

Background

The Division supports the philosophy and practice of inclusion of students with their same age peers and exposure to the curriculum; however, at times students may benefit from targeted intervention outside of the classroom.

The Division intends that students with all types of diversity be considered under the context of inclusion including students who have academic and learning challenges, physical, mental, or social-emotional challenges, or have social and cultural differences.

Best Practices for Inclusion is based on the principles that “all children attend age appropriate regular classroom in their local schools”, “all children receive curriculum relevant to their needs”, and “all children benefit from cooperation and collaboration among home, school and community”, among others. These principles serve as a basis for ten categories of best practice, including the following:

1. A school learning environment that holds positive expectations and opportunities for all students;
2. Collaborative planning among administration, students, teachers, parents, and community partners;
3. An administration that provides an enabling and empowering school environment for all students;
4. A school environment that enables and expounds the importance of social responsibility, including the celebration of difference;
5. The inclusion of students and parents in the planning of curriculum for students with disabilities, and the accommodation of individual strengths and needs;
6. Support programs and services (e.g. counsellors, health and social service workers, program assistants) that meet the needs of students with disabilities;
7. The use by teachers of a range and variety of instructional and assessment practices in order to “accommodate various learning preferences”;
8. Transition planning that involves all stakeholders in the life of a particular student (i.e. receiving teachers and administrators, job counsellors, parents, external service workers, etc.);
9. Partnerships between the school, the student’s family, and the greater community;
10. Innovative system and staff growth through evaluation and professional development.

The Division offers numerous program choices to students.

Each school will have procedures in place with regard to the promotion and placement of students that align with and correspond to these principals.

Definitions

Adapted Programs: Programming that retains the learner outcomes of the Programs of Study and where adjustments to the instructional process are provided to address the special education needs of the student.

Modified Programs: Programming in which the learner outcomes are significantly different from the Programs of Study and are specifically selected to meet students' special education needs.

Universal Design for Learning: Proactively creating accessible classrooms through the use of flexible technology instills flexibility into methods and materials, maximizing learning opportunities for ALL students. Universal Design for Learning provides students with alternatives in:

- how learning is represented,
- how they express or demonstrate what they have learned, and
- how they engage in their learning.

Differentiated Instruction: Differentiated instruction is a philosophy and an approach to teaching in which teachers and school communities actively work to support the learning of all students through strategic assessment, thoughtful planning and targeted, flexible instruction.

Response to Intervention (RTI): A school improvement process based on tiers of increasingly intensive intervention:

- Identify students at risk
- Identify highly effective strategies specifically designed to address areas of need
- Implement strategies with fidelity
- Utilize assessment to determine progress and adjust instruction

Core Curriculum: The core curriculum is the course of study deemed critical and made mandatory for all students of a school or school system. Core curricula are instituted at the elementary and secondary levels by local school boards, Departments of Education, or other administrative agencies charged with overseeing education.

Procedures

1. Whenever possible and viable, students will be placed within same age group settings.
2. Intervention Practices will follow the Response to Intervention Model and be supported by an RTI funding allocation that designates support reflective of students' needs rather than merely their designated code. Interventions will be considered on three summary levels:
 - 2.1. Primary Intervention, the least intensive level of the RTI prevention framework, typically includes the core curriculum and the instructional practices used for all students. Primary prevention includes:
 - 2.1.1. A core curriculum that is research-based
 - 2.1.2. Instructional practices that are culturally and linguistically responsive
 - 2.1.3. Universal screening to determine students' current level of performance
 - 2.1.4. Differentiated learning activities (e.g. mixed instructional grouping, use of learning centers, peer tutoring) to address individual needs
 - 2.1.5. Accommodations to ensure all students have access to the instructional program
 - 2.1.6. Problem solving to identify interventions, as needed, to address behavior problems that prevent students from demonstrating the academic skills they possess
 - 2.1.7. Students who require interventions due to learning difficulties continue to receive instruction in the core curriculum.
 - 2.2. Secondary prevention typically involves small-group instruction that relies on evidence-

based interventions that specify the instructional procedures, duration (typically 10 to 15 weeks of 20- to 40-minute sessions), and frequency (3 or 4 times per week) of instruction.

- 2.2.1. Secondary prevention has at least three distinguishing characteristics:
 - 2.2.1.1. is evidence-based (rather than research-based);
 - 2.2.1.2. it relies entirely on adult-led small-group instruction rather than whole-class instruction;
 - 2.2.1.3. and it involves a clearly articulated, validated intervention, which should be adhered to with fidelity.
 - 2.2.2. Secondary prevention is expected to benefit a large majority of students who do not respond to effective primary prevention.
 - 2.2.3. As evidenced by progress monitoring data, students who do not benefit from the interventions provided under secondary prevention may need more intensive instruction or an individualized form of intervention, which can be provided at the tertiary prevention level.
 - 2.3. Tertiary prevention, the third level of the RTI prevention framework, is the most intensive of the three levels and is individualized to target each student's area(s) of need.
 - 2.3.1. At the tertiary level, the teacher begins with a more intensive version of the intervention program used in secondary prevention (e.g. longer sessions, smaller group size, more frequent sessions). However, the teacher does not presume it will meet the student's needs. Instead, the teacher conducts frequent progress monitoring (i.e. at least weekly) with each student.
 - 2.3.2. These progress monitoring data quantify the effects of the intervention program by depicting the student's rate of improvement over time.
 - 2.3.2.1. When the progress monitoring data indicate the student's rate of progress is unlikely to achieve the established learning goal, the teacher engages in a problem-solving process. That is, the teacher modifies components of the intervention program and continues to employ frequent progress monitoring to evaluate which components enhance the rate of student learning.
 - 2.3.3. By continually monitoring and modifying (as needed) each student's program, the teacher is able to design an effective, individualized instructional program.
3. Individual Program Plans (IPP's): The Standards for Special Education (2004) require an IPP for all students with a special education code. An IPP is also required for students to receive local approval for PAT and Diploma accommodations. The purpose of completing an IPP is:
- Development of a plan
 - Recognition of a need for individualized strategies
 - Accountability of outcomes
 - Communication of strategy success
 - Communication with parents

The process recognizes that these purposes and documentation requirements can be accomplished for many students without the creation of a single document. This process also recognizes research that suggests teacher efforts are better directed at supporting intervention for a student than in the creation of paperwork.

The evolution of inclusive education practices supports many of the purposes of an IPP that were not common thirty-years-ago when the procedure was to place children with disabilities in segregated classrooms. Approaches to teaching that involve Universal Design for Learning

(UDL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI) allow planning and reaction for all students who may experience difficulty in the classroom. Pembina Hills School Division (PHSD) goal setting meetings and reporting practices further support communication with all parents regarding student learning.

These revisions to IPP procedures are based on certain assumptions and have implications for practice amongst PHSD teachers.

- Teachers are implementing UDL and DI.
 - Teachers are regularly reporting student achievement details for ALL students. This would mean not just a comment of being “below grade level” but a description of specific skill development in a reporting period.
 - Teachers are communicating with parents about their child’s learning and allowing parent to provide feedback related to classroom strategies and goals.
- 3.1. An IPP document does NOT need to be completed for:
- 3.1.1. Students who only require individual strategies and supports that are normally available and implemented within typical classroom practice. Teachers are reporting academic progress on a regular basis to parents.
 - 3.1.2. Students identified with a speech or motor issue who only require individual strategies and supports that are normally available and implemented within typical classroom practice. Teachers are encouraged to work with occupational therapists and speech language pathologists to learn how to integrate supportive activities into their normal classroom repertoire.
- 3.2. An IPP document does need to be completed for:
- 3.2.1. Students with an identified disability who require individual strategies and supports that are not normally available and implemented within typical classroom practice.
 - 3.2.1.1. Students who have curriculum based outcomes replaced with non-curriculum based outcomes (i.e. life skills instead of academic).
 - 3.2.1.2. Students requiring a medical management plan
 - 3.2.2. Students expected to require accommodations for provincial examinations like the PAT’s and Diploma exams.
 - 3.2.3. Students with an identified disability in a classroom where the teacher is not implementing UDL and DI.
 - 3.2.4. Students requiring significant support (RTI Levels 5 & 6).
- 3.3. The IPP is composed of several components. All components are not required for all IPP’s.
- 3.4. The Strategy Plan includes the basic demographic and background information. It also contains information regarding common strategies and test accommodations.
- 3.4.1. The Strategy Plan is included for all IPP’s.
 - 3.4.2. Goals, Objectives & Transitions are intended for students requiring a high level of supports and services (RTI allocation funding level of 5 or 6) or with interventions being targeted at outcomes not included in the curriculum of studies. This would include goals related to life skills such as hygiene, personal safety, etc. For students with severe behaviour needs this section should reflect how school staff will specifically increase awareness and skills related to behaviour, ex. self-regulation.
 - 3.4.3. Behaviour/PSME (Proactive Safety Management Evaluation) Plan would be included for all students requiring a high level of support related to behaviour and safety (RTI allocation funding level 5 or 6).
 - 3.4.4. Medical Management is included for students who require medication

administration, monitoring of medical conditions or medical supports at school.
3.4.5. Success in School should be completed for students under the guardianship of Alberta Child and Family Services.

4. Placing individual students in Modified programs

4.1. The decision to place a student in a modified program within a classroom setting will be made by the principal or designate, in consultation with the Division's Education Services administration on the recommendation of the student's teacher and after consulting the student's parents/guardian and after reviewing other relevant student assessment data.

5. Targeted Intervention outside the Regular Classroom

5.1. It should be clearly documented in the student's IPP, when targeted intervention will remove a child from their classroom for the duration of the school year. (For example, this would not include a 10 week ERI program but would include a separate year-long remedial math course.)

5.2. The Director of Student Services should be specifically notified if a student's program will take place outside of their regular classroom for more than 25% of the school day.

5.3. Special programs that involve groups of students, covering material other than the regular curriculum and/or resulting in students being separated from their same age peers should:

5.3.1. Be discussed with the Director of Student Services prior to creation.

5.3.2. Have clearly written material that will be provided to parents, which outlines:

5.3.2.1. Rationale for the program

5.3.2.2. Entry criteria

5.3.2.3. Exit criteria

5.3.2.4. The parents right to decline their child's participation in the program

6. Protocol to Transition Children and Youth in Care into School Placements

6.1. In the interests of best supporting students in government care who move into our schools, Pembina Hills School Division and other school divisions in the area of Region 7 North Central Alberta Child and Family Services Authority have agreed on a specific protocol. Schools should refer to and follow the procedures in the Protocol to Transition Children and Youth in Care into School Placements.

7. Selecting Alternate (i.e. French Immersion, Christian, etc.) Programs for Students

7.1. The decision to select a program for elementary and junior high students (i.e. Regular program, French Immersion, Alternate Christian, etc.) is made in consideration of the student's and parents/guardian's wishes and availability of space. The School's role through its teachers, counsellor and principal is to provide advice and counsel.

7.2. The decision to select a high school program or course is that of the individual student and parents/guardian presuming they have met the entrance prerequisites. The School's role through its teachers, counsellor and principal is to provide advice and counsel.

7.3. See also [AP 60-01 Curriculum – Provincial and Alternate Programs](#)

8. Mid-Year Program Transfers (Within a School)

- 8.1. Written requests for program transfers should be made to the principal.
- 8.2. Students already in a particular program (i.e. Kindergarten French Immersion) shall have priority when entering a subsequent program (i.e. Grade One French Immersion) over students with no related background.
- 8.3. Transfers-in shall assume the same program duration commitments as existing participants (i.e. French Immersion, Junior High Band).
- 8.4. If a private or summer program which would enhance the student's suitability for a mid-program transfer is available, parents shall be encouraged to enroll their child.
- 8.5. Decisions regarding transfers shall be made by the principal or his designate after consultation with the parent and appropriate personnel.

Reference

[Policy 13 Appeals and Hearings Regarding Student Matters](#)
[Policy 19 Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments](#)
[Alberta Education – Supporting Every Student](#)
[AP 60-01 Curriculum – Provincial and Alternate Programs](#)
[Form 6-12-A Protocol to Transition Children and Youth in Care into School Placements](#)
[Exhibit – PHSD Rubric on Inclusive Practice 2012](#)
[Exhibit – Quick Guide for Indicators for PHSD Rubric on Inclusive Practice](#)