇒ provides flexible spaces for varied types and modes of learning (ie flexible groupings or individual);
- ⇒ fosters ongoing, meaningful interactions for students with their peers and the school community; and,

- ⇒ includes support resources that enable students to develop independence in both individual work and group/peer interactions.

Staff in inclusive educational environments:

- ⇒ foster a commitment to equity of outcomes and to closing achievement gaps between students;
- ⇒ utilize teacher created assessments as a valid and critical means of collecting information regarding student progress
- ⇒ use inclusive and respectful language and approaches in all interactions with students and parents;
- ⇒ demonstrate the belief that all students can learn and a commitment to meeting the needs of all students in diverse ways;
- ⇒ work to provide classroom materials and activities that represent the diversity, values, backgrounds, and experiences of students;
- ⇒ utilize technology to assist students to access learning;
- ⇒ communicate and work effectively with all parents;
- ⇒ work with students to develop a process through which concerns and issues about discrimination can be identified and resolved;
- ⇒ use “teachable moments” to address non-inclusive, disrespectful, or discriminatory classroom behaviours;
- ⇒ encourage student leadership by involving students in establishing and monitoring guidelines for achieving inclusive classrooms;
- ⇒ understand that equity and inclusive education principles apply to every student and not just to certain groups of students; and,
- ⇒ assume responsibility for examining and taking steps to modify personal beliefs and biases that are inconsistent with equity and inclusive education principles.

Definitions

Adapted programming - programming that retains the learning outcomes of the Program of Studies and where adjustments to the instructional process are provided to address the special education needs of the student.

Assessment - the ongoing process of collecting information about students using a number of formal and informal methods across a variety of domains relevant to performance (behavioral, communicational, intellectual, learning or physical characteristics) to develop and implement appropriate programming to support student learning.

Community agencies – outside services necessary to support students, parents, and teachers in addressing the needs of students (i.e. Alberta Health Services, RCSD, Addiction & Mental Health, etc.)

Inclusive setting/inclusion - specially designed instruction and support for students with special education needs in regular classrooms and neighborhood schools.

Informed consent - means that the individual:

- has been provided with all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought
- understands and agrees, in writing, to the carrying out of the activity for which his or her consent is sought
- understands that the granting of consent is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time.

Intake – the process of gathering important information regarding new students

Modified programming - programming in which the learning outcomes are significantly different from the provincial curriculum and are specifically selected to meet students' special education needs (i.e. life skills, not on any formal Alberta Education curriculum).

Placement - the setting in which the special education programming or service is delivered to students.

Pyramid of Interventions - is a tiered pyramid-shaped model that represents a continuum of increasingly intense interventions that correspond to the responsiveness and needs of students.

Referral - arranging for students to receive specialized assessment and/or intervention.

Transition planning - a consultative process that involves students, parents, other professionals, receiving school staff, and community agencies, as appropriate, to enable students to prepare for and successfully make changes (school entry, between grades/levels of schooling and upon school completion).

Wrap-around services – outside agencies who work with the school community to ensure the necessary supports are in place for students, parents, and teachers in addressing the needs of students

Procedure

- 1) Student learning and progress will be continuous. All students will be placed in classrooms with age-appropriate peers and have opportunities to engage and interact with their peers. These classrooms will reflect the range of abilities present in that grade level.
- 2) Student assessment will be comprehensive and involve a collaborative approach with the student, parents, teacher, and community agency resources where appropriate. Teacher designed assessments play a key role in determining student strengths and needs.
- 3) Teachers (classroom and/or teams) will be responsible for the collaborative design and implementation of Individual Program Plans, Behavior Support Plans and/or Learner Profiles for students requiring significant adjustments to content, process, or context of the educational program. The Livingstone Range School Division approved software will be utilized for this process.
- 4) Student, parents, teachers, family school liaison counselors, and community agencies involved will all sign the IPP/BSP and be involved in at least two reviews per school year. (See Team Planning Process – attached)
- 5) Classroom teachers will be responsible for the work of support staff assigned to their classes utilizing the LRSD Teacher Assistant Standard of Practice as described in the Learning Support Handbook.
- 6) Classroom teachers will refer student concerns to the school Learning Support Team for discussion and suggested strategies.
- 7) A school-based Learning Support Team will be in place within each LRSD school. It will include a Learning Support Teacher, Family School Liaison Counsellor, First Nation Staff, School Administrator, and other needed support personnel. This team will meet at

least bi-weekly to discuss student learning concerns and the design of process, structures, and resources that support student learning. The Learning Support Teacher will act as team leader. (See LRSD Inquiry Matrix – attached)

- 8) The School Learning Support Team is responsible for:
 - a) the design and implementation of a School Response to Intervention Framework(s) to ensure students are successful within the Alberta Program of Studies or their personal modified program. Team members will provide support for classroom teachers through a coaching/co-teaching model within this framework; (See LRSD Jurisdiction Response to Intervention – Responding to Student Need – attached)
 - b) ensuring that community agencies will be involved where needed to support students, parents, and teachers in addressing student needs (Wrap-around services);
 - c) ensuring that clear intake procedures are in place for students wishing to enroll;
 - d) ensuring that students make smooth transitions in moving to a different grade level and/or a different school setting;
 - e) communicating to students and parents the learning support services that are available within the Response to Intervention Framework in the school and the process for accessing them. This will be included in the parent/student handbook and on the school website.
- 9) Learning Support Teachers and Family School Liaison Counselors will form a Jurisdictional Learning Support Team to enable informed decision-making.
- 10) Livingstone Range School Division Instructional Funding Allocation Formula, designed and reviewed by Administrative Council to move forward for approval from the Board of Trustees, provides school-based funds to address the learning needs of all students. Specialized funds determined through this same collaborative process with Administrative Council may be pooled to meet specific student learning needs and will be reviewed on a yearly basis. (Pooled Divisional Instructional Budget.) Schools will collaboratively design the use of their budgets to meet all student needs. A brochure describing funding is available in the Learning Support handbook and on the division website.

August, 2012

References

Livingstone Range School Division Administrative Procedures 201, 210, 310, 351, 360, 431
Edmonton Public Schools, Board Policy and Regulations, Inclusive Education
School Act Sections 8(1), 20(e), 45(1)(2)(3)(7)(8), and 47
Policy 1.6.1 Educational Placement of Students with Special Needs
Policy 1.6.2 Special Education
Standards for Special Education - Amended June 2004
Setting the Direction Framework, June 2009
Setting the Direction Framework: Government of Alberta Response, June 2010
Setting the Direction: Moving Toward an Inclusive Education System in Alberta, revised November 2010
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action' (1994)
Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

Updates: July, 2013; August, 2015