

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, their parents/guardians;
- involves an ongoing process for all partners, in learning how to live **with** difference and learning **from** difference;
- values the unique contributions of all students and provides an environment where diverse groups learn side by side, for the benefit of all;
- works for the identification and removal of barriers for students through the evaluation of data from a wide variety of sources;
- collaborates with all educational partners including learners, parents, government and community members to commit to addressing and removing barriers to enable all learners to achieve success through the transformation of culture, policy and practice.

Includes information from Ainscow and Miles, 2009

An inclusive learning environment:

- embraces diversity 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 (i.e. flexible groupings or individual);
- fosters ongoing, meaningful interactions for students with their peers and the school community; and,
- provides a continuum of supports and services designed to maximize academic

success, well-being and sense of belonging of each learner.

Staff in inclusive educational environments:

- foster a commitment to equity of outcomes and to closing achievement gaps between students;
- gather ongoing evidence, to inform teaching, learning and next steps to address student needs;
- provide a continuum of supports and services designed to maximize academic success, well-being and sense of belonging of each learner;
- 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 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, SWCSS, Addiction & Mental Health, FSCD, etc.)

Continuum of supports and services- an intentionally-designed set of actions, strategies, supports and services designed to maximize the academic success, well-being and sense of belonging of all students. A continuum is flexible and responsive to learner needs

Inclusive education is how we develop and design our schools, classrooms and activities so that all ECS children and students have the opportunities and support needed to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of schooling.

Inclusive education system-refers to a structure or organization that mobilizes all educational partners including: learners, parents, school authorities, government and community members to commit to addressing and removing barriers to enable all learners to achieve success through the transformation of culture, policy and practice.

Inclusive learning environment - a classroom, school, online learning environment or other educational setting structured to anticipate, value and respond to the diverse strengths and needs of all learners. Inclusive learning environments bring together same-age peers from different backgrounds and with different abilities to learn together. Inclusive learning environments includes supports to reduce and remove barriers to learning that lead to exclusion.

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.

Referral - arranging for students to receive specialized assessment, services 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 Student Plans, Behavior Support Plans and/or Learner Profiles for students requiring adjustments to content, process, or context of the educational program. The Livingstone Range School Division approved software will be utilized for this process.
4. Students, parents, teachers, family school liaison counselors, and community agencies involved will all sign the ISP/BSP and be involved in at least two reviews per school year.

5. Classroom teachers will be responsible for the work of support staff assigned to their classes as outlined in the LRSD Educational Assistant Handbook and Standard of Practice.
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 may include a Learning Support Teacher, Family School Liaison Counsellor, Success Coach, School Administrator, and other needed support personnel. This team will meet at least bi-weekly to discuss student learning concerns and the design of processes, structures, and resources that support student learning. The Learning Support Teacher will act as team leader.
8. The School Learning Support Team is responsible for:
 - the design and implementation of a Collaborative Response Framework, which includes intervention and Continuum of Supports and Services 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 Continuum of Supports and Services - Responding to Student Need – attached)
 - ensuring that community agencies will be involved where needed to support students, parents, and teachers in addressing student needs (Wrap-around services);
 - ensuring that clear intake procedures are in place for students wishing to enroll;
 - the Learning Support Team will participate in all student intake meetings
 - ensuring that students make smooth transitions in moving to a different grade level and/or a different school setting;
 - communicating to students and parents the learning support services that are available within the Responding to Student Need Continuum of Supports and Services 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 Division Learning Support Team to enable informed decision-making.
10. Livingstone Range School Division provides specialized school-based funds to address the learning needs of all students. Specific student learning needs are reviewed on a yearly basis through a collaborative process with the Administrator, Learning Support Team and division office.

August 2012
Updates: July 2013, August, 2015, April 2020, December 2023

References

Livingstone Range School Division Administrative Procedures 201, 210, 310, 350, 360,
Livingstone Range School Division Policy 21

Education Act Sections 3,11, 33(1.a) (1.d) (1.e) (2) (3), 197(a.1) (e),
Alberta Inclusive Education Policy
Implementing a Continuum of Supports and Services, 2022 Policy
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
Canadian Human Rights Act