

DATE: December 2, 2014

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Inclusive Education in Alberta Schools
(Response to Request for Information # 051)

ORIGINATOR: Mary Michailides, Assistant Superintendent, Supports for Schools

RESOURCE STAFF: Heather Raymond, Managing Director, Inclusive Learning

REFERENCE: September 16, 2014 Board Meeting (Trustee Hoffman)
[Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Inclusive Education in Alberta Schools](#)
June 14, 2011 Board Meeting (Special Needs Task Force Recommendations)
[HA.BP - Inclusive Education](#)
[HA.AR - Students in Need of Specialized Supports and Services](#)
[Educational Strengths-Based Approach](#)
[Pyramid of Intervention](#)
[Challenging Behaviour Website](#)
[New Teacher Induction Website](#)
[Everyone's In Tip Sheets](#)

ISSUE

The following information was requested:

- What recommendations in the report have already been implemented by the District?
- What recommendations in the report do we believe would support us in offering a successful inclusive educational environment for all students?
- What would be the potential resource implications of the recommendations?

BACKGROUND

On September 10, 2014, the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) released the Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Inclusive Education in Alberta Schools. The panel has 38 recommendations arranged around seven themes for the Government of Alberta, Alberta Education, ATA, post-secondary institutes, and school jurisdictions. Within the 38 recommendations, 10 refer to the work of school jurisdictions. The 10 recommendations for school jurisdictions include 5, 6, 7, 26, 28, 29, 30, 35, 36 and 38 which fall under the themes of Shared Vision; Resources; Teacher Professional Growth; Time; and Community Engagement.

CURRENT SITUATION

What recommendations in the report have already been implemented by the District?

The District's work in creating an inclusive learning environment has been guided by the Trustee Special Needs Task Force: Recommendation Report approved June 14, 2011. Using the Trustee Task Force as the District's internal guiding document, Inclusive Learning (IL) consultants believe they have been able to fulfill the recommendations in the Blue Ribbon Panel on Inclusive Education in Alberta Schools for school jurisdictions.

Under the themes, the following actions directly align with the school jurisdictions recommendations:

Shared Vision

- HA.BP – Inclusive Education and HA.AR – Students in Need of Specialized Supports and Services were developed.
- In June 2012, the Inclusive Education Parent and Community Advisory Committee was formed for the purpose of ensuring continued involvement of parent and community members in the District’s implementation of an inclusive education system.
- As part of the communication plan for HA.AR – Students in Need of Specialized Supports and Services. The following is in place:
 - Two district guiding documents:
 - The Pyramid of Intervention: A Framework for Supporting All Students. The tools in the document form the basis for collaborative conversations between school staff and IL consultants. The Learner Profile, a tool in the document, gives teachers a voice in the development of educational goals for students.
 - An Educational Strengths-Based Approach: This document forms the basis for collaborative conversations between school and IL staff in creating and enhancing a strengths-based culture throughout the District.
 - To date, 10 Everyone’s In tip sheets related to topics to support the implementation of HA.AR – Students in Need of Specialized Supports and Services were developed and distributed to schools. Additional tip sheets are under development and will be distributed throughout the year. These include:
 - Supporting a Strength-Based Approach;
 - Creating Learner Centered Individual Program Plans (IPPs);
 - The Pyramid of Intervention – A Planning Tool;
 - The Pyramid of Intervention – Helping Parents Participate;
 - People First Language;
 - Social Inclusion;
 - Creating Welcoming and Inclusive Schools;
 - Supporting Your Child’s Individual Program Plan (IPP);
 - Supporting Social Inclusion; and
 - Indicators of Inclusive Schools: Alberta Education Guide.
- Nine videos, as part of the IL Everyone’s In Series, are available for staff to learn from other district colleagues on best practices for inclusion.
- Insights into the IL series posted on Staff Room support the District’s ongoing work to build an inclusive system. The series offers school staff an excellent opportunity to learn from one another and describes how they are helping students of all needs and abilities experience success.

Resources

- Professional learning (PL) for educational assistants (EA) is provided through schools, catchment groups, and centrally. The PL sessions offered supports the building of staff capacity to support all learners. Supply EA’s new to the District are provided with two full days of training which includes NonViolent Crisis Intervention.
- The Edmonton Regional Collaborative Service Delivery (ERCSD) partners, which include Edmonton school authorities and Alberta Health Services (AHS) are collaborating to

support services offered to school staff and families to improve students' ability to take part in their educational program. The goal of ERCSD, in partnership with EPS through IL, is to coordinate an enhanced delivery of services and supports to complement what is already available to students, families, and school staff within their schools.

- IL and Curriculum and Resource Support staff support school staff in understanding and applying the principles of Universal Design for Learning as a means of enhancing the learning of all students and to increase teacher confidence in meeting the learning needs of our diverse student population.

Teacher Professional Growth

- PL for teachers is provided through schools, catchment areas and centrally.
- In addition to teachers being able to apply for professional improvement leaves/tuition effective September 2014, the District has also established a Staff Development Fund. The function of the fund is to assist individuals or groups of teachers in pursuing professional learning activities focused on teaching quality and improvement of student outcomes.
- In order to build staff capacity, schools are able to access IL multidisciplinary teams. The teams have regular scheduled school visits for school-led conversations about the programming needs of students. This is resulting in greater coordination of service to schools, development of collaborative protocols between schools and the IL teams, and support for students in transition.
- To build capacity through a culture of collaborative and distributed leadership, the [Challenging Behaviour Website](#) has been developed to support school staff.
- The New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) ([New Teacher Website](#)), a joint initiative between Edmonton Public Schools and Edmonton Public Teachers Local 37, is provided to welcome, mentor and support teachers in transition to the teaching profession and to the District.

Time

- The District is undertaking a two-year calendar pilot project aimed at enhancing teachers' skills to support student success. The calendar will include more PL opportunities for teachers through five common PL days throughout the year.
- Schools provide teachers with release time to meet in collaborative teams to develop strategies focused on supporting student learning.
- A pilot has been established within the North East Catchment to use the IPP templates released by Alberta Education 2014. The templates focus on instructional planning and academic learning.

Community Engagement

- Parent Councils provide parents with opportunities to discuss issues related to student programming which include creating an inclusive environment for all students.
- Some of the Everyone's In tip sheets have been developed to support parents in the engagement of creating an inclusive learning environment for all.

What recommendations in the report do we believe would support us in offering a successful inclusive educational environment for all students?

All 38 recommendations in the report have merit. Advocacy efforts by the Board of Trustees to request Alberta Education to support the recommendations would further the District's work in developing successful inclusive educational environments for all students.

To further the District's effort to create an inclusive learning environment for all students, continual focus on PL for staff is necessary. In addition to the work occurring in catchment areas and in collaboration with the Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium (ERLC), the development of a targeted PL plan with specific competencies required for educational assistants, teachers and principals would further our capacity building efforts.

What would be the potential resource implications of the recommendations?

The catchment structure within leadership groups, IL and Curriculum and Resource Support provides the basis for the necessary resources needed to develop a targeted professional development plan to continue to build district staff capacity in developing inclusive learning environments for all students.

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES

N/A

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