Inclusion

Supporting All Students

Inclusion is an attitude and a value system that promotes the basic right of all students to receive appropriate and quality educational programming and services in the company of their peers.

What are the elements of inclusion?

- Students are equal members of their neighbourhood schools.
- There is a collaborative culture within schools, and between schools and communities and other agencies, to address the diverse needs of students.
- There is early and ongoing involvement of parents and guardians in their children's education.
- A process of identification, assessment, planning, and evaluation for students with special needs is in place and documented.
- An individual program plan (IPP), based on a student's strengths and needs, is developed and implemented for a student for whom the public school program learning outcomes are not applicable and/or attainable.
- Differentiated instruction addresses the needs of every student and accommodates the learning styles of all students.
- Supportive and collaborative school leadership is evident.
- Research identifying effective programming and services is used to enhance student learning.
- Transition planning is part of the individual planning process for each student with special needs.

What should I look for in schools that practise inclusion?

- early and ongoing involvement of parents and guardians in their children's education
- an understanding of, and commitment to, inclusion at all levels of the school community
- leadership supporting a collaborative culture within the school, and between the school and school community, to address the needs of students
- the provision and creative use of supports for teachers and students
- creative use of human resources to assist and support students (such as peer helping, tutoring, and mentoring programs)
- a focus on outcomes for all students that students work toward in a variety of ways
- a range of classroom teaching and management strategies
- school teams meeting regularly to discuss student progress
- ongoing staff training and development
- showcasing of exemplary teaching practices and their results
- strong links between the school and outside agencies

> Inclusion facilitates the membership, participation, and learning of all students in school programs and activities.

> Differentiated instruction provides a range of strategies based on a teacher's response to individual learners' needs.

> Transition planning supports passage from one stage in a student's life to another— from home to school, grade to grade, school to school, community to school, and school to community.

Supporting
Student
Success

How can we all support inclusion[1]?

Students can support inclusion by

- valuing the contributions of the diversity within the school community
- encouraging a sense of belonging to the school community among all peers
- contributing to an orderly and safe learning environment

Parents can support inclusion by

- working with their children and the school to support learning
- becoming involved in program planning as a member of the program planning team to share their understanding of their children's strengths and needs

School staff can support inclusion by

- using a variety of instructional and assessment strategies to meet student needs[2]
- referring to the program planning team when further support is required to meet the needs of a student
- communicating regularly with parents
- co-operating and collaborating with parents, the program planning team members, and board personnel
- demonstrating acceptance of and sensitivity to the diversity in classrooms

Principals can support inclusion by

- providing leadership to support a collaborative culture that meets the needs of all students
- encouraging sharing of effective practices
- supporting a safe, orderly, positive, and effective learning environment
- communicating and monitoring school process of identification, assessment, program planning and reporting student progress, and achievement
- supporting vision building as a collective exercise for long range, continuous improvement and growth

Community members can support inclusion by

- supporting inclusive schooling through school improvement planning with school advisory councils, home and school associations, etc.
- collaborating as service delivery agencies to meet the needs of children and youth in the public school system

Information about inclusion may be found in the *Special Education Policy* (Nova Scotia Department of Education 2008), available at http://studentservices.ednet.ns.ca.

For more information about inclusion, or print copies of Department of Education resources, please contact

School: School Principal

School Board: Student Services Coordinator

Department of Education: Student Services (902) 424-7454

> This is one of a series of seven Supporting Student Success fact sheets. Other topics in the series include *Adaptations*, *Assistive Technology*, *Autism Spectrum Disorder*, *Enrichment*, *Program Planning*, and *Transition*.

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1. To obtain a broader list of responsibilities, refer to the *Education Act* (in particular, sections 24, 25, 26, and 38), the *Ministerial Education Act Regulations* (in particular, sections 53–61), and the *Special Education Policy*.
2. See the *Adaptations: Strategies and Resources* Supporting Student Success fact sheet.

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