

EASTERN SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY STATEMENT

SUBJECT: **Inclusive Education**

DATE OF ADOPTION: December 14, 2011

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 14, 2011

REVIEW DATE:

SUPERSEDES: April 6, 2011

CROSS REFERENCE: Administrative Regulation IHBA-R – Inclusive Education
Minister's Directive No. MD 2001-08 – Special Education
The School Act

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The Eastern School District believes that inclusive education programs should be delivered in the most enabling environment that is required to meet the needs of the identified student. Inclusive education services and programs are provided to allow students to benefit from the public education system.

Schools and parents/guardians will work with school-based staff, district staff and other involved agencies, using all available information to develop an understanding of each child's strengths and needs, and to program in the most appropriate manner.

It is the policy of the Eastern School District that inclusive education services within the District are guided by the following principles.

1. Public education is group education, guided by collaboration between home and school.

Our mission is to nurture and develop the potential of all students by providing meaningful learning opportunities. Educational program delivery occurs within a group of peers that facilitates the development of the whole child and respects the learning rights of all students. We believe that the education of every child is the collective responsibility of every adult within a school community.

2. Diversity within our student population is valued and informs program delivery.

Schools within the Eastern School District represent proud and unique communities. Programs are developed and implemented to meet local needs within the framework of provincial education requirements. (Minister's Directive MD 2001-08) This includes identifying and meeting individual student needs within the context of group learning. Schools have access to some specialized supports to identify, understand and meet special needs with a view to expanding the range of special needs that can be met within each school community.

3. Fostering an inclusive culture in schools is paramount.

The culture of the school is essential in fostering an attitude of inclusion. An inclusive culture celebrates diversity by creating an infrastructure that balances group and individual needs. It supports school staff in the development of new skills and invites parents and students to actively participate in the educational process.

An attitude of inclusion recognizes the provision of education programming on a continuum. With instructional coaching and, in consultation with related staff, the classroom teacher will deliver in the classroom setting, an appropriate program for students. This may be achieved by focusing on universal design, and by differentiating instruction. These two practices help lay the foundation for the creation of learning environments that allow all students to access effective teaching practices in the regular classroom. The learning needs of some students may be further met by using flexible groupings for specific, and time limited Tier II intervention. Only after a variety of specific Tier II interventions have been tried, will a student be referred for Tier III programming. At the final stage of the continuum is placement in an alternate site. Deciding when a self-contained placement may be appropriate is a consultative process which honors the voices of parents, school staff, program support staff and the student, as appropriate. Further, an attitude of inclusion ensures that students in self-contained classes are welcomed and integrated into a new school community.

4. Educational resources are intended to reach educational goals.

While education supports the special learning needs of students, it does not aim to treat children for medical, mental and social disorders or disease. Whenever possible, we seek to work cooperatively with community agencies.

5. Resources are organized to support the classroom teacher.

This respect for the regular classroom teacher is dependent on the allocation of resources to develop his/her skills on an on-going basis. Effective educational programming requires a knowledge of specific exceptionalities, provincial curriculum standards and teaching, learning and assessment methods. The development of this broad range of skills for all teachers must be supported by inservice, materials and planning resources that target these areas.

6. Classroom teachers are the greatest resource in the education system.

All schools are expected to establish functional school based Student Services Teams which meet on a regular basis. The team includes the classroom teacher, resource teachers, administrators and counselors, and this group provides key support to the classroom teacher. If appropriate, parents and students may join this group to address specific cases. Through Student Services Team discussions, students requiring intervention, are identified and their learning needs addressed. The classroom teacher should have a lead role in this identification process and assists in the coordination of additional supports to build a better understanding of an individual student and in the development of an appropriate education plan to address these needs. Other personnel will support him/her in this effort. Where

other resources such as educational assistants, mentors, youth workers, parent volunteers and community partners are available, they should be allocated, based on interest, competency, knowledge and experience. In keeping with the principle of inclusion, schools work to minimize the culture of dependency that can be created by an over reliance on one individual staff member or on one level of service.

7. Placement options are guided by least restrictive/most enabling environments for learning.

Early identification of learning needs and programming to address them is part of classroom planning for all students. If a student's needs can be met in a regular classroom using a pyramid of interventions, placement should be in the least restrictive environment, which is usually a regular classroom in the home school.

Alternative class placements are a more restrictive environment within the education system. The individual needs of some students requiring interventions are such that placement within alternative settings can also be the most enabling. For these students, such placements offer time limited but intensive support at certain stages of development in order to address specific, identified needs that will enable students to achieve educational goals within their home school. For example, a student with a learning disability may have opportunities to learn how to use technology as an adaptive strategy to bypass written language difficulties, or a student with behavioural needs is coached to develop the self control required for success in a regular classroom.

To achieve these diverse goals, the Eastern School District may offer specific, time limited, self-contained placements in alternative settings. This facilitates the flexible provision of intensive supports to a broad range of individual learning needs. Educational implications of participation in self-contained programs should be discussed with the parents and students through the planning process, annual goal setting and transition planning.

If the long term goal for a student is the completion of a PEI high school graduation certificate, a self contained class placement must be time limited to enable the development of the non-academic skills required for success in regular classes (i.e., independent work completion and goal setting, time management, organization, etc). Continuity of programming is important. If the long term goal for a student is the completion of a certificate of accomplishment, then opportunity for continued placement will be offered in accordance with the *School Act*.

8. Instruction is informed by best practices.

Teachers should know and understand best practices – those which produce measurable improvement in student achievement.

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