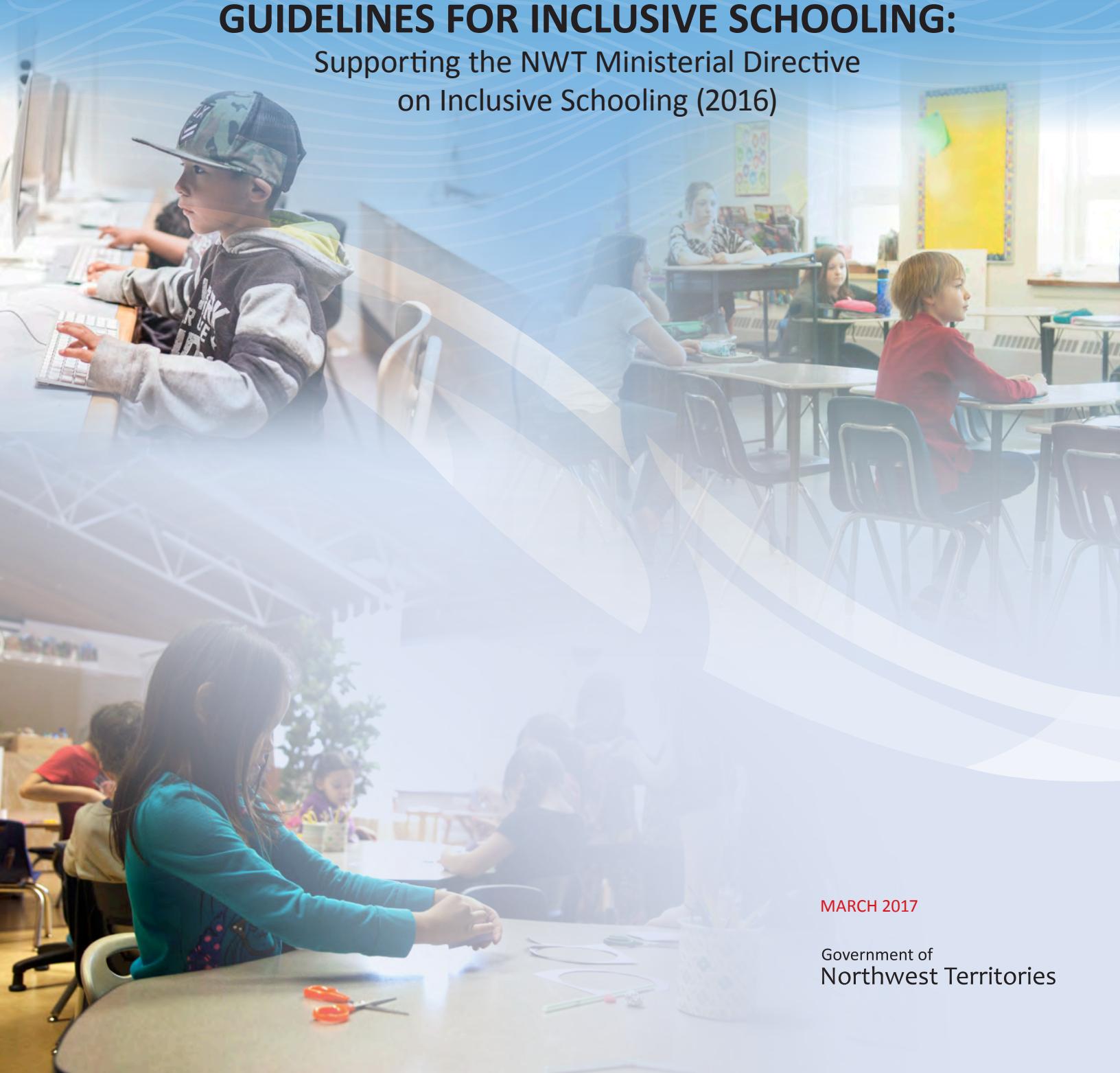




NWT MINISTERIAL DIRECTIVE ON INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING (2016)

GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING:

Supporting the NWT Ministerial Directive
on Inclusive Schooling (2016)



MARCH 2017

Government of
Northwest Territories



NWT Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling (2016)

Guidelines for Inclusive Schooling:
Supporting the NWT Ministerial Directive
on Inclusive Schooling (2016)



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Government of Northwest Territories

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT AND MINISTER FOR YOUTH

Dear NWT Educators,

Inclusive education has been a foundational part of the Northwest Territories' education system for many decades. Through it, we recognize that all children can learn, and ensure that all students can do so in a welcoming and safe common learning environment with their age-appropriate peers.

Inclusive education implies that school teams work in collaboration with families and communities, to meet the diverse needs and strengths of all NWT students in a responsive, accepting, respectful and supportive way. The best interest of each student is at the heart of an inclusive education system, regardless of race, nationality, creed, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, family status, political belief, or social condition. An inclusive education system is about creating learning environments and opportunities where each child feels they are valued, they belong and that they are provided with the supports necessary to obtain their personal best.

The Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling (2016) represents a renewed focus, through the NWT JK-Grades 12 Education Renewal initiative, on providing quality inclusive education to the diverse student population of the Northwest Territories. The current approach and application of Inclusive Schooling was put through a rigorous examination process that included many people coming together to help review and guide changes for improvement. The results showed clearly that though the philosophy of inclusive education in the NWT is a solid one, there were definite areas of improvement required to strengthen the school based practices, the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in supporting student learning and the overall accountability of Inclusive Schooling funding.

Through this renewal process the Directive, and its new accompanying guidelines and evaluation tool, now clearly defines the roles of all education staff involved in Inclusive Schooling, encourages true collaboration of the school team to support classroom teachers in better meeting student needs, highlights the importance of ongoing professional training and development, and ensures that the Government monitors the large investment being made in Inclusive Schooling to confirm that the intentions and goals are being met.

I want to acknowledge and thank all who contributed to this work in the past few years including the many experienced educators who provided essential feedback and suggestions for improvement.



I am convinced that together, within each of our roles, our education system will succeed in supporting the Territory's children and youth on their individual pathways to success and to becoming contributing members of our society.

Mahsi,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alfred Moses".

Honourable Alfred Moses, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and Minister Responsible for Youth

NWT MINISTERIAL DIRECTIVE ON INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING (2016)

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NWT MINISTERIAL DIRECTIVE ON INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING (2016)

1. PURPOSE

This Directive on Inclusive Schooling provides direction to education bodies from the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to ensure that schools in the Northwest Territories are implementing inclusive schooling as defined in this directive, and mandated by Section 7(1) of the *Education Act* (1996).

2. DIRECTIVE STATEMENT

In accordance with this directive, education bodies must welcome students within a common learning environment in the community in which the student resides and provide support through School-Based Support Teams to enable teachers to meet the diverse needs of students, including those who experience significant barriers to learning.

3. DIRECTIVE OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure that all students have access to quality education programs within a common learning environment in the community in which the student resides.
2. To ensure that education bodies have direction on how to administer inclusive schooling supports and programming.
3. To ensure educators are provided with in-servicing to deliver inclusive schooling supports and programming.
4. To ensure financial accountability for inclusive schooling funding.
5. To ensure monitoring, evaluation and reporting of inclusive schooling supports and programming.

4. INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING VISION

To ensure access to quality education for all students by effectively meeting their diverse needs in a way that is responsive, accepting, respectful and supportive.

5. PRINCIPLES

Inclusive schooling in the Northwest Territories:

- Recognizes that every student can learn.
- Is individualized – educational programs and decisions focus on the individual student's strengths and needs, and are based upon the student's best interests.
- Ensures access to appropriate learning opportunities by utilizing evidence- based instructional and support strategies to remove barriers to learning.
- Enables all students to participate within a common learning environment shared amongst age-peers in the community in which the student resides.
- Is delivered within an accessible physical environment where all students and school personnel feel welcome, safe and valued.
- Is respectful of student and staff diversity in regards to their race, colour, ancestry, nationality, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, family status, family affiliation, political belief, political association, social condition and a conviction that is subject to a pardon or record suspension. (*NWT Human Rights Act*, Section 5 (1) 2014)
- Is characterized by collaboration: parents, affected student (where appropriate), school principals, classroom teachers, program support teachers, support assistants, and other professionals collaborate to make decisions related to the educational needs of individual students.
- Promotes the involvement of parents/guardians in their child's education.
- Establishes and maintains a professional learning program to ensure that educational staff have the knowledge and skills needed to provide effective instruction to a diverse student population.
- Promotes partnerships between schools and their communities, operating effectively through a range of school-wide supports and community programs and services available to all students.

6. APPLICATION

This directive applies to all Education Bodies. The Northwest Territories *Education Act* (S.N.W.T. 1995, c.28, as amended) under section 7(1) and 7(2) states that every student is entitled to have access to the education program in a regular instructional setting in a school in the community in which they live, and that an education body shall provide the support services needed to ensure that students have access to the education program.

7. AUTHORITY

Authority for this directive on inclusive schooling is derived from the Northwest Territories *Education Act* (S.N.W.T. 1995, c.28, as amended). Specifically the Minister responsible for the *Education Act* has the authority under section 7(2) to provide direction to education bodies on inclusive schooling.

8. DEFINITIONS

Accommodation: measures that allow students to best gain access to and achieve success with expected learning outcomes, including those who experience obstacles to learning and those who require enriched opportunities for learning. Accommodations may include changing the teaching process, learning environment, time demands, assistance, evaluation and/or the ways in which a student demonstrates learning. Accommodations are recorded on a Student Support Plan yet do not represent changes to the expected learning outcomes as stated in curricular documents.

Common learning environment: an inclusive environment where instruction is designed to be delivered to students of mixed ability and with their peer group in the community school, while being responsive to their individual needs as a learner, and used for the majority of the students' regular instruction hours.

Differentiated Instruction: a best practice in education that recognizes and supports individual differences in learning, wherein teachers actively plan and teach in order to address the diverse learning needs of their students. It is based on the understanding that students will attain learning outcomes by varying routes, at differing paces, while requiring a variety of supports. Aspects of teaching and learning that may be differentiated include: content, product/demonstration of mastery, instruction, assessment, task, grouping, resources, and/or process. Curricular objectives remain constant, while the teaching practices are flexible and designed to match student learning needs.

Education body: a District Education Authority (DEA), a Divisional Education Council (DEC) or a *commission scolaire francophone (CSF)*, or all of them as the case may be.

Education program: the program of education from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 based on the curriculum established by the Minister. Students may follow a Regular Education Program (with or without accommodations), a Modified Education Program, or an Individual Education Program.

Enrichment: extending the learning outcomes to ensure that students are appropriately challenged; a form of accommodation.

Homebound students: those who are required to stay home and not attend school at the request of a medical doctor.

Inclusive Schooling: students access the education program, and required supports, in a common learning environment in the student's home community.

Individualized Education Program/Plan (IEP): An individualized Education Program is student-specific program outlined in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This plan is a comprehensive written education plan with annual student outcomes and shorter-term objectives, determined through a collaborative process, driven by the strengths and needs of the student; it may or may not include learning outcomes articulated in NWT curricula. A student on an IEP usually requires supports, accommodations, facilities, resources and/or equipment required beyond those required by his/her peers.

Instructional Strategies: techniques teachers use to help students become independent, strategic learners. These *instructional strategies* become *learning strategies* when students independently select the appropriate ones and use them effectively to accomplish tasks or meet goals.

Modified Education Program: A Modified Education Program is developed for students who are documented as working significantly above or below grade level in one or more subjects, yet retains the learning outcomes articulated in NWT curricula. The curricular learning outcomes are selected from the working grade level and used to guide instruction for the Modified Program. The Modified Program is based on student strengths, needs and interests and may include modified individualized learning goals, instructional methods, methods of practice and evaluation procedures, consistent with the principles of differentiated instruction. The Modified Program is recorded in a Student Support Plan (SSP).

Other professionals: include related service providers such as Occupational Therapists, Speech-Language Pathologists, Physiotherapists, Social Workers, Addictions and Mental Health Counsellors, Educational Psychologists, and Paediatricians.

Program Support Teacher (PST): an experienced and skilled teacher who provides direct collaborative support to classroom teachers as they develop instructional strategies to meet the needs of students.

Regular Education Program: A Regular Education Program is determined by the learning outcomes articulated in NWT curricula for a specific grade level.

School-based Support Team (SBST): a team co-led by the school administrator and Program Support Teacher(s) that provides support to classroom teachers with instructional issues, strategy development and problem-solving. The team coordinates the utilization of school personnel and other resources to support teachers and students. The school-based team may seek the assistance of other professionals or community supports, as appropriate.

Student Support Plan (SSP): a record of supports for learning which documents accommodations or modifications required for a student to best experience success with their programming. The SSP may change at any time to best reflect student needs and successes. Different kinds of Student Support Plans exist: Regular Education Program with Accommodations for Difficulty (JK-12); Regular Education Program with Accommodations for Enrichment (JK-12), Modified Education Program – Below Grade Level (JK-9); Modified Education Program – Above Grade Level (JK-9).

Support Assistant (SA): an individual working in the school to support classroom teachers in meeting the instructional and personal needs of students.

Supports: additional service, strategy or resource provided to enhance student learning or help an individual student overcome barriers to learning. Supports are services beyond those provided to all students as part of the overall school program.

Temporary residency: student residing in treatment centres/group homes operated by the NWT Department of Health and Social Services (HSS).

- Youth Justice facilities operated by the NWT Department of Justice.
- Medical/long-term care facilities operated by HSS.
- Medical or treatment facilities outside of the NWT approved by HSS.
- A temporary foster placement.

*The Northwest Territories *Education Act* (S.N.W.T. 1995, c.28, as amended) under section 7(3)

9. PROVISION OF SUPPORT

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment, working through education bodies and schools, will establish and maintain systematic supports for instruction so all students are able to access an educational program within a common learning environment in the community in which the student resides.

9.1 COMMON LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Education bodies are required to ensure that the common learning environment:

- Enables each student to fully participate in a learning environment that is designed for all students and is shared with peers in their home community.
- Applies student-centred instructional practices and learning principles.
- Is responsive to individual learning needs by implementing required supports in a timely manner.

9.2 SUPPORTS FOR INCLUSION

ECE and Education bodies must establish, maintain and systematically monitor supports for inclusion, including policy, funding, monitoring, evaluation and capacity-building strategies.

9.2.1 Education bodies are required to direct principals to:

- Ensure that a student's instruction is primarily provided by the classroom/subject teacher, within the common learning environment.

- Ensure homogenous groupings of students with similar needs are flexible and temporary, and their utilization is based on on-going assessment of student needs and successes.

**When it is determined that a homogenous group is needed for instruction, the plan for the group must include clear targets and short-term goals, as well as pre-identified strategies with defined, on-going assessment methodologies to monitor success.*

- Ensure support assistants and classroom teachers are aware of and respect the guidelines and standards of practice for support assistants.
- Support teachers and support assistants in the use of flexible instructional strategies.

- Allocate resources to maximize assistance to classroom teachers to enable them to support the learning of all their students.
- Ensure that all students have access to appropriate curricular activities.
- Ensure a fair process for equitable access to extra-curricular and school-sponsored activities within available resources.
- Identify accessibility issues to ensure facilities meet student needs.

9.3 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Inclusive schooling in the NWT ensures that students have access to the necessary support services to access education within the community in which they reside. Education bodies are required to support the development, implementation and monitoring of a Student Support Plan (SSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for students who require them by directing principals to:

- Ensure that the teacher develops a Student Support Plan (SSP) that identifies accommodations and/or modifications to the learning goals and instructional strategies needed to enable student success.
- Ensure that the teacher, supported by the School-based Support Team and in consultation with the parents/guardians, develops an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that identifies individual student learning goals, instructional strategies and accommodations needed to enable student success.
- Ensure that in developing the SSP or IEP, the identification of student strengths and challenges includes such things as information on interests and aspirations, readiness to learn, learning preferences and other relevant factors.
- Ensure parents, and students when appropriate, have the opportunity for meaningful involvement in planning, problem solving and decision-making related to a student's learning goals and instructional strategies and necessary supports to achieve them.
- Ensure the teacher is supported by relevant members of the School-based Support Team.
- Provide access to technological supports when appropriate and where needed to overcome barriers to learning.
- Ensure classroom teachers know how to utilize ECE approved software for the development and storage of electronic educational program plans, as per the guidelines.

9.3.1 Education bodies are required to support the identification, development and monitoring of educational plans by directing classroom teachers to:

- Participate within the School-based Support Team to develop or utilize a number of informal to formal assessment strategies across time periods and situations to:
 - ◆ Determine students' strengths and challenges;
 - ◆ Assess performance in relation to NWT curricular outcomes;
 - ◆ Make changes to instruction and assessment as required;
 - ◆ Identify whether there is the need for an SSP or IEP.
- Notify the School-based Support Team when students experience persistent learning difficulties in spite of the use of responsive teaching strategies intended to meet assessed learner needs and interests or, when a student needs significant enrichment. The School-based Support Team will act upon that information utilizing available resources.
- Develop, implement and update the learning goals and instructional strategies whenever significant changes or accommodations are required, in collaboration with the School-based Support Team.
- Receive, review and update the SSP or IEP when a student transitions from another grade and/or school - as well as regularly throughout the school year - in consultation with parents, the student, members of the School-based Support Team, appropriate regional staff, including other professionals as required.
- Develop lesson plans and instructional strategies that reflect the requirements of the SSP or IEP.
- Monitor and evaluate, on an on-going basis, the effectiveness of the instructional strategies and accommodations identified and make modifications to the plan as needed.
- Follow relevant guidelines issued by ECE on individual planning for students, including SSPs and IEPs.

9.3.2 Special Circumstances

Education bodies are required to:

- Provide education programs for students in temporary residency situations.
- Provide educational programs for homebound students.

9.4 SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAM

Education bodies are required to ensure each school has an established and operationalized School-based Support Team.

9.4.1 Purpose

The primary role of the School-based Support Team is to strengthen the school's capacity to enable student learning. Education bodies are required to ensure each school has an established School-based Support team that will:

- Operate under the leadership of the principal to assist classroom teachers with developing and implementing instructional and/or management strategies, Student Support Plans or Individualized Education Plans, and to coordinate support resources for students.
- Develop strategies to support classroom teachers in meeting students' needs and to reduce barriers to students' success in learning; solve specific problems; address systemic issues as well as those that are teacher or student specific; and maintain documentation, as per the reporting requirements.

9.4.2 Membership

- Core membership includes the school principal and/or vice principal, program support teacher(s) (PST) and other staff including counsellors, guidance staff and others whose focus is providing support to teachers and students. Core members will meet on a regular basis, typically once per week.
- Participation in the School-based Support Team is determined by the Principal and PST and may include: classroom teachers, support assistants, parents, students, superintendent, Regional Inclusive Schooling Coordinator, other regional staff, members of the Inclusive Schooling Territorial Support Team, other related service providers, and professionals from other government departments, as needed and appropriate, within compliance of Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATTIPP).

9.5 SPECIALIZED INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING STAFF

Education bodies receive conditional funding for the following types of Specialized Inclusive Schooling Staff. As part of the annual budget development, ECE will provide Education Bodies with funding and position information for Specialized Inclusive Schooling Staff. Education Bodies are responsible for implementation and management of Specialized Inclusive Schooling Staff and for reporting on Specialized Inclusive Schooling Staff as part of the overall accountability provisions related to this Directive.

9.5.1 Regional Inclusive Schooling Coordinator (RISC)

RISCs provide administrative and programming leadership at the regional level to support inclusive schooling based staff (Program Support Teachers and Support Assistants) support classroom teachers in meeting the needs of students.

Specifically, the RISC:

- Works closely with the superintendent and/or comptroller to ensure the funding provided for inclusive schooling is effectively used and consistent with the Directive and associated guidelines established by ECE.
- Liaison and collaborate with staff at ECE and with other RISCs to build a strong network to develop and support inclusive schooling practices in the NWT with specific focus on professional learning and capacity building initiatives.
- Work directly with school principals and PSTs to ensure that school staff know and use effective inclusive schooling practices that support students.
- Ensure that required program reporting is completed on time and submitted to the superintendent.

9.5.2 Program Support Teacher (PST)

The PST is an experienced and skilled teacher who provides direct collaborative support to classroom teachers as they develop and use instructional strategies to meet the needs of students.

Specifically, the PSTs:

- Focus on developing and supporting the implementation of instructional strategies; problem-solving; coaching; mentoring; co-teaching; and modelling promising practices.
- Will spend not less than 60% of their time engaged in activities that directly support classroom teachers, as outlined in the Guideline for Inclusive Schooling: Supporting the NWT Directive on Inclusive Schooling.
- Work closely with the school principal to operate the School-based Support Team.
- Provide school-based information and data to the RISC as required.

9.5.3 Support Assistant (SA)

Support Assistants work in the school to support teachers in meeting the needs of students.

Specifically, the SAs:

- Are assigned to support the teacher by the principal/School-based Support Team to meet identified student needs as described in the SSP or IEP.
- Works collaboratively with the classroom teacher to implement the SSP or IEP.

9.6 GENERAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

9.6.1 Minister of Education Culture and Employment

- Responsible for leadership and guidance on the directive and how inclusive schooling must be administered by education bodies in the NWT.

9.6.2 Department of Education, Culture and Employment

- Responsible for providing Education Bodies with information on the key components of the inclusive schooling program and associated funding.
- Responsible for providing support and coordination for professional learning and capacity building and for specialized resources in cooperation with the Education Bodies.
- Responsible for the overall accountability of inclusive schooling in the NWT.
- Responsible for monitoring and evaluation of inclusive schooling in the NWT.
- Responsible to give feedback and recommendations to education bodies on inclusive schooling in the NWT.

9.6.3 Education Bodies

- Responsible for following this directive on inclusive schooling.
- Responsible for administration of inclusive schooling programs.
- Responsible for financial accountability and reporting on inclusive schooling.
- Responsible for monitoring inclusive schooling and completing evaluation reports to be submitted to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment in an agreed format.

9.6.4 Superintendents

- Responsible for following this directive on inclusive schooling.
- Responsible to ensure that education bodies are following this directive on inclusive schooling.
- Responsible to ensure that inclusive schooling funding is being used by education bodies in a financially accountable manner.
- Responsible to ensure that education bodies produce monitoring and evaluation reports on inclusive schooling.
- Responsible for submitting financial and program reporting, as well as monitoring and evaluation reports to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment in an agreed format.

10. APPEALS

Parents/Guardians and/or students may disagree with an educational decision and proceed under sections 39 or 42 of the *Education Act*. In cases of appeal, education bodies are required to:

- Adhere to procedures articulated in the *Education Act* (1996) “Resolution and Appeal of Decisions Affecting Students” sections 38 through 43, and
- Education Appeal Regulations (1997)

11. ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING

11.1 FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

11.1.1 Funding provided to education bodies for inclusive schooling must be used for the sole purpose of supporting students and teachers in accordance with this directive on inclusive schooling.

11.1.2 Education bodies must maintain appropriate detailed financial records of how inclusive schooling funding has been spent and for what purpose.

11.1.3 Education bodies must provide the Department of Education, Culture and Employment audited financial records showing how inclusive schooling funding was spent on a yearly basis, as per financial reporting regulations.

11.2 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

11.2.1 Education bodies must monitor how inclusive schooling is implemented and is in adherence with the Directive, and will provide data to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment in a format prescribed by the Department.

- Education bodies will complete reviews of inclusive schooling practices in individual schools using the indicators and timelines established through the IS Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan. The review results will be used to plan for on-going school improvement.

11.2.2 The Department will monitor and evaluate inclusive schooling to ensure that it is functioning according to this Directive and accompanying Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan.

GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING:

Supporting the NWT Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling (2016)

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GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING: Supporting the NWT Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling (2016)

Part 1: Inclusive Schooling - the Context

BEGINNING THE CONVERSATION

The Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling (2016) represents a renewed focus on providing quality inclusive education to the diverse student population of the Northwest Territories. The Directive highlights the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE)'s continued commitment to equity and opportunity in each of the NWT communities, and reflects common values shared amongst citizens of the NWT.

Section 7(1) of the NWT *Education Act* (1996) is entitled Inclusive Schooling and states that, *“Every student is entitled to have access to the education program in a regular instructional setting, in their home community”*. Students are welcomed within regular classroom settings with their age peers, and are provided with educational programs and supports, as needed.

In order for ALL students to achieve success within this comprehensive learning environment, some students will need extra support to enhance their learning. This support might be minimal or intensive, short or long term. In order for ALL our students to experience success in our schools, their teachers clearly also need support.

In these Guidelines, the key elements of the Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling (2016) are highlighted to assist school staff and regional/district education personnel to implement and operationalize the policy.



PURPOSE

This guideline will describe some of the school and classroom practices that will make Inclusive Schooling a reality in NWT schools. They are based on more than 20 years of practical experience here in the Northwest Territories, as well as on research on best practice and evidence of what works and what does not.

Most of what follows has long been part of our practice. NWT educators have produced valuable resources that remain important in the details of professional practice. They remain operative and will be regularly updated to provide useful direction to regional/district staff and school based educators. These documents include:

- Dealing with Child Abuse: A Handbook for School Personnel: Frequently Asked Questions (2012)
- Honouring the Spirit of Our Children: A Framework for School Counselling Programs of the Northwest Territories (2004)
- Northwest Territories Program Support Guide: Programming for Student Success (Revised January 2008)
- Northwest Territories Individual Education Plans: Guidelines for Development & Implementation (2010) and Teacher Resource Kit (2006)
- Northwest Territories Student Support Plans: Guidelines for Development and Teacher Resource Kit (2006)
- Support Assistant Handbook (Draft 2016)
- Support Assistant Competency Profile (2008)

What is new is the focus being brought to this policy. We need to examine the knowledge and practices of teachers, the support provided them by principals and program support teachers, the leadership provided by regional Inclusive Schooling coordinators, superintendents and other regional/district staff, and the investment we need to make in enhancing the capacity of NWT educators to fulfill the promise of inclusive education.

Annually, the Government of the Northwest Territories allocates a substantive amount of funds for the Inclusive Schooling program, based on the size of the student population. That investment is necessary to accommodate the wide diversity of needs NWT students bring to their classrooms every day. To meet those demands, these investments must result in programs, processes and personnel that work effectively to support teachers and ensure student success. Effective practice and program accountability are essential.

The renewed Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling (2016) provides specific accountability requirements for schools and regions/districts. These are needed to ensure that individuals function according to their job descriptions and that regular systemic program reviews (at school, region/district and territorial levels) are carried out. Effective monitoring and evaluation of Inclusive Schooling in this manner will contribute to program improvement and increased student success.

Inclusive Schooling benefits individuals, families, communities and the Territory. Towards this end, the Directive was created to maximize opportunities for equitable access to quality education for all learners by effectively meeting the diverse needs of all students in a way that is responsive, accepting, respectful and supportive.

All students are welcomed within regular classroom settings with their age peers, and are provided with educational programs and additional supports as needed. This does not mean that students would never access other age groups for specific purposes, such as a Grade 4 student being a leader in a Grade 1 physical education class, if this met with his/her Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals. Application of these guidelines requires contextualization specific to the individual. The student's goals and needs must drive programming considerations.

Inclusive instruction takes place in a common learning environment where the instruction is designed for delivery to students of mixed abilities, with their peer group, in the community school, while remaining responsive to their individual needs as learners. Supports are introduced, as required, and are documented on the Student Support Plan or in the Individual Education Plan.

In practical terms, inclusive education creates opportunities for students to develop their individual strengths and gifts, create positive peer relationships, foster a sense of belonging and respect for others, and generate an appreciation of diversity.

Finally, it is by reducing learning barriers and actively engaging families and the larger community in education that the goals of education for all students can best be realized.

Inclusive Schooling is dependent on several important practices:

- Creating an inclusive school climate and environment;
- Supporting teachers as well as students;
- Planning support for individual students;
- Creating effective instructional programs (classroom practices) to accommodate diverse student needs;
- Creating and using a school-based support team;
- Defining and operationalizing individual support roles – program support teachers, principals, support assistants and other school and regional/district staff;
- Working with partners beyond the school; and
- Ensuring individual and systemic program accountability through monitoring and evaluation.

You are invited to use these ***Guidelines*** as the basis for critical reflection of your own professional practice.



Part 2: Supporting Teachers and Students

A COLLABORATIVE MODEL OF INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING

Inclusive Schooling is defined by collaboration; parents, principals, teachers, program support teachers, peers, and other professionals collaborate to make decisions related to the educational needs of individual students.

Collaboration means working together to produce results. In Inclusive Schooling this means using the strengths of the School-based Support Team members to best meet the needs of the students. In a collaborative process, team members are guided by a query from a teacher, and seek to support that teacher in meeting the needs of the students. The team members are invested in the success of the teacher and student and actively seek to provide on-the-ground support. All members in this process are equals at the table, and each member brings their own unique perspective.

Consultation means meeting with individuals, often experts, in order to discuss a situation and seek advice. In Inclusive Schooling, consultation is used, when needed, as a way to get new ideas or strategies to best meet student needs. In a consultation, the experts are not responsible for implementing strategies. They may or may not know the student, the community or the school. In their role, they provide advice and may provide follow up consultation, if desired. It is essential that the School-based Support Team evaluate the advice of experts and implement within the context of their known realities.

Both collaboration and consultation are used in Inclusive Schooling. Collaboration is an essential ongoing practice, whereas consultation only occurs when needed, as determined by the School-based Support Team.

Coaching and modeling are critical components of collaboration within the School-based Support Team. The Program Support Teacher is ideally positioned to best coach a teacher in the development of new skills and model implementation of new strategies. Coaching and modeling both are job-embedded professional development strategies that strengthen Inclusive Schooling.

The following model of Inclusive Schooling service delivery in the NWT outlines roles and responsibilities for effective implementation. A key aspect of this model emphasizes the importance of supporting classroom teachers to effectively deliver challenging and appropriate learning experiences for all students.

Effective learning environments are comprised of many levels of support:

- A. School-based Supports
- B. Education System Supports
- C. Health & Social Services System Support
- D. Community Supports

A. SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORTS

The Directive clearly indicates the central role the classroom teacher plays in meeting the needs of each student in the classroom. The success of the teacher in providing effective instruction to a diverse group of students is dependent on many factors. No matter how skilled and experienced the teacher may be, there will always be new situations and circumstances where the teacher needs additional support.

Several schools in the NWT are in communities with a small population and student enrollment. These schools may have particular challenges. For instance, some may not have a Program Support Teacher. Every effort must be made to meet the needs of small schools in a creative and equitable manner.

The establishment and operation of a **School-based Support Team (SBST)** in which each participant plays an effective role is essential to the success of an inclusive school and its teachers.

The **School-Based Support Team** consists of the principal/assistant principal(s), the program support teacher(s), the support assistant(s) (as appropriate) and other staff including counselors, mentors, and others. While these may be the core members in larger schools, actual membership will vary depending on the school and the number of staff members. However, whatever the size of the community or the school, it is critical that collaboration occurs in order to problem solve together and best meet student needs. In very small schools, this might occur through virtual meetings with Regional/District staff or with teachers and administration from another school.

Whatever the circumstance, making the school program work for a diverse student population is not always easy, but it is achievable. It requires a great deal of collaborative effort by staff members to resolve the challenges that inevitably come to the surface in classrooms. Strong and effective collaborative structures that tap into the knowledge, experience and expertise of the educators working in the school/district are the primary building blocks for success.

The primary roles of the SBST members should be to support the classroom teacher through coaching, co-teaching, co-planning and consultation. They should function as a team with a shared vision, a focus on collaboration, collegial support, joint problem-solving and promising practices and strategies that result in teacher and student success.

The following provides a discussion of the role of each of the key team players.

A.1. THE PRINCIPAL (AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL)

The Principal provides needed leadership for the effective functioning of the school-based team by setting conditions (ex. creative timetabling) so the program support teacher (PST) can work effectively with classroom teachers, and by working closely with the PST to ensure all staff have the opportunity to collaborate and problem solve within the school-based collaborative team model.

The principal must also ensure that teachers have access to relevant professional development opportunities related to inclusive practices, and will monitor and follow the accountability framework mandated in the Directive. Facilitating an inclusive culture in the school and advocating for community and district support for programs and services to meet teacher and student needs is a critical responsibility of the principal.



A.2. PROGRAM SUPPORT TEACHER

The **Program Support Teacher (PST)** provides leadership to the school-based team to ensure effective inclusive practice while working collaboratively with the principal and other team members. The role of the PST in an inclusive school must be focused on supporting and working directly with classroom teachers. The PST is preferably an experienced and knowledgeable teacher, who works well with colleagues, and who can provide a range of supports to help build teacher capacity for utilizing effective and appropriate pedagogical strategies.

A Program Support Teacher contributes to the education of students with diverse needs by serving as a colleague, role model and coach for teachers with regards to inclusive instructional practices. The PST works with all members of the school team to ensure consistency of understanding and delivery, and provide support where needed.

The PST maintains a working knowledge of NWT curriculum, related research, exceptionalities, and inclusive instructional practices (ex. classroom lesson plans/units, Universal Design for Learning or UDL, and assessment practices) in order to collaborate with the classroom teacher who holds the subject matter expertise.

In carrying out this role, the PST will focus on activities and functions that directly support classroom teachers to meet the needs of their students. The Directive provides guidance in this by setting out PST priority time-use targets:

- a minimum of 60% of the PST's time should be devoted to ***teacher support activities***
- no more than 25% of the PST's time should be spent working ***directly with students*** (commonly Tier 3 students – those with more complex needs)
- maximum of 15% of the time used for ***other*** functions

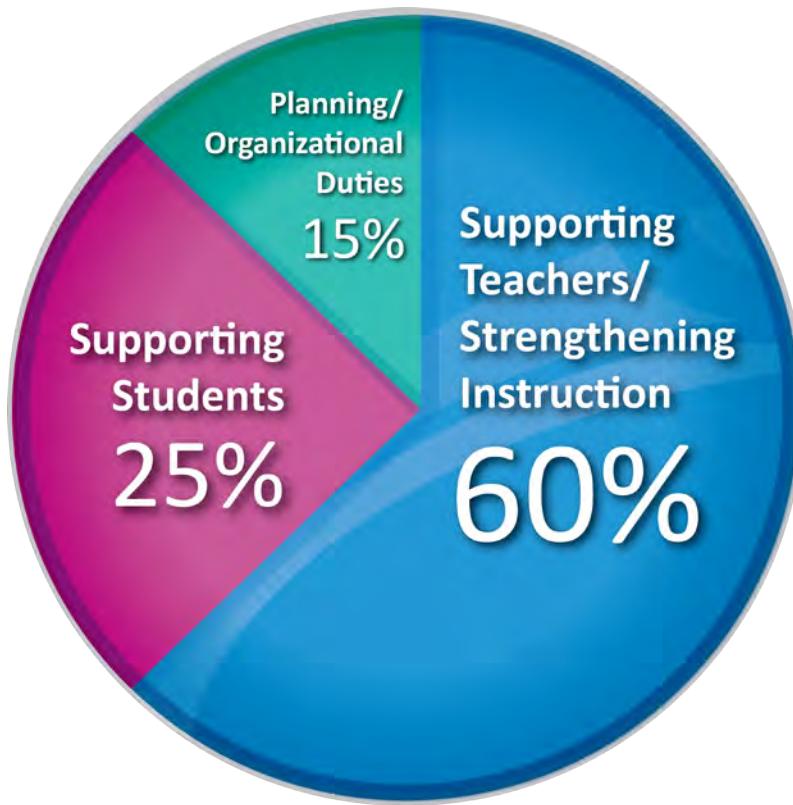


Photo Credit: Angela Gzowski

THE PROGRAM SUPPORT TEACHER

Priority Time-Use Targets

The goal is to focus on supporting classroom teachers in an active and sustained manner throughout the school year.



PRIORITY TIME-USE FOR PROGRAM SUPPORT TEACHERS

SUPPORTING TEACHERS (60%)

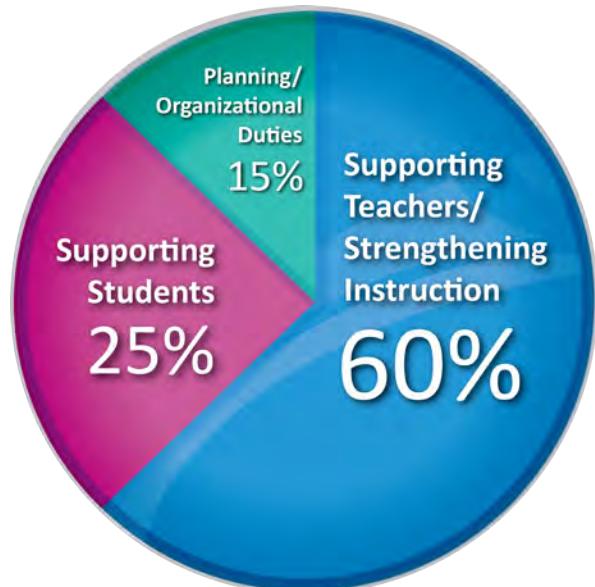
- **Coaching teachers, modeling demonstration lessons, co-teaching**
- **Collaborating and/or co-planning** with teachers and other staff to make decisions around programming for students
- **Collaborating** with teachers to adapt, revise & modify curriculum materials
- **Communicating and/or meeting with parents** in collaboration with teachers
- **Debriefing or reflecting** with classroom teacher and other staff
- **Directing and coordinating** input from consulting professionals
- *Individual Education Plan (IEP)* development: **Coordinating** development of the IEP with the teacher and School-based Support Team following IEP Guidelines
- **Creating Learner profiles** with the teacher by analyzing student data and helping them to use it to inform instruction
- **Observing, collecting and analyzing** academic, behaviour & other data for student and teacher needs
- **Preparing or directing the preparation** of resources/materials to support the delivery of interventions
- **Organizing and leading School-based Support Team** meetings & follow-up activities
- **Conducting some assessment of** students (informal and formal), including observations to assist the teacher
- *Student Support Plan* development: **Assisting teachers** to develop, write, implement and update the SSP
- **Supporting Support Assistants**
 - scheduling, meeting, directing, supervising, training
- **Supporting & providing systemic staff development & training** for support assistant, teachers, and applicable volunteers (job-embedded, in-school, after-school, PD days, etc.)

STUDENT SUPPORT ACTIVITIES (25%)

- **Advocating** for students (ex. family situations, housing, food, addictions, mental health needs)
- **Assessing** the individual needs of students for direct instruction (intervention) by the Program Support Teacher
- **Supporting the social, emotional, behavioural** needs of students
- **Working directly with students one to one or in small groups**, inside and/or outside of the common learning environment (direct intervention by the PST)

PLANNING/ ORGANIZATION ACTIVITIES (15%)

- **Collaborating** with providers of support services (ex. speech and language pathologist, occupation therapist, social worker, mental health professionals, etc.)
- **Documenting supports** following the Departmental Directive on the Management of Information in the Student Record and Other Records Pertaining to Students, 1998 and *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015 (ATIPP Act)*
- **Prioritizing support needs** in the school for staff development, equipment and resources, and program support staff (in consultation with the School-based Support Team)
- **Provide professional development** at the school and district level
- **Providing and seeking** information through **professional correspondence**
- **Engage in personal professional development** - researching instructional strategies, current pedagogy & a variety of areas of exceptionality
- **Re-allocating Support Assistants as needed** (ex. time unexpectedly becomes available, a new student with needs arrive, staff absences)
- **School-based meetings** (ex. leadership, instructional, staff meetings, etc.)
- **Supporting school with unexpected situations** (ex. cover class for a teacher while alternative arrangements are being made, help with a sick child, attend to an emergency situation)
- **Transition planning** from year to year, school to school and at key times
- **Other**



A.3. SUPPORT ASSISTANTS

Support Assistants (SA) play a valuable role in assisting teachers to meet the needs of students to successfully access curriculum and services.

A Support Assistant, under the direct supervision of a qualified teacher assists with:

- carrying out instructional and behavioural plans (SSPs and IEPs);
- classroom management and student supervision; and
- providing instructional and other supports to students.

The duties of the SA may be many and varied, depending on the particular situation; they do not, however, replace those professional responsibilities of the teacher(s) nor are they limited to the needs of any one student. While the primary responsibility of SAs may be to work with students who have educational challenges, they are also a resource to the whole class. Support Assistants are used to provide that extra help that only an additional adult in the classroom can provide to a teacher.

Support Assistant tasks include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Contributing to the education of students in inclusive schools and classrooms by implementing supplemental small-group and individual instruction;
- Engaging in instructional monitoring of student work (ex. independent or small-group work) identified and planned by teachers and PSTs;
- Preparing instructional materials for use by student(s) under the direction of the teacher (ex. materials for braille, manipulatives for kinaesthetic learners, etc.);
- Collecting formative assessment data on student performance and progress, and/or behaviour observation data, based on collection systems designed by teachers or PSTs;
- Facilitating peer interactions based on guidance from the teacher and PST. They invite students to help each other. They may also engage in non-instructional tasks (ex. group supervision such as on the playground, during bus boarding, in the cafeteria, and/or on field trips) identified by teachers and the PST;
- Applying current promising practices and strategies learned through professional development and school-based in-service/workshops;
- Delivering programs prepared by teachers, PSTs and/or other professionals (ex. speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists) such as life skills training; and
- Providing needed care in order to access the education system (ex. toileting, feeding, safety supervision, etc.)

A.4. OTHER SCHOOL-BASED STAFF MEMBERS

Some schools have additional staff members who play a role in supporting instruction. Their roles vary and depend on the mandate provided by the funding that makes the position possible. Some of the positions found in schools in the NWT include the following:

- Counsellor
- Art Therapist
- Literacy Support Teachers/Coaches
- Numeracy Support Teachers/Coaches
- Other support staff

These staff members provide support to the teacher or the student using appropriate strategies as a member of the School-based Support Team.



A.5. THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

While the School-based Support Team and its individual members provide assistance to classroom teachers, it is the teacher that connects with the student day-to-day in the classroom and provides the learning opportunities that result in student success. The task of the teacher in meeting 21st Century learning outcomes with students is not without its challenges. Collaboration and teamwork are vital to achieve optimal results for students.

Teachers will contribute to the education of all students in inclusive schools and classrooms, and support the learning needs of all students by:

- Collaborating with school-based staff to create opportunities that facilitate the valued membership of all students in the common learning environment (ex. instructional planning, classroom set-up, purposeful student groupings, and meaningful participation);
- Knowing the first priority to be student relationship building, followed by familiarity with the student's learning characteristics, performance levels, and personalized learning outcomes;
- Applying formative assessment, universal design for learning, differentiation, universal strategies (ex. self-regulation) and other learner-centred activities, so that students can pursue and achieve curricular-based learning goals;
- Supervising and directing Support Assistants to maximize their effectiveness in supporting students; and
- Engaging in coaching and co-teaching opportunities with Program Support Teachers and other colleagues to accommodate all students within an inclusive environment.



B. EDUCATION SYSTEM SUPPORTS

The Education System external to the individual school plays an important role in supporting the teacher and school staff in meeting students' needs. Its role ranges from setting policy and sourcing funding mechanisms, to providing practical assistance for resolving unfamiliar and complicated situations, as well as providing opportunities for training and capacity building. The following provides some detail on the responsibilities of those in these roles.

B.1. REGIONAL INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING COORDINATOR (RISC)

Regional Inclusive Schooling Coordinators provide administrative and program leadership for Inclusive Schooling at the district/regional level. The RISC supports school-based staff. They may also serve as a liaison between the school and community agencies and other stakeholder groups. They ensure that appropriate programs are developed and used to meet the learning needs of students. The RISC works directly with school principals and PSTs to ensure that school staff know and use effective inclusive schooling practices.

One of the major responsibilities of the RISC is to assist with professional learning and capacity building in individual schools and in the region/district. The RISC collaborates with staff at ECE and with RISCs from other regions/districts to build a strong network for developing and supporting inclusive schooling practices in the NWT.

The RISC also works closely with the superintendent and comptroller to ensure the funding provided for Inclusive Schooling is effectively used and consistent with the objectives of the Directive. The RISC will collaborate with other region/district staff to ensure that required program reporting is completed and submitted to the superintendent on time.

B.2. SUPERINTENDENT

Superintendents contribute to the education of students in inclusive schools and classrooms, and display leadership and commitment by working directly with school principals and the school community on any issues that may impact the level of success a school has in responding to the needs of its students. It is the superintendent's responsibility to promote and enhance collaboration between families, educational staff, and community agencies.

The superintendent ensures school principals understand the importance and responsibility of leading and implementing effective inclusive instructional practices and environments.

To this end, the superintendent directs and monitors school principals and teachers in their application of policies, directives and accountability measures regarding the support of students with diverse needs.

The superintendent works collaboratively in establishing inclusive instructional priorities with the Regional Inclusive Schooling Coordinator, as well as with the school/district leader responsible for curriculum matters, and assists with targeting inclusive learning priorities that will strengthen the programming and support available at all schools. The superintendent works collaboratively with the RISC, school principals, and comptroller in determining how Inclusive Schooling funding will be used to best support the needs of students in the region/district. The superintendent ensures that all Inclusive Schooling funding is used within the specifications of the funding guidelines. They report specifics about funding usage to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

The superintendent reports to DEAs on the progress and implementation of policies and guidelines that support inclusive learning practices.

B.3. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT (ECE) STAFF

The staff of ECE provides leadership for educational practice in the NWT. They have responsibility for curriculum and instructional programs, and for monitoring and evaluating student and school success in the Territory as a whole. Under the leadership of the Minister, they establish priorities, initiate improvement efforts and provide system support to regions and schools, as circumstances require. They play a vital role in providing information to senior policy makers in ECE on systemic issues and new challenges that emerge in Territorial schools.

The staff of ECE monitors implementation of the Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling including school reviews of inclusive practice. They collaborate with educational bodies to foster consistency and equity within the implementation and application of the Directive. Senior officials keep abreast of current inclusive education trends and promising practices and are responsible for offering training opportunities related to Inclusive Schooling.

The staff member most directly involved with assisting in the implementation of the Directive is the Coordinator of Inclusive Schooling and Student Support who works with ECE colleagues and the Regional Inclusive Schooling Coordinators to ensure that the key elements of the Directive are understood and implemented, that a plan for on-going professional learning and capacity building is in place and effectively operating, and that proactive program monitoring and evaluation processes are in place to ensure that the goals of Inclusive Schooling are being met.



C. HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES SYSTEM SUPPORTS

The involvement and support of professionals working in the Health & Social Services systems can be critical to school success for some students. Some professionals may be involved with schools on a systemic basis and others on a case-by-case basis. ECE is committed to working with the Department of Health and Social Services to facilitate integration of education, health and social services delivery to support student success in the classroom.

Health and Social Services system supports may include the following:

C.1. HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY (HSSA) PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- Audiology
- Mental Health Counselling
- Occupational Therapy
- Physician Specialists (Paediatrics, Psychiatry)
- Physiotherapy
- Primary care medical services (physician, nurse practitioner or community health nurse)
- Social work
- Speech-Language Pathology

HSSA professional services contribute to the education of students within schools and classrooms by providing supports that are relevant, necessary, and linked to one or more aspect of a student's educational program. As well, HSSA professional services collaborate with school team members to determine when supports should be continued, modified, scaled down, or discontinued based on relevant student data.

HSSA professional services are delivered in a number of ways:

- Collaboration with school team members to transfer knowledge, information and skills associated with their field to others, which fits within inclusive educational contexts;
- Assessment and intervention services aimed at supporting student participation in the regular classroom environment. These services may be provided on site or virtually (ex. TeleSpeech); and
- Consultative services regarding specific classroom strategies or adaptive and assistive equipment specific to a student's needs.

C.2. HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY (HSSA) DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Within the Health and Social Services System, there are teams which provide medical diagnostic and support services to children with complex medical conditions:

- **Stanton Territorial Health Authority (STHA) Child Development Team (CDT)**
 - **CDT Diagnostic Assessment Clinic** – Diagnostic assessment services are available for NWT children from birth to 16 years of age with complex conditions. CDT team members assess the child and then meet to review the findings and determine a diagnosis, if possible. The team also meets with the family to develop an individual Intervention Plan for each child based on the family's goal for their child.

The Territorial Diagnostic Assessment Clinic refers children to their regional Rehabilitation Services providers and will provide consultation about assessment results and recommendations, as needed.
 - **Child Development Team (CDT) Intervention Team** - The CDT team provides medical and therapeutic intervention for children living within the catchment area of the Stanton Territorial Health Authority's Rehabilitation Departments which includes the Dehcho, Tłı̨chǫ, and Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority. Services are provided for each child based on the Diagnostic/ Assessment Clinic findings and the Intervention Plan.

Team members, families and community service providers work together to achieve the identified goals. Case conferences are coordinated at least annually to monitor and revise the Intervention Plan.
 - Members of the Stanton Child Development Team include:
 - ◆ The child and family in question
 - ◆ Paediatrician
 - ◆ Speech Language Pathologist
 - ◆ Occupational Therapist
 - ◆ Physiotherapist
 - ◆ Audiologist
 - ◆ Education professionals
 - ◆ Child Development Team Coordinator

- **STHA FASD Family and Community Support Program**
 - **FASD Diagnostic Clinic** – This program will assess, and when appropriate, diagnose FASD in children up to 17 years of age who reside in the Northwest Territories, with school age children as the priority age group.
 - **Family and Community Support** – An FASD Family Liaison meets and provides ongoing information and support to community support teams including families, schools and community-based programs to facilitate understanding of FASD Diagnostic Clinic assessment results, identify resources and supports, and provide information and training.
 - Members of the FASD Diagnostic Team include:
 - ◆ Paediatrician
 - ◆ Psychologist
 - ◆ Speech Language Pathologist
 - ◆ Occupational Therapist
 - ◆ Audiologist
 - ◆ Social Worker
 - ◆ Family Liaison
 - ◆ Child Development Team Coordinator



D. COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

D.1. ABORIGINAL GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL LEADERSHIP BAND COUNCIL PARTNER PROGRAMS

Local community leadership plays a key role in supporting education programs in individual communities in all regions. **Each community offers unique programs and supports to help serve their students and support their schools, such as:**

D.2. POSSIBLE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

- Language and Cultural Programs
- Student tutoring programs
- School supply programs
- Recreation programs
- Counselling services
- Addiction services

D.3. COMMUNITY & NATIONAL AGENCIES

The future of the North, as it is everywhere, is dependent upon the youth in our communities. Thus, it is not only the schools that have the responsibility for nurturing and developing productive, informed, healthy and active citizens; the larger community as well plays a vital role. Non-governmental organizations offer important programming that is helpful to student with specific needs. One important example is respite support.

Some communities in the NWT benefit from organizations that work closely with educators and families. These include, but are not limited to, agencies such as:

- NWT Disabilities Council
- NWT Literacy Council
- Centre for Northern Families
- Yellowknife Association for Community Living (YACL)
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
- Learning Disabilities Association
- YWCA – NT (www.ywcanwt.ca)
- Human Rights Commission (www.nwthumanrights.ca)
- Assistance Dogs in Canada (<http://www.dogguides.com>)

There are also organizations and agencies that provide information helpful to Inclusive Schooling at the national level. These include, but are not limited to, agencies such as:

- Inclusive Education Canada (IEC - www.inclusiveeducation.ca)
- Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education - Western University (<http://www.inclusiveeducationresearch.ca>)
- People First of Canada (www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca)
- Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL - <http://www.cacl.ca>)
- Council of Canadians with Disabilities (www.ccdonline.ca)
- Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (www.chha.ca)
- Active Living Alliance (www.ala.ca)
- Disability Tax Credit (www.cra.gc.ca)
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind-Alberta/NWT (www.cnib.ca/en/alberta)
- MS Society Alberta/NWT (www.mssociety.ca/alberta)
- Assistance Dogs in Canada (<http://www.dogguides.com>)
- Autism Society Canada (www.autismsocietycanada.ca)
- PREP Program (Pride, Respect, Empowerment, Progress) – Down Syndrome (<http://www.prepprog.org/>)



D.4. PARENTS & FAMILIES

As their child's first teachers, **parents** establish the foundation for lifelong learning. They are responsible for their child's early education, including the acquisition of language, culture and social skills.

While all students benefit from the involvement of their parents in schooling, parental involvement is even more crucial for those **students with learning differences**.

Parents/guardians can contribute to education within inclusive schools and classrooms by developing an understanding of their child's strengths, interests, and needs. It is helpful in guiding program planning when parents/guardians participate in planning activities including the Making Action Plans (MAPs) and Circles of Friends processes.

Families know so much about their children that can be useful to educators in their planning. Communicating key information to the School-based Support Team and /or teacher about learning preferences, health, mental health, culture and community issues that contribute to educational planning priorities for children is essential to their success.

In collaboration with school staff, family members can identify and/or select a set of learning priorities for the semester/term, and can help to identify supports necessary for student success. As families are forever, it is in everyone's best interest that they play a prominent role in long-range educational and transition planning.



Part 3: Planning to Meet Instructional Needs of Students

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

"Education in the Northwest Territories (NWT) is committed to an inclusive philosophy and practice which welcomes all students into its schools. Inclusive Schooling provides all students with learning opportunities appropriate to their diverse strengths and needs, in classrooms with their age peers.

The Education Act (1996) mandates access to the education program in a regular instructional setting, support services to give effect to this access, and modifications to the school program if deemed necessary to accommodate the needs or abilities of the student."

- From the Northwest Territories Individual Education Plans: Guidelines for Development and Teacher Resource Kit (2006)

Inclusive schooling in the NWT ensures that students have access to the necessary support services to access education within their home community.

There are 3 educational programs in the Northwest Territories:

1. Regular Education Program (with or without accommodations)
2. Modified Education Program
3. Individual Education Plan

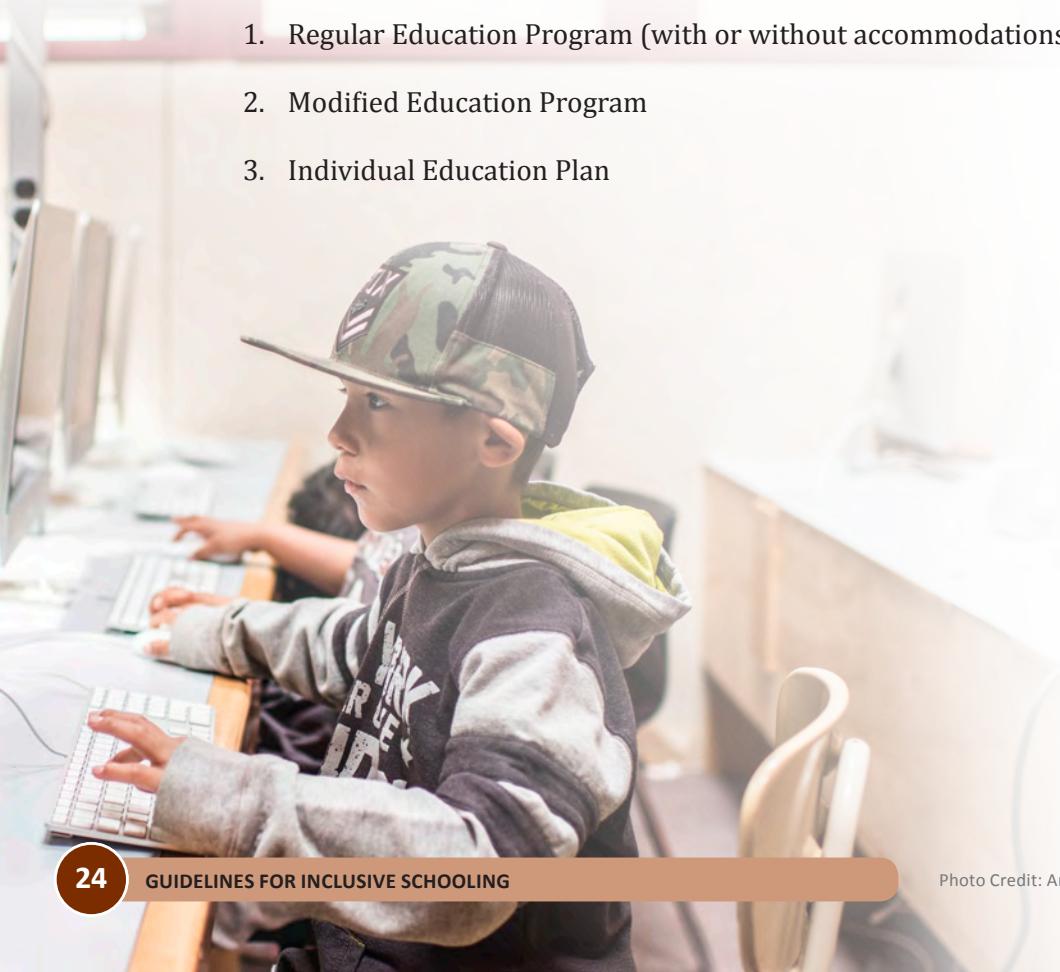


Photo Credit: Angela Gzowski

TYPES OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

1. Regular Education Program R.E.P. (with or without accommodations)

**Typically represents 80-85% of students*

Instructional Focus:

- Student is following the curricular programming of the grade level
- Instructional practices:
 - ◆ Consider the range of diversity in a 'typical' classroom
 - ◆ Are based on Universal Design for Learning principles
 - ◆ Provide flexible options for learning activities and assessment of learning
- Accommodations for the needs of students may be provided and documented on the Student Support Plan (SSP) such as:
 - ◆ Extra time
 - ◆ Assistive technology
 - ◆ Materials in alternative forms (braille, auditory, visual, ...)

2. Modified Education Program M.E.P.

**Typically represents 10-15% of students*

Instructional Focus:

- Student is following the curricular programming of another grade level in one or more subjects because they have been documented as working significantly above or below grade level*
- A process has been followed to place the student on a MEP and includes obtaining parent consent (verbal or written)
- Instructional practices:
 - ◆ Curriculum content is modified to reflect the student's current level of performance
 - ◆ Instructional & assessments methods are modified to reflect student strengths, needs & interests
 - ◆ Are based on Universal Design for Learning principles
 - ◆ Provide flexible options for learning activities and assessment of learning
- Modifications for the needs of students will be provided and documented on the Student Support Plan (SSP)
 - ◆ May be done on an ongoing basis
 - ◆ May be done for a short period of time until the student has reached grade level in a subject area
 - ◆ Always directed by student need

**Students in a grade level typically span one year of development as students' birthdates range from Jan 1 - Dec 31. The curriculum is scaffolded from one year to the next to encompass this range. Students who are significantly outside of this expected range may qualify for a MEP.*

3. Individual Education Plan I.E.P.

**Typically represents 3-5% of students*

Instructional Focus:

- Is a student-specific program based on the strengths and needs of the student (always growth-oriented & asset based)
- Includes such details as information on interests and aspirations, readiness to learn, learning preferences and other relevant factors
- Includes strategies identified to support the student's learning
- May include content based on subject matter curriculum outcomes, or may be focused on the personal and unique needs of the student (or a combination thereof)
- Is specific, targeted & measurable
- Is developed through a collaborative process usually involving the teacher(s), the principal, the program support teacher, the parents/guardians and the student when possible
- A parent/guardian signature is required to implement an IEP
- A student on an IEP usually requires supports, accommodations, facilities, resources and equipment beyond those required by his/her peers

Education bodies are required to support the development, implementation and monitoring of a Student Support Plan (SSP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP), for students who require them, by directing principals to ensure that the teacher develops a plan with input from parents/guardians and student, and which is based on the identification of student strengths and challenges.

When a student is identified as a struggling learner, it is the teacher's responsibility to monitor the student's progress and provide support when necessary. When best instruction practices are not meeting a student's needs, it is time to consider whether a SSP or IEP may be necessary, in consultation with the School-based Support Team and parents/guardians.

These plans are evolving documents. Teachers, in collaboration with the School-based Support Team, develop, implement and update the learning goals and instructional strategies whenever significant changes or accommodations are required.

Teachers will actively participate within the School-based Support Team, when the team is meeting about a student in their class, to develop or utilize a number of informal to formal assessment strategies across time periods and situations to determine students' strengths and challenges. These instruction and assessment strategies must change as circumstances require.

SOME EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING CONSIDERATIONS

It is critical that the School-based Support Team, as well as parents/guardians and resource professionals from the community effectively support the teacher.

Principals need to provide access for teachers to technological supports when appropriate and where needed.

In consultation with the family, the student, members of the School-based Support Team, appropriate regional staff, including other professionals as required, the teacher will review and continue to update the SSP or IEP plan on an on-going basis, typically in alignment with the reporting processes of the school/district.

They will monitor and evaluate the plan as to the effectiveness of the instructional strategies and accommodations/modifications identified, and make changes to the plan as needed.

It is especially important that effective planning is done when a student transitions from grade-to-grade, teacher-to-teacher, from one school to another, or at key stages such as between Grades 3 and 4, Grades 6 and 7, Grades 9 and 10, and/or from primary to elementary, elementary to high school, and from high school to post-secondary education or the work place.

CLASSROOM PRACTICES/MODELS/STRATEGIES THAT FACILITATE INCLUSION

Here are some of the practices, models and strategies that can help schools to facilitate inclusion. Please refer to the Northwest Territories Program Support Guide and other supporting documents for more information.

1. Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

UDL provides a framework to improve the learning environment for all students. Incorporating UDL principles into the design and development of curriculum and classroom practice, including learning outcomes, activities, assessments, and teaching methods, improves the accessibility of learning for all students.

UDL helps the teacher make instruction more flexible and student-centered. It engages students in the learning process and allows them to make choices in acquiring knowledge and skills, as well in how they demonstrate their learning.

2. Tiered levels of support (ie: *Response to Intervention* model)

This is a multi-tiered approach to the early identification and support of students with learning, social-emotional and behavioural needs that begins with high-quality classroom-wide instruction, universal screening of all students and applying interventions as required.

3. Differentiated Instruction

Differentiation involves adapting instruction to meet individual needs including differentiating content, process, products, or the learning environment. Differentiation may mean teachers respond to learners in the classroom by adjusting teaching in order to create the best learning experience possible.

4. Inquiry-Based Learning

This approach to teaching allows student interests, questions, ideas and observations to guide the learning experience. Students engage in evidence-based reasoning, creative problem-solving, and open-ended investigations, often stemming from their environment and/or experiences.

5. Multiple Intelligences Model

Students learn, remember, perform, and understand in different ways. This model outlines nine types of intelligence and encourages educators to plan for reaching students through the use of multiple modalities.

6. Cooperative Learning

Students working together in small groups with individual accountability can facilitate better learning outcomes and improve student relationships and the classroom collaborative culture.

7. Positive Behavioural Interventions & Support (PBIS)

PBIS recognizes that behaviour is a form of communication through which students express their needs. Consistent, common expectations that are predictable, explicitly taught, and positively reinforced, enables teachers to focus less on classroom management and more on student instruction.

8. Self-Regulation (SR)

Self-Regulation is the ability to manage your own energy states, emotions, behaviours and attention, in ways that are socially acceptable and help achieve positive goals, such as maintaining good relationships, learning and maintaining wellbeing (*Shanker, 2012*). By applying the principles of SR to the classroom, educators can help students by providing adaptations, strategies, routines, tools and lessons that will enable students to become more aware of their energy states and of how to modulate them to attain the best state for learning.

9. Educator Wellness

Educators must be well in order to care for their students and offer them the best teaching and learning environment. Self-care needs to be a teacher focus, so that they are fully available to their students.

10. Trauma-Informed Practice

Trauma has an enormous effect on education and health outcomes. The impact of the legacy of Residential Schools in NWT communities cannot be underestimated. Educators must be aware of this, and of other possible traumas affecting students' lives, in order to help student manage their emotions, behaviours, energy levels and attention in order to be able to do their best learning. Teachers need the support of their School-based Support Team to know how and when to connect a student affected by trauma to a trained professional.

11. Collaborative Professional Learning and Teaching

Professional learning and capacity building for school and regional/district staff is a foundation necessary for successful implementation of Inclusive Schooling.





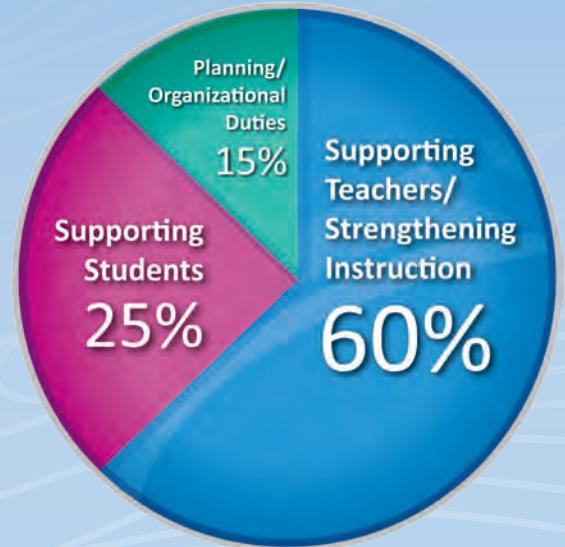
Part 4: Monitoring and Evaluation: Ensuring Program Accountability

Monitoring and evaluation to ensure Inclusive Schooling accountability involves demonstrating compliance to the Directive, the appropriate use of targeted funding, and reflecting and reporting on performance relative to goals, standards and requirements.

ECE will monitor and evaluate the implementation of Inclusive Schooling in NWT schools to ensure that it is functioning according to the Directive. This will be done through such tools as the Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling Compliance Reporting Tool completed and submitted to the Minister annually, the annual education body financial planning and reporting process, and school review processes.

Role-specific accountability at the regional/district level should include a focus on capacity building, and outlining and evaluating staff Inclusive Schooling practices through job descriptions and job performance tools. In addition, Inclusive Schooling should be linked directly to the school improvement process and be considered in ongoing planning for growth and development.

Priority Time-Use for Program Support Teachers



SUPPORTING TEACHERS / STRENGTHENING INSTRUCTION 60%

- **Coaching teachers, modeling** demonstration lessons, **co-teaching**
- **Collaborating and/or co-planning** with teachers and other staff to make decisions around programming for students
- **Collaborating** with teachers to adapt, revise & modify curriculum materials
- **Communicating and/or meeting with** parents in collaboration with teachers
- **Debriefing or reflecting** with classroom teacher and other staff
- **Directing and coordinating** input from consulting professionals
- *Individual Education Plan (IEP)* development: **Coordinating** development of the IEP with the teacher and School-based Support Team following IEP Guidelines
- **Creating Learner profiles** with the teacher by analyzing student data and helping them to use it to inform instruction
- **Observing, collecting and analyzing** academic, behaviour and other data for student and teacher needs
- **Preparing or directing the** **preparation** of resources/materials to support the delivery of interventions
- **Organizing and leading School-based** **Support Team** meetings and follow-up activities
- **Conducting some assessment** of students (informal and formal), including observations to assist the teacher
- *Student Support Plan* development: **Assisting teachers** to develop, write, implement and update the SSP
- **Supporting Support Assistants** - scheduling, meeting, directing, supervising, training
- **Supporting and providing systemic** **staff development and training** for support assistant, teachers, and applicable volunteers (job-embedded, in-school, after-school, PD days, etc.)



Photo Credit: A.Gzowski

SUPPORTING STUDENTS 25%

- **Advocating** for students (ex. family situations, housing, food, addictions, mental health needs)
- **Assessing** the individual needs of students for direct instruction (intervention) by the Program Support Teacher
- **Supporting the social, emotional, behavioural** needs of students
- **Working directly with** **students one to one or in** **small groups**, inside and/or outside of the common learning environment (direct intervention by the PST)

PLANNING / ORGANIZATIONAL DUTIES 15%

- **Collaborating** with providers of support services (ex. speech and language pathologist, occupation therapist, social worker, mental health professionals, etc.)
- **Documenting supports** following the Departmental Directive on the Management of Information in the Student Record and Other Records Pertaining to Students, 1998 and *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015 (ATIPP Act)*
- **Prioritizing support needs** in the school for staff development, equipment and resources, and program support staff (in consultation with the School-based Support Team)
- **Provide professional** **development** at the school and district level
- **Providing and seeking** information through **professional** **correspondence**
- **Engage in personal professional development** - researching instructional strategies, current pedagogy and a variety of areas of exceptionality
- **Re-allocating Support Assistants as needed** (ex. time unexpectedly becomes available, a new student with needs arrive, staff absences)
- **School-based meetings** (ex. leadership, instructional, staff meetings, etc.)
- **Supporting school with** **unexpected situations** (ex. cover class for a teacher while alternative arrangements are being made, help with a sick child, attend to an emergency situation)
- **Transition planning** from year to year, school to school and at key times
- **Other**



Photo Credit: ECE/GNWT



Types of Education Programs



Regular Education Program* (R.E.P.)

Typically represents 80-85% of students

INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS:

- Student is following the curricular programming of the grade level
- Instructional Practices:
 - ◆ Consider the range of diversity in a 'typical' classroom
 - ◆ Are based on Universal Design for Learning principles
 - ◆ Provide flexible options for learning activities and assessment of learning
- Accommodations for the needs of students may be provided and documented on the Student Support Plan (SSP) such as:
 - ◆ Extra time
 - ◆ Assistive technology
 - ◆ Materials in alternative forms (braille, auditory, visual,...)

**with or without accommodations*

Modified Education Program (M.E.P.)

Typically represents 10-15% of students

INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS:

- Student is following the curricular programming of another grade level in one or more subjects because they have been documented as working significantly above or below grade level*
- A process has been followed to place the student on a MEP and includes obtaining parent consent (verbal or written)
- Instructional Practices:
 - ◆ Curriculum content is modified to reflect the student's current level of performance
 - ◆ Instructional and assessments methods are modified to reflect student strengths, needs and interests
 - ◆ Are based on Universal Design for Learning principles
 - ◆ Provide flexible options for learning activities and assessment of learning
- Modifications for the needs of students will be provided and documented on the Student Support Plan (SSP)
 - ◆ May be done on an ongoing basis
 - ◆ May be done for a short period of time until the student has reached grade level in a subject area
 - ◆ Always directed by student need

**Students in a grade level typically span one year of development as students' birthdates range from Jan 1 - Dec 31. The curriculum is scaffolded from one year to the next to encompass this range. Students who are significantly outside of this expected range may qualify for a MEP.*

Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.)

Typically represents 3-5% of students

INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS:

- Is a student-specific program based on the strengths and needs of the student (always growth-oriented & asset based)
- Includes such details as information on interests and aspirations, readiness to learn, learning preferences and other relevant factors
- Includes strategies identified to support the student's learning
- May include content based on subject matter curriculum outcomes, or may be focused on the personal and unique needs of the student (or a combination thereof)
- Is specific, targeted & measurable
- Is developed through a collaborative process usually involving the teacher(s), the principal, the program support teacher, the parents/guardians and the student when possible
- A parent/guardian signature is required to implement an IEP
- A student on an IEP usually requires supports, accommodations, facilities, resources and equipment beyond those required by his/her peers

