

Administrative Procedure 214

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Background

All children can learn and reach their full potential given opportunity, effective teaching and appropriate resources. The goal of our inclusive education programming is to provide all students with the most appropriate learning environments and opportunities for them to best achieve their potential. Each student belongs and is to receive a quality education no matter his/her ability, disability, language, cultural background, gender or age. The success of inclusive education programming relies on the engagement, collaboration and involvement of students, parents, staff and community.

An inclusive system is supported through a continuum of specialized supports and services. The continuum of specialized supports and services refers to the expertise or skill sets required to meet the identified needs of learners and maximize the achievement of competencies through a range of intentional actions or strategies. A continuum plans for all learners and is instrumental in maximizing the success of each learner.

Every student - regardless of background, need or circumstance - must be the centre of all decisions related to his/her learning.

Definitions

In this Administrative Procedure:

Inclusive Education refers to the education of all students including those with mild, moderate or severe disabilities and/or those children who are gifted and talented.

Students with special needs means:

- Students described in Section 47(1) of the Act as being in need of special education programs because of their behavioural, communicational, intellectual, learning or physical characteristics.
- Students who may require specialized health care services.
- Students who are gifted and talented.

Education program for a student with special needs means a program based on the results of ongoing assessment and evaluation and includes an Individualized Program Plan (IPP) with specific goals and objectives and recommendations for education services that meet the student's needs.

Individualized Program Plan (IPP) means a concise plan of action designed to address the student's unique needs and is based on diagnostic information which provides the basis for intervention strategies. All students with special needs *including* the gifted and talented require an IPP.

Integration means the practice of meeting the physical, intellectual, social and emotional needs of students with special needs in regular classes in neighbourhood or local schools with same-aged peers and with appropriate support.

Neighbourhood or local school means the school a child would normally attend with siblings and neighbours.

Consultation means a process that gives parents/guardians of a student with special needs the opportunity to help make decisions about all aspects of placement and programming. Consultation includes conferencing and meeting with school staff.

Procedures

1. Educational Placement of Students with Diverse Learning Needs

- 1.1 On a continuum, universal, targeted and individualized supports are to be put in place to ensure students are meaningfully engaged in learning the interrelated attitudes, skills, facts, procedures and principles that are required for success at school, at home and in the community.
 - 1.1.1 Within a flexible and responsive learning environment, diversity must be embraced and celebrated, and must be planned for by ensuring that curriculum is relevant.
- 1.2 Children with diverse learning needs are to be provided with services in the most enabling environment. Therefore, educating students with diverse learning needs in regular classrooms in neighbourhood or local schools shall be the first placement option considered by the Division, in consultation with students, parents/guardians and school staff.
- 1.3 A range of placements is to be provided in order to meet the diverse and unique needs of students. The range of options may include placement in:
 - 1.3.1 A regular classroom with appropriate support and program modification.
 - 1.3.2 A small group for instruction within the regular classroom or on a withdrawal basis.
 - 1.3.3 Highly Supportive Learning classrooms.
 - 1.3.4 Residential program in a hospital facility or other provincial institution.
- 1.4 Placement in an alternate setting is to be provided when such a placement is in the best interests of the student.
- 1.5 Parents/guardians and students must be informed about the choices available to them, and be actively involved in discussions with teachers and administrators about placements and programs.

2. Parental Approval for Placements

- 2.1 A Highly Supportive Learning classroom placement for students is only to be implemented if the parents or guardians provide formal written approval.
- 2.2 The Division is ultimately responsible for making placement decisions that are in the best interests of individual children and of all the children they serve.

3. Appeals

- 3.1 Parents may not be in agreement with the placement or program after certain compromise measures have been discussed or taken. The following appeal procedures shall then apply:
 - 3.1.1 Parents wishing a review of the situation will make a written request to the Assistant Superintendent.
 - 3.1.2 The Assistant Superintendent shall review the matter with the school administration and staff involved.
 - 3.1.3 The Assistant Superintendent will convene a case conference of all involved persons and the parents for review of recommendations.
 - 3.1.4 If program or placement change is recommended and agreeable to the parents, the Assistant Superintendent shall arrange implementation.
 - 3.1.5 If program or placement recommendations are not acceptable, the parents are advised that they may make an appeal to the Superintendent.
- 3.2 Appeals to the Superintendent
 - 3.2.1 Appeals will be heard by the Superintendent within thirty (30) days of the appeal referral date.
- 3.3 Parents may have the right to appeal a program or placement decision in accordance with Board Policy 13 – Appeals and Hearings Regarding Student Matters.

Reference: Section 11, 32, 33, 196, 197, 222 Education Act
Ministerial Order 015/2004 – Standards for Special Education
Ministerial Order 042/2019 – Seclusion and Physical Restraint in Alberta Schools Standards