

# **Every principal's guide to special education in British Columbia**

**Revised August 2002**

**Produced by the  
B.C. School Superintendents' Association  
in partnership with the  
B.C. Ministry of Education**



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## Purpose of this guide

School principals\* and vice-principals make a significant contribution to the culture of their schools by effectively leading and managing special education services. School cultures that are safe, healthy and harmonious must include quality supports for students with special needs. When students' special needs are not effectively addressed, the whole school community (students, staff and parents) can be negatively affected.

The ideas contained in this manual are not the sole responsibility of principals. However, principals—using a collaborative approach, fostering partnerships and encouraging others—play an integral role in developing inclusive school environments. Their leadership, commitment and support of the staff, school-based teams, parents and students with special needs are essential to the successful implementation of quality educational programs.

Canadian and U.S. studies have identified leadership as a key variable in relation to the success of special education services. Critical success factors for principals, include:

- knowledge of current literature, research and best practices
- the ability to communicate a sense of purpose and vision and what must be done to achieve this vision
- leadership that values programs and services that are child-centred and instructionally effective
- morale, built and maintained through conflict management interventions, communication, co-ordination and negotiation
- sensitivity to the power structure and politics of the system
- technical knowledge and expertise to influence the approval of proposals and ideas which benefit special education students

— L.C. Burrello and D.J. Zadnick

*Critical Success Factors of Special Education Administrators*

While there is provincial policy on inclusion, local contexts vary, affecting district- and school-based practices. It is the responsibility of principals to support and encourage the implementation of effective educational programs for all students, including those with special needs.

The B.C. School Superintendents' Association, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, developed this manual for principals. It is an updated version of *Every Administrator's Guide to Special Education* published in 1996. This new version of the guide is intended to provide practical information to help principals and other leaders in special education in their schools and districts.

The material here is intended to complement your existing school and district policies and guidelines.

\* The term *principal* will be used throughout the rest of this document and refers to principals as well as vice-principals.

## THE BIG IDEA

*A principal's leadership and commitment are essential to the successful implementation of quality educational programs for students with special needs.*

## THE BIG IDEA

***“The key variable in developing successful inclusion is a knowledgeable and supportive principal.”***

*- A Legacy for Learners*

## The underlying philosophy

At the centre of B.C. provincial policy and this resource are three beliefs:

All students are unique.

All students are valued.

All students can learn.

—Sawatsky and Jacobsen, 1992

Many studies confirm the crucial role of principals in the development of special education programs. *A Legacy for Learners*, the document arising from the Sullivan Royal Commission on Education, noted: “The research literature in special education concludes that the key variable in developing successful inclusion is a knowledgeable and supportive principal.”

According to *Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines* produced by the B.C. Ministry of Education, “Inclusion is the value system that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their education. The practice of inclusion transcends the idea of physical location and incorporates basic values that promote participation, friendship and interaction.”

Inclusion benefits all students, not just those identified as having special needs. Students who are not disabled learn to understand and empathize with their peers. They discover there are more similarities than differences between themselves and other students. Inclusion creates environments that allow students with special needs to experience success and maximize their social, emotional, intellectual and physical development. These principles underscore the importance of having instructional programs and services that address the widely varying needs, learning styles, backgrounds and circumstances of individual students.

The practice of including students with special needs in regular instructional environments throughout their schooling is motivated by:

- a desire to meet the needs of the whole person
- an appreciation of the social dimensions of growth and development

An increased knowledge of diverse needs and the ability to differentiate instruction make it possible to successfully accommodate a greater diversity of individual needs.

Inclusion embraces not only integration of students with special needs, but also the understanding of individual differences and diverse learning styles characteristic of all classrooms. The B.C. Ministry of Education’s three Principles of Learning found in the Kindergarten to Grade 12 Educational Plan (1994) guide instructional practices which support diversity in our classrooms:

- Learning requires the active participation of the student.
- People learn in a variety of ways and at different rates.
- Learning is both an individual and a group process.

# Section 1

# Leadership

**Principals as special education leaders—A**

**Effective communications—B**

**Cultural competence—C**





# Section 1

## Leadership

**Principals as special education leaders—A**

# Principals as special education leaders

## Key points

In *The Leadership Challenge*, James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner presented the findings of their extensive research in leadership. They discovered effective leadership is based on five practices that can be developed and learned. Effective school principals, who create a climate of high expectations for all student and staff, incorporate these practices into the successful implementation of special education. The five practices are:

- **Inspiring a shared vision**—Effective leaders value the participation and contributions of every member of the team. Principals, as leaders, should inspire a shared vision in the school for inclusion of students with special needs. This vision should be developed collaboratively at staff meetings, site-based team meetings and when working with staff, parents and students. This will have a significant effect on the delivery of special education programs. When everyone in the school shares the vision of inclusion, the principal will have successfully created the climate of high expectations for all students.
- **Modeling the way**—Credible leaders' actions reflect their beliefs. Strong school leaders model the attitude, behaviour or delivery of service that should be available to all students. When change is necessary, principals need to consider the balance between pressure and support, keeping in mind that modeling change is crucial to its successful implementation. Effective principals communicate a positive and inspiring presence that elicits confidence in the worthiness of what staff are doing.
- **Enabling others to act**—Positive leaders do not try to control the performance of others. They encourage and support team members to develop their own way to contribute to the shared vision of the organization. In schools, a successful special education program is dependent on the skills and commitment of a variety of professionals. School principals should ensure systems are in place to support positive working environments for all school staff and, most importantly, the students. Enabling all students and staff to act, take risks and explore new areas of expertise and experience are the foundation of a relevant educational experience.
- **Challenging the process**—Effective leaders question existing practices that are not necessary or are out-of-date. Effective principals should critically review school and district special education processes ensuring they are relevant, time-efficient and supportive of students' development and inclusion. They should also encourage critical feedback from staff and students about these processes.

## THE BIG IDEA

*“As we looked deeper into the dynamic process of leadership... we uncovered fundamental practices that enable leaders to get extraordinary things done.”*

—*The Leadership Challenge*

- **Encouraging the heart**—Positive leaders appreciate and celebrate the small victories. Leaders in education encourage the efforts and accomplishments of all staff and students, and especially students with special needs. By giving individual acknowledgements and supporting school-wide celebrations, principals encourage the whole school community to provide the foundation for a healthy and welcoming school. Students and staff will feel a sense of belonging and connection to their school community when they believe they are encouraged to make choices and are valued for their uniqueness and recognized for their achievements.

## Practices

- Principals demonstrate their leadership by:
  - getting involved in school-based team meetings and ensuring the focus is on enhancing capacity rather than on the disability of the student
  - promoting collaborative decision-making
  - facilitating appropriate staff development for individuals and collective staff
  - providing time and resources for staff to collaborate
- Principals recognize teachers are the most important sources of assistance for students and should be at the centre in designing the support network. The choice of tasks or activities which would be most advantageous depends on the individual student's needs, overall classroom situation and the skills and knowledge of teachers.
- Principals follow fair process procedures. Fair process, in relation to how schools function, is set out by the B.C. Ombudsperson in the document *Public Report No. 35—Fair Schools*. School board appeal procedures should reflect the rights of students to:
  - be treated with respect and dignity
  - speak on their own behalf or have an advocate speak for or with them
  - be heard
  - participate in decisions affecting them
  - receive clear, complete and appropriate reasons for a decision
  - obtain all information that led to the initial decision or that is being considered in an appeal
  - an impartial review of a decision that affects them—a review that is accessible, flexible, timely and easy to use
  - an appeal procedure that has a built-in mechanism to protect against retribution

## Definition of terms

### Adaptations

Adaptations are strategies that support students in achieving the learning outcomes of the provincial curriculum. Adaptations may include adjustments to assessment, instruction, environment or resources.

### Collaboration

Collaboration is an interactive process where a number of people with particular expertise come together as equals to generate an appropriate program or process or find solutions to problems.

### Inclusion

Inclusion is the value system which holds that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their education. The practice of inclusion transcends the idea of physical location and incorporates basic values that promote participation, friendship and interaction.

### Modifications

Modifications are changes to learning outcomes that result in students' learning outcomes being substantially different from those of the provincial curriculum. Modifications are specifically selected to address a student's special needs.

...cont. Pg. 13

# Principals as special education leaders cont.

## Questions and answers

### **What are some common concerns of...:**

#### **parents of students with special needs?**

Common parental concerns centre around:

- identifying and assessing their child's special needs
- placement decisions
- their child's Individual Education Plan
- the provision of support services
- disciplinary procedures

#### **parents of children whose classmates have special needs?**

Common parental concerns include:

- whether the quality of their child's educational program will be compromised
- whether there will be disruptive behaviour and what impact it would have on the learning environment
- safety issues
- whether their child's behaviour will be negatively affected

#### **teachers?**

Teacher concerns (with respect to all students) centre around:

- the intensity of instruction required for all students to be successful
- the development of high levels of engagement in all students
- effectively addressing disruptive and motivational problems
- the proportion of time students spend in general education classrooms and specialized settings
- the incorporation of adaptations and modifications in their classrooms
- the process of assigning staff to address each student's needs
- the availability of additional support

Discuss these issues with colleagues and be prepared to discuss them at in-service sessions and parent meetings.

### **How can principals facilitate inclusion in the school?**

- Inform staff about school and district procedures.
- Form a school-based team and establish procedures for effective communication.
- Ensure the school-based team responds to the needs of staff and students in a timely manner.
- Discuss and address accessibility concerns: e.g. access to facilities, resources, personnel and services.

## **Definition of terms continued**

### **Parent/Guardian**

According to Section 1 of the B.C. *School Act*, *parent* means “in respect of a student or of a child registered under Section 13, a) the guardian of the student or child, b) the person legally entitled to custody of the student or child, or c) the person who usually has the care and control of the student or child.”

### **Students with special needs**

According to the B.C. Special Needs Students Order (M150/89), students with special needs are those who have disabilities of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioural nature, have a learning disability or have exceptional gifts or talents.

### **Transition**

Transition is the passage of students from one environment to another at key points in their development from childhood to adulthood, for example: into Kindergarten or from elementary school to middle or secondary.

## **How can principals foster a network of support?**

- Show active support for teachers by visiting classrooms and working with students.
- Welcome parents of children with special needs to the school community.
- Celebrate activities and achievements of all students, including those with special needs, at parent advisory group meetings and in school newsletters.
- Create new activities to allow students with special needs to participate fully in the life of the school.
- Encourage staff collaboration by talking to individual staff members, consulting with resource teachers and facilitating interactions among staff.
- Hold orientation and awareness sessions for students to encourage them to be part of the support for students with special needs.
- Reinforce inclusion as part of the school culture by talking often about progress, successes and concerns.

## **How can principals promote an environment of acceptance among students?**

Strategies to promote positive interactions among students must be implemented on a continuous basis throughout the school year.

- Encourage relationship building among students by first focusing on what they have in common.
- Create opportunities for increasing understanding and raising awareness by inviting a special education teacher or expert to make a presentation on what it's like to live with a disability.
- Promote better understanding by making resources, such as brochures, articles, videotapes and books, available.

## **What can the principal do to help parents as they struggle to understand their child's special needs?**

In every school district there is pressure from parents to provide more support for their children. To help parents set high, but realistic, expectations for their child and for the services the school provides requires diplomacy and good communication skills. It is the principal's role to ensure parents understand the goals and impact of particular interventions for their children. Parents should be given concrete ways (such as the B.C. Performance Standards) to look realistically at what their children are achieving.

Principals may need to respond to parents' feelings of loss and grief as a result of their child's special needs.

# Principals as special education leaders cont.

## **What strategies can principals use to support staff?**

- Develop a plan to facilitate inclusive activities within the school.
- Facilitate information and awareness training sessions for all staff.
- Provide shared planning time for the classroom teacher and resource teacher.
- Ensure specific training is provided for staff when required.
- Make information about special education practices available to staff.

## **What is the role of the principals when a parent comes to enroll a child with special needs after the school term has begun?**

- Welcome the parent and child.
- Listen to the needs of the student and parent.
- Find out what support has been provided in the past.
- Talk about the importance of working together on a transition plan. Discuss the best time for entering their child in the school to ensure a plan is in place for a smooth transition into the school environment.
- Get written permission from the parent allowing the release of records from the student's previous school and community service providers.
- Call the district office to discuss the emerging need in the school.
- Call a meeting of the school-based team to make interim plans to support the student and classroom teacher.

## **What is the role of principals on the school-based team?**

Principals can help teams function successfully and effectively by:

- participating in meetings
- ensuring regular meeting times and appropriate documentation
- providing release time when required
- reinforcing and encouraging collaboration among members of the school-based team
- supporting requests for in-service and resources
- ensuring shared leadership among staff members

(See the chapter on school-based teams, pages 35 to 38.)

## **What are factors for principals to consider when organizing resources for students with special needs?**

Principals must consider the changing profile of needs in their schools and make careful judgements that ensure equitable access to available resources.

## **What are the attributes principals should encourage staff to develop so they provide effective instruction to students with special needs?**

Here are some broad guidelines:

- knowledge and experience in programming for individual students who have special needs
- cross-grade experience and knowledge about how people learn and different learning styles
- knowledge and experience with multiple methodologies for working with students who have special needs
  - multi-sensory approaches
  - thinking and learning strategies
  - use of computers and adaptive equipment
  - behaviour and management strategies
- expertise in the regular curriculum
- an ability to design and implement adaptations and modifications
- experience in using a variety of assessment and evaluative strategies and resources
- skill in working collaboratively

## **Resources**

**The Leadership Challenge**, James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1995, pages 8 and 9

**Public Report No. 35—Fair Schools**, B.C. Ombudsperson, 1995





# Section 1

## Leadership

**Effective communications—B**

# Effective communications

## Key points

### THE BIG IDEA

*Successful principals communicate effectively with the whole school community and ensure vital information networks are in place.*

- School principals serve diverse school communities, and they will encounter differences in values, beliefs and perspectives. Most situations require effective communication skills to resolve these differences.
- Effective communication requires that principals listen to the perspectives of others with a genuine desire to understand their points of view. According to Steven Covey, effective people seek first to understand, then to be understood.
- Principals need to demonstrate empathy for students, parents and staff in all their communications.
- Principles to guide effective communication include:
  - being clear and firm about the beliefs on which decisions and actions are based
  - training yourself to recognize and look beyond the egocentric and territorial tendencies of others
  - reflecting constantly on what is happening and what one is doing
- Principals have critical information that must be shared with others in the school:
  - school board and ministry policies and procedures
  - district allocation of resources
  - programs and services available in the school and district
  - community resources available to students and families
  - information about the roles, rights and responsibilities of staff, parents and students
  - district assessment procedures
  - parent appeal procedures
  - collective agreement information

## Resources

**The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People**, S. Covey, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1989

**Getting to Yes**, R. Fisher and W. Ury, Penguin Books, Toronto, 1991

*What Makes a Leader?*, D. Goleman, **Harvard Business Review**, Nov./Dec. 1998

*The Principal's Role in Creating Inclusive Schools for Diverse Students: A Review of Normative Empirical and Critical Literature on the Practice of Educational Administration*, C.J. Riehl, **Review of Educational Research**, Vol. 70, No. 1, pages 55-81, Spring 2000

## Practices

- Consider strategies for effective communication:
  - looking at a problem without allowing it to be clouded by personalities
  - focusing on interests, not positions
  - generating a variety of possibilities before deciding what to do
  - insisting the result be based on an objective standard
- Ensure that staff are aware and fully informed about the resources and procedures in the school and district. Make all documents, policies, guidelines and resources readily available to everyone in the school.
- Support students, parents and teachers in their search for information about students' needs and strategies to help them succeed. Provide information about the impact of disabilities on a student's learning. Instill confidence and trust among teachers, support staff and parents by providing access to information.
- Clearly inform parents of their role in the planning for their children. An information sheet or brochure explaining the special education services in the school can be helpful. It can include assessment processes, how Individual Education Plans are developed, the annual review and what parents can expect at report card time.
- Use the staff room bulletin board to show regularly scheduled meetings of the school-based team so teachers have ready access to the team for consultation and support.
- Be open and upfront with parents, students and staff about procedures and resources that are available. Provide other sources of information for them to ensure they have confidence in the legitimacy and accuracy of your explanations.
- Follow-up with teachers and parents in a timely manner if there has been a problem. Ensure solutions and strategies are working effectively and that everyone understands the actions that have been taken.

## Questions and answers

### **What should principals do if advocacy groups or outside agencies question school procedures?**

School districts should have policies regarding the conditions under which agencies can be involved at the school level. Principals should follow district protocols.

## Definition of terms

### **Empathy**

Empathy is understanding the emotional make-up of other people and responding to people in an appropriate way and in accordance with their emotional reactions.

## Questions and answers cont.

### What's the best way for a principal to deal with an upset parent?

Dealing with an upset parent can provide great opportunities.

In these situations, thoughtful communications work and ineffective communications can bring irreparable harm. An effective principal accomplishes three things when dealing with an upset parent:

#### 1) Gathers information

Listen carefully to find out as much information as possible from the parent about the concern. Then ask questions for clarification.

- Why is the parent upset?
- Has he or she spoken to the teacher?
- What knowledge does the parent have?
- Is it complete or incomplete?
- Is it correct or incorrect?
- What are the parent's beliefs and knowledge about roles, rights and responsibilities in the school?

Principals should ask questions and listen carefully to understand parents' positions. People who are upset divulge a lot about themselves and their priorities as they talk. In addition, when principals seek to understand parents' perspectives, parents feel they are being listened to and their concerns are important. They tend to calm down.

If there has been an incident, the principal can then talk to the other people involved and learn their perceptions. He or she will be able to determine the most positive way to resolve the issue because the other party's position will be clearly understood.

#### 2) Acts as an objective translator

In some instances, principals are necessary and important buffers, protecting classroom teachers from the stress of having to handle highly charged emotional encounters with a parent. Being surprised by an upset parent in the middle of their day can be very unsettling and disruptive to the learning environment. Words can be exchanged that are very emotional or accusatory and the parent-teacher relationship can be damaged. Principals can be objective translators for what may, in fact, be misunderstandings that can be addressed before they escalate.

#### 3) Establishes trust

The foundation for a strong relationship with a member of the school community is prepared. If this matter is settled constructively the parent will respect and trust the principal and be a strong advocate for the school.

# Section 1

## Leadership

**Cultural competence—C**

# Cultural competence

## THE BIG IDEA

*Principals today need to promote cultural competence in their schools.*

## Key points

- Principals are critical to ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all students and their families and creating schools where students from diverse cultural backgrounds can be successful.
- Leaders need to re-affirm that discrimination on the basis of racial, cultural heritage, ancestry or place of origin has no place in our schools. Students who have special needs and are from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds are particularly vulnerable. They and their families may feel doubly different: first in culture and then in their learning needs.
- People's beliefs about special education, in particular, and teaching and learning can be influenced by their traditional cultural values and customs.
- Educators have the challenge of ensuring that cultural differences among learners do not hinder their successful participation in school, their mastery of learning outcomes or their ability to become contributing members of society. This becomes especially important when students have special needs.
- No two school communities are identical. A recipe-book approach will not provide strategies for principals who want to increase the cultural competence of their schools. Leaders will need to assess the cultural make up of their students, their parents, the school staff and the surrounding community.
- The following areas may need to be addressed:
  - students with Aboriginal backgrounds
  - students for whom English is a second language
  - students from diverse ethnic heritagesThe degree to which students with ethnically diverse backgrounds face challenges in our schools does not necessarily correlate with their length of residence in Canada.

# Practices

- Jargon commonly used in special education should be replaced by vocabulary more easily understood by students and their families. In some cases, it may be necessary to communicate through a translator.
- Principals can learn from families and other community members who represent the diversity of the school.
- Cultural differences should be taken into consideration in the selection and application of appropriate and fair assessment materials and techniques. Testing instruments used for formal assessments are developed based on norms from a general population, so the results may not accurately reflect the potential of some students. A student may respond more slowly to items on timed tests, based on the way people in his or her cultural group or community communicate. This can seriously affect cognitive scores on standardized tests.
- Practices can be fostered, through staff development, that will encourage teachers to carefully observe how students are responding to instruction. The behaviours students use to seek help can vary significantly from one culture to another. For some students, asking for help is natural and easy. For others, appearing to understand when one is still confused may be the socially appropriate way to show respect for teachers.
- Cultural values should be considered when special education program and placement decisions are made. Belonging to a community is a strong cultural value for some Aboriginal people. It is seen as a rejection or shunning by the school when a student is removed from a regular class to provide special education services. Some Aboriginal community leaders disagree with the concept of singling out individuals for gifted programming, believing all students have gifts and talents.
- Schools can draw upon the advice and assistance of cultural communities in assessing students' needs and in planning interventions for students who require them. Efforts to include students from diverse backgrounds, their families and communities can strengthen the capacity of the school-based team. Programs that focus on the strengths and gifts of learners, as well as their needs, will help students succeed.
- ESL students should be encouraged to build on the educational and personal experiences of their families and cultural backgrounds. ESL students who also have special needs require support for language proficiency and cultural diversity, as well as services to address their special needs.
- All staff can use what they understand about a student's culture to intervene when supports are needed. For example, when planning support for students from cultural groups that venerate ancestors, students may respond well to activities based on the experiences of their ancestors.

## Definition of terms

### Culture

Culture refers to the customary beliefs, social forms and traits of a racial, religious or social group that may also consist of a set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices.

### Cultural competence

Cultural competence is the ability to integrate and transform knowledge about individuals and groups of people into personal attitudes and then use this awareness to develop appropriate policies and practices to produce better outcomes and increase the effectiveness of communication and services.

### Diversity

Diversity is the ways in which individuals differ from each other. Some of these differences may be visible (e.g. race, gender, age) while others are less visible (e.g. culture, ancestry, language, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic background).

## Cultural competence cont.

### *Practices cont.*

- The family's need for privacy must be honoured when addressing the needs of the student. In some cultures, a student's difficulties may be seen as reflecting negatively on the whole family because professional help is only consulted as a last resort. This can make consulting with a family about a student's special needs very difficult. Confidentiality would be even more critical in instances such as this.
- School staff should be aware that invitations to parent-school meetings about a student's special needs may be interpreted as a negative reflection on the child's behaviour and can have an effect on the other siblings in the school system, not just the individual child with special needs.
- Principals can learn more about the cultural values of students in their schools by consulting with the groups in their areas representing those cultures.



# Questions and answers

## **Why use the word *competence*, when it implies that the opposite is *incompetence*?**

This term has come into use because it connotes the capacity to function in a particular way. It means learning a new way of behaving, finding flexibility to respond differently in different contexts. The term encourages organizations such as school boards and schools to assess where they are on a continuum and set goals to move beyond understanding to proficiency.

When addressing the goals for a student with special needs from a cultural group that is different from one's own, educators need to keep in mind that there are different paths to the same outcome for the student. As educators and families, we can use different strategies to get to the same reality for a learner: successful learning. The focus should be on the student's needs and challenges, rather than on strategies the school has traditionally used.

## **How can a school increase its cultural competence in the area of special education?**

Schools can improve their cultural competence in this area by:

- taking into account the different beliefs, customs, practices, languages and behaviours of individuals and cultural groups
- encouraging understanding, acceptance, mutual respect and inclusion, in order to make school communities and society as a whole more equitable for all people
- developing a mutually understood and agreed upon vocabulary to discuss students' needs and the school's plans to support them
- working with parents and others to reach a deeper understanding of special education and its goals for students and find interventions that are culturally appropriate for different individual students or groups of students
- learning from families and other community members who represent the diversity of the school
- tapping into the knowledge and understanding of district staff

## **How is cultural competence different from cultural sensitivity?**

Competence goes beyond knowledge, awareness and sensitivity. It requires understanding of the values and norms of students and their families. For students requiring special education support, it means keeping in mind these values and norms, as well as the experiences and needs of students, in the selection and application of assessment and instructional techniques and during communication with families and communities.

# Cultural competence cont.

## How can schools apply cultural competence to assessments of students with special needs?

Assessments need to be based on information beyond scores on formal tests. Schools can gather assessment information from:

- examples of the students' work
- strengths in academics and other areas
- observations of the students in a variety of settings, including the familial environment when possible

Assessment information can include information about students' strengths and talents as well as learning deficits or behaviour problems.

## Why is cultural competence important for educators who have Aboriginal students in their schools?

The performance of Aboriginal students may be affected by differing cultural practices and values such as responsibility to family and community, motivations, spirituality and attitudes toward learning. The incidence of Aboriginal students being identified as students with special needs is significantly higher than the rate of incidence for the total school population. It is also important to recognize that some Aboriginal parents may be reluctant to become involved in the school system because of their own childhood experiences in residential schools.

Principals need to ensure the strategies and interventions used to support Aboriginal students in special education and counselling programs fit the cultural context of these students' communities. The principal's leadership can help create school cultures in which Aboriginal students and their families feel welcome and safe and learning environments where Aboriginal students feel respected and valued.

## Resources

### **Cultural Competency Home Page,**

[www.cwla.org/programs/culturalcompetence/default/htm](http://www.cwla.org/programs/culturalcompetence/default/htm) (Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice)

### **Culture in Special Education: Building Reciprocal Family Provider Relationships,**

M. Kalyapur & B. Harry, Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 1999

**Diversity in B.C. Schools: A Framework,** Ministry of Education, Province of B.C., 2001 ([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/diversity/diversity-framework.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/diversity/diversity-framework.pdf))

Local organizations representing the cultural groups in the community

### **Over-representation of Aboriginal Students Reported with Behaviour Disorders: A**

**Review of the Literature,** Shirley R. McBride & William McKee, B.C. Ministry of Education. 2001 ([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/branches/abed](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/branches/abed))

*Understanding Family Resiliency from a Relational World View,* T.L. Cross in *Resiliency in Ethnic Minority Families. Vol. I: Native and Immigrant American Families,* H.I. McCubin, E.A. Thompson, A.I. Thompson and J.E. Fromer (eds), University of Wisconsin System, 1995

# Section 2

## Educational practices

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Individualized Education Plans</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>School-based teams</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>Intervention and instruction</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>Reporting</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Records management</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Health and safety</b>	<b>G</b>
<b>Critical incidents and crisis response</b>	<b>H</b>



# Section 2

## Educational practices

**Assessment—A**

# Assessment

## THE BIG IDEA

*Principals who support assessment as a foundation for instruction provide a model for effective special education decision making.*

## Key points

- Early identification is essential for students with special needs. Ideally, identification begins before students enter school, when parents and health or other community personnel identify the students' special needs and begin planning to address those needs. Schools should make use of this information and incorporate it into their planning.
- Students whose special needs are less readily evident are often not identified until they enter the school system. The sooner students are assessed, the more effective the strategies will be to support them. Thorough and timely assessment of students' strengths and needs should be conducted by trained personnel.
- Goals for students and strategies to help them reach these goals are based on careful assessments of students' needs. Staff and material support are allocated based on the findings of the assessments.
- The effectiveness of students' educational programs is determined by evaluating their achievement in relation to the goals of their Individual Education Plans (IEPs).
- Ongoing assessment and evaluation are needed to:
  - plan for instruction
  - assist communication about students with special needs
  - measure achievement relative to standards established by the IEP
  - report to parents
  - prepare for the annual review of the IEP

## Practices

- Planning educational programs for students with special needs usually begins at the classroom level. Teachers, in consultation with parents, assess students by comparing their performance with expected learning outcomes for their age or grade. In many cases, students will have their special needs addressed by classroom teachers with no additional assistance.
- Classroom teachers should consult, whenever possible, with parents and the school-based team or the school administration. If they believe students require more intensive individual assessment of how they learn and the best ways to teach them, they can access the expertise of the school-based team.
- More specialized assessment may be needed for students whose special needs are more complex or intense. Specialized staff (for example, school psychologists) should be available to assist with assessment and planning.

## Definition of terms

### Assessment

Assessment is a systematic process for gathering information from many sources in order to make appropriate educational decisions for a student. It is a progressive process identifying the student's strengths and needs, and results in the design and implementation of selected educational strategies. Assessments are conducted on a continuum and include formal and informal assessments.

### Educational program

An educational program is an organized set of learning activities designed to enable students to develop to their potential and acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to contribute to a healthy society.

## Types of assessments

- Assessments are often described as informal or formal and are best seen as a continuum. (See diagram Page 33)
- In general, informal assessments include:
  - classroom observation
  - the student's portfolio (a collection of the student's work)
  - interview information (student, parent, teachers and teachers' assistants)
  - review of existing documents (report cards, permanent record file, past assessment reports)
  - teacher-designed assessment materials
  - checklists describing strengths and needs
  - performance-based assessments (B.C. Reading, Writing, Numeracy and Social Responsibility Performance Standards)
- In general, formal assessments include some of the same activities as well as standardized diagnostic tests:
  - standardized reading inventories
  - tests of achievement
  - tests of cognitive ability

## Questions and answers

### What should a teacher do if he or she observes the student is having difficulties in learning or behaviour?

Teachers should try other instructional approaches and keep records of how the student responds to each. Teachers must also fully consider cultural, linguistic and experiential factors affecting a student's learning before assuming a disability. The teacher can consult with the school-based team to get suggestions for strategies to help the student.

### How should principals respond to a parent's demand for an immediate formal assessment?

Principals, together with teachers, should help parents understand that informal assessments may be more helpful because results have a direct link to what is happening in the classroom. Formal assessments are effective when they set out to answer specific questions that can not be answered by trying different instructional approaches and are usually initiated when these strategies aren't working.

### What should a principal do if parents enrolling a child identify him or her as having special needs?

Parents may provide the school with some kind of documentation indicating their child has special needs. Parents often have records of assessments and reports. Principals should get as much information as possible and written permission from the parent to request records from the former school and to share this information with the school-based team.

## Assessment cont.

### Questions and answers cont.

#### **What should we do if a student is disabled due to a car accident?**

School boards are required to provide an educational program. A student with a learning problem as a result of an accident is enrolled in the same way as any student with special needs. In some instances, the Insurance Corporation of B.C. may provide funding to support students' educational programs (tutors and equipment) *outside* the normal school setting.

#### **Which students are excused from writing the Foundation Skills Assessment?**

Students with special needs who require adaptations, as documented in their Individual Education Plans, and students receiving learning assistance *should* be included in the assessment. Principals may excuse students who are on a modified program, as documented in their IEPs, and those who cannot respond in a meaningful way in the language of the assessment.

## Resources

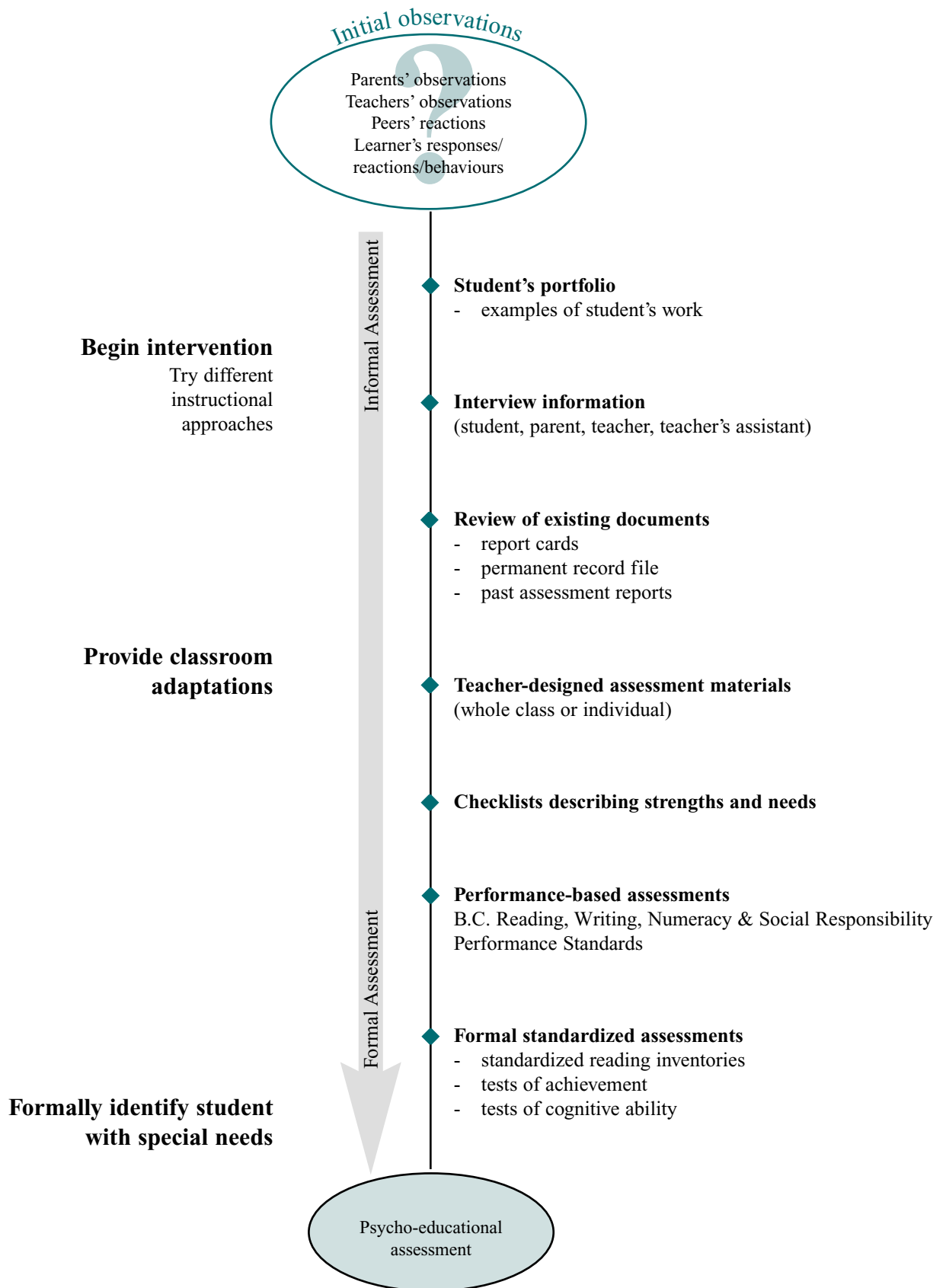
**Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**, Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, 1995 ([www.bced.gov.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm](http://www.bced.gov.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm))

**B.C. Reading, Writing and Numeracy Performance Standards**—  
[www.bced.gov.ca/classroom\\_assessment/perf\\_stands/](http://www.bced.gov.ca/classroom_assessment/perf_stands/)

**Parents' Guide to Individual Education Planning**, B.C. School Superintendents' Association, 2002 ([www.bced.gov.ca/specialed/iep/cover.htm](http://www.bced.gov.ca/specialed/iep/cover.htm))



# An assessment continuum





# Section 2

## Educational practices

**School-based teams—B**

# School-based teams

## Key points

### THE BIG IDEA

*Principals support the efforts of school-based teams, ensuring team members continually diagnose, problem-solve and recommend viable strategies, resources and services for students with special needs.*

- Principals can make important contributions to their school-based teams by:
  - participating in meetings
  - encouraging regular meeting times
  - providing release time when possible
  - reinforcing and encouraging the school-based team
  - acknowledging the challenges faced by teachers trying to address the needs of all students
  - supporting requests for in-service and resources
- The purpose of the school-based team is to act as a problem-solving group that supports students and teachers and accesses additional resources when needed.
- The school-based team should be supported by school staff, district staff and community agencies and service providers.
- Effective school-based teams use a collaborative problem-solving approach by:
  - clarifying problems
  - brainstorming possible solutions
  - implementing strategies
  - ensuring strategies are implemented
- Team members, working together, bring:
  - greater insight than can be generated by a single person
  - experience and encouragement
  - suggestions based on a variety of strengths
  - direct services offered by professionals

## Resources

**Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**, Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, 1995  
([www.bced.gov.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm](http://www.bced.gov.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm))

**A Framework for Learning Services in the Richmond School District**, J.A.B. Beirsto, Richmond School Board, 2001

## Practices

- The school-based team often includes:
  - a principal or vice-principal
  - a classroom teacher
  - a school counsellor
  - a learning assistance or resource teacher
  - specialized professionals as needed (speech and language pathologist, school psychologist, etc.)
  - representatives from community agencies as needed (social worker from Ministry of Children and Family Development, etc.)

The team may also involve:

- parents
  - the student, if appropriate
- Principals can support the effectiveness of teams by focusing their work for greatest efficiency and ensuring they have the resources they need.
  - The team should appoint a case manager to be responsible for developing the student's Individual Education Plan, monitoring the student's special education supports and communicating about the student's progress with parents.
  - One of the common activities of the school-based team is to determine the appropriate level of support for the student based on a needs assessment.
  - During budget planning, the school-based team can provide suggestions to the school principal about staffing and resources needed to support the school's students with special needs.
  - School-based teams should use district-sanctioned connections with local service providers and community agencies.
  - Key points about collaboration:
    - The culture of a school (beliefs, expectations, behaviours and norms) determines the ability to improve teaching and learning. Effective schools nurture collaborative cultures.
    - A collaborative school culture moves away from the tradition of teacher isolation. Organizing teachers into teams helps achieve this.
    - Student learning becomes a shared responsibility when groups, rather than individuals, take responsibility for implementing curriculum and assessment.
    - Time for collaboration should be built into the school day and staff should be expected, not just invited, to collaborate. Protocols to guide the process are established. Specific tasks and measurable goals are clearly set out.

## Definition of terms

### Assessment

Assessment is a systematic process for gathering information from many people in order to make appropriate educational decisions for a student. It is a progressive process identifying the student's strengths and needs, and results in the design and implementation of selected educational strategies. Assessments are conducted on a continuum and include formal and informal assessments.

### Collaboration

Collaboration is an interactive process where a number of people with particular expertise come together as equals to generate an appropriate program or process or find solutions to problems.

### Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are written records which document the individualized planning processes for students with special educational needs. Individualized planning is a continuous and integrated process of instruction, assessment, evaluation, decision-making and reporting.

## School-based teams cont.

### Questions and answers

#### **What can principals do to ensure effectively run school-based teams?**

Principals should:

- evaluate the processes of their school-based teams on an annual basis to ensure they are meeting the needs of their schools
- advocate a schedule for meetings (set times and set days) when all key people, including outside participants, can be present to advise and help plan
- provide release time when possible—this will reduce the number of meetings necessary to keep everyone informed

#### **How is a school-based team set up?**

The principal and school staff should collaborate on the the design and procedures for the school-based team's operation:

- when and where meetings will be held
- how agendas will be set
- who will attend
- who will keep records

#### **Who is responsible for calling a school-based team meeting?**

A meeting should be called by any staff member in direct contact with a student with special needs. However, there should be school procedures that make it possible for anyone—teachers, parents, district personnel— to discuss a student with a school-based team.

#### **When should the experts be called in?**

There will be times when the information collected by school personnel will raise questions that cannot be answered by those on the team. Experts from the school district or community agencies should be called in at that time to assist the team.

#### **When is it appropriate to include students with special needs in the meetings of the school-based team?**

Students could be invited to meet with the school-based team when they can communicate their suggestions and observations about programs, services and learning situations that benefit their learning needs.

# Section 2

## Educational practices

**Individual Education Plans (IEPs)—C**

# Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

## Key points

### THE BIG IDEA

*Principals set school standards for IEP development. Effective services require sound collaboration and planning.*

#### Legislative requirements

- The B.C. *School Act* states that when students are identified as having special needs, school boards are required to provide Individual Education Plans as soon as practical. The responsibility to ensure this happens usually falls to school principals.
- According to the B.C. Individual Education Plan Order (M638/95), students identified as having special needs must have IEPs **unless**:
  - 1) the student with special needs requires minor adaptations to educational materials, instructional methods or assessment strategies
  - 2) the expected learning outcomes established by the applicable educational program guide have not been modified for the student with special needs, and
  - 3) the student with special needs is receiving, in a school year, 25 hours or less remedial instruction, by a person other than the classroom teacher in order for the student to meet the expected learning outcomes.
- Principals must give parents an opportunity to be consulted in the planning process. They can provide information about a child's medical history and health care, educational history, types of programs the child has already experienced and family history if appropriate.
- Where appropriate, students should also participate or be consulted.
- The B.C. Ministry of Education's guidelines recommend that IEPs include:
  - the present levels of educational performance of the student
  - goals for that student where they have been modified from the prescribed learning outcomes
  - all the required adaptations to educational materials and instructional and assessment methods
  - all the support services to be provided
  - a description of the places where the educational program is provided
  - the names of all personnel who will be providing the educational program and the support services for the student during the school year
  - the period of time and process for review of the IEP



## Practices

- Principals should support a collaborative IEP development process where participants come together as equals to analyze information gathered through formal and informal assessments. All parties should have opportunities to provide information.
- School personnel, after consulting with parents (and outside agencies if relevant), develop IEPs which take into account students' strengths as well as special needs.
- IEPs:
  - are written records of planning developed in consultation with students, parents, school personnel and other service providers
  - provide coherent, short-term and long-range plans for student learning and service needs
  - provide principals with evidence of individualized planning
  - are useful tools in planning the transition of students with special needs from one setting to another
  - contain the goals towards which student achievement is measured
  - form the basis of reporting students' progress
- IEPs should set reasonable goals and strategies that can be successfully provided by the school.
- Though planning occurs collaboratively, principals should ensure all students with special needs are assigned case managers to co-ordinate the development, documentation, implementation and monitoring of their IEPs.
- Case management notes and the school-based team minutes should be stored in the students' files along with Individual Education Plans.
- Transitions (between classes, schools and districts and from school to post-secondary institutions or work places) require special planning to ensure elements of the IEP are not disrupted or lost in the process.
- Records for students with special physical and intellectual needs may include plans for critical incident management as it relates to the student's individual circumstances. (See pages 63 to 66.)
- IEPs must be reviewed and updated at least annually.
- IEPs are more effective when all interested parties receive copies and understand how they will be used to guide students' educational programs.

### Definition of terms

#### Adaptations

Adaptations are strategies that support students in achieving the learning outcomes of the provincial curriculum. Adaptations may include adjustments to assessment, instruction, environment or resources.

#### Collaboration

Collaboration is an interactive process where people with particular expertise work together to generate an appropriate process or program or to find solutions to problems.

#### Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are written records documenting the individualized planning process for students with special educational needs.

Individualized planning is a continuous and integrated process of instruction, assessment, evaluation, decision-making and reporting.

#### Modifications

Modifications are changes to learning outcomes that result in students' learning outcomes being substantially different from those of the provincial curriculum. Modifications are specifically selected to address a student's special needs.

...cont. Pg. 43

# Individual Education Plans (IEPs) cont.

## Questions and answers

### **How do schools determine if a student needs an IEP?**

According to the B.C. Individual Education Plan Order (M638/95), if a student with special needs receives more than 25 hours of remedial instruction, he or she must have an IEP.

### **What are the issues to consider in developing an IEP?**

Once all assessment information is available, here are questions to ask:

- What does the student need to learn? Are curriculum adaptations necessary? Does the student need individualized goals that are modified?
- Who are the support people needed to facilitate the student's learning?
- Where will the student's education take place? Which classrooms will provide the most enabling environments? Will the student require time in other centres in the school or the community?
- What provisions are needed to address the physical needs of the student? Who will provide the support? Is special staff training required?

### **Who develops IEPs?**

There are several models for developing IEPs.

- IEPs may be written by one person, usually a classroom teacher or a non-enrolling teacher.
- One person may take on the role of case manager and call together a team of people to help write the IEP.
- The school-based team may act as the IEP team.

### **What is the role of parents in developing an IEP?**

B.C. legislation states principals must offer to consult with parents during the development of IEPs. Parents bring unique perspectives that should be considered in order for IEPs to be successful.

### **When is it appropriate for an advocate to accompany a parent to an IEP meeting?**

In some cases it is helpful if parents bring an advocate such as a translator or specialist to an IEP meeting. Decisions about inclusion of advocates in such meetings are made locally by school or district policy.

### **When is it appropriate to include students with special needs in the development of an IEP?**

B.C. legislation states students with special needs should be included in the planning of their Individual Education Plan when appropriate, i.e. when they can communicate their suggestions and observations about programs, services and learning situations that benefit their learning styles.

## What form can an IEP take?

Normally the IEP is written using a set format as mandated by the school board or school. Depending on the school district's policy, examples of forms include:

- templates developed by the B.C. Ministry of Education (available at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed))
- a district-developed form
- a school-developed form
- data-base format developed by the school board or ministry (see Resources, this page)

## How is the IEP evaluated?

The Individual Education Plan should have clearly defined student goals with specified dates so that changes and progress can be monitored and reviewed frequently and formally at least once a year.

## What is the role of principals in developing IEPs?

Principals are usually responsible on behalf of the school board for ensuring:

- IEPs are designed as soon as possible after students are identified as having special needs
- parents are consulted
- a review is conducted annually

## Should the IEP be signed by the parent and a member of the school-based team?

There is no provincial requirement for signatures and the IEP is not a binding contract. If parents' signatures are used to document that parents were present at the IEP meetings or they received copies of the IEP, school staff should make it clear to parents that IEPs are not written contracts but rather working documents.

## Resources

**Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**, Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, 1995 ([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm))

**Individual Education Planning for Students with Special Needs**, Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia ([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/iepsn](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/iepsn))

**Parents' Guide to Individual Education Planning**, B.C. School Superintendents' Association, 2002 ([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/iep/cover.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/iep/cover.htm))

IEP templates are available from the B.C. Ministry of Education's web site at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed)

An IEP database template was distributed by the Ministry of Education in 2001 to each district administrator of special education and superintendent. Additional copies were provided to the Federation of Independent Schools' Association.

## Definition of terms continued

### Parent/Guardian

According to Section 1 of the B.C. *School Act*, *parent* means "in respect of a student or of a child registered under Section 13, a) the guardian of the student or child, b) the person legally entitled to custody of the student or child, or c) the person who usually has the care and control of the student or child."

### Placement

Placement means the level, grade, classroom or setting that is most suitable for the student.

### Transition

Transition is the passage of students from one environment to another at key points in their development from childhood to adulthood, for example: into Kindergarten or from elementary school to secondary.

### School-based team

A school-based team is an ongoing team of school-based personnel which functions as a problem-solving group to assist classroom teachers in developing and implementing instructional and management strategies and to coordinate support resources for students with special needs within the school.

## Relevant legislation

B.C. Individual Education Plan Order (M638/95) — [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e.htm)



# Section 2

## Educational practices

**Intervention and instruction—D**

# Intervention and instruction

## Key points

### THE BIG IDEA

*A principal supports the practice of interventions as part of the services of a healthy school, supporting the classroom teacher and support staff in the delivery of specialized instruction.*

- According to the B.C. *School Act*, an educational program is an organized set of learning activities designed to enable learners to develop to their individual potential. Implementation and support of a student's educational program is maximized when a student with special needs is regarded in the same way as all other students and not defined exclusively by those special needs.
- Principals can influence resource allocation and focus staff efforts so early intervention is emphasized. Early intervention is encouraged because it is more successful than responding to accumulated difficulties later on.
- Successful interventions are dependent on clearly defined goals and objectives that are understood and continuously evaluated for effectiveness.
- Interventions are enhanced when there are high expectations for all students and staff and when there is a good balance between challenge for the students and support from the school.

## Resources

**Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**, Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, 1995  
([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm))

**The Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching**, Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, 2000

**Learning in Safe Schools**, F. Brownlie and J. King, Pembroke Publishers Ltd., Markham, Ontario, 2000

**Choosing Options and Accommodations for Children: A Guide to Planning Inclusive Education**, M.F. Giangreco, C.J. Cloninger & V.S. Iverson, Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company, Baltimore, Maryland, 1993

# Practices

- Staff training is necessary to ensure intervention and instruction are culturally, linguistically and experientially sensitive. Principals can support this training for teachers and staff.
- Support staff (i.e. learning assistance teachers, resource room teachers, integration support teachers, teachers' assistants) should be available to the school to help implement the interventions and provide their expertise, materials and other supports as necessary for classroom teachers and students.
- Teachers' assistants cannot design a student's educational program, but they can assist with the personal care and behaviour management of the student and help implement the instructional program under the supervision of the teacher or principal.
- Principals should encourage teachers to recognize different learning styles and diversify their instructional approaches without compromising prescribed learning outcomes. Effective strategies include:
  - relating learning to the student's real world experience in order to motivate and support concept development
  - using a multi-sensory representation of concepts: visual, auditory and kinesthetic
  - using group work for peer support and social construction of knowledge
  - allowing alternative forms of representing, communicating and assessing knowledge
- Interventions usually include one or more of the following:
  - adaptations to make the learning environment more accessible
  - alternative approaches to instruction and evaluation
  - use of adaptive or assistive technologies (computers, hearing aids, etc.)
  - provision of direct intensive instruction (e.g. remedial instruction or adaptations to teaching approaches)
  - provision of support services (e.g. speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, counselling, teachers' assistants, physiotherapy)
  - provision of specialized training (e.g. Braille, orientation and mobility, speech reading and sign language instruction)
- Staff can involve parents in implementing congruent interventions for their child at home.

## Definition of terms

### Adaptations

Adaptations are strategies that support students in achieving the learning outcomes of the provincial curriculum. Adaptations may include adjustments to assessment, instruction, environment or resources.

### Interventions

In the field of special education, interventions are putting into practice plans, strategies and support to facilitate the learning and address the special needs of students.

### Modifications

Modifications are changes to learning outcomes that result in students' learning outcomes being substantially different from those of the provincial curriculum. Modifications are specifically selected to address a student's special needs.

# *Examples of adaptations and modifications*

## **Adaptations**

- Adaptations are alternative strategies to support meaningful learning so the student can participate and achieve the outcomes of the curriculum at some level.
- There are four main areas in which adaptations can be used. Examples for each area include:

### **Environment**

provide small classroom environment  
manage the classroom lighting or ambient sound  
provide a wheelchair accessible workspace  
use study carrels  
seat the student at the front or back of the room

### **Materials**

provide calculators  
provide tape-recorded materials  
provide Braille or large print texts  
offer raised lined paper  
highlight directions or key points  
provide graphic organizers  
provide computers

### **Instruction**

use concrete manipulative materials  
provide directions in written and oral forms  
use visual schedules  
provide multi-sensory examples  
break information into small chunks or steps  
provide structured overviews  
provide additional time or supervised breaks

### **Assessment/Evaluation**

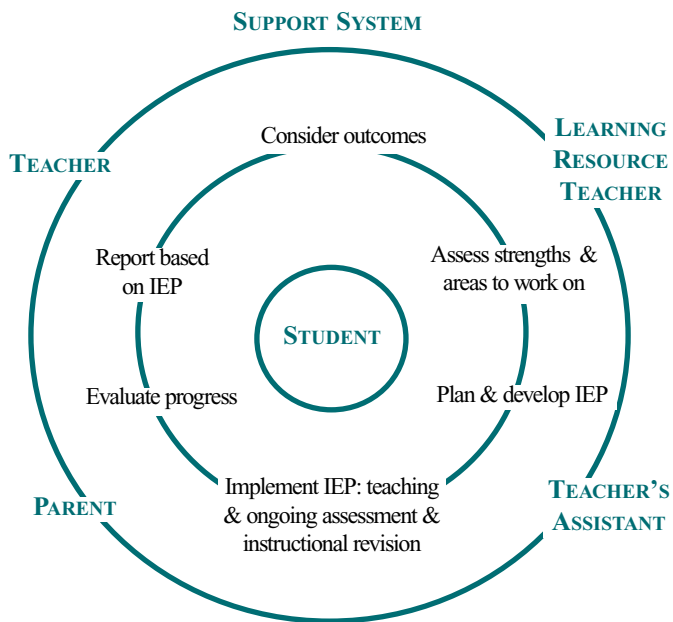
use video  
extend time for tests  
use oral tests  
provide a scribe  
use open book tests  
allow for small group or individual testing  
use readers on first-draft writing & numeracy  
allow audio-taped responses

## **Modifications**

- Modifications involve setting goals for a student that are different from provincial outcomes. These modifications should focus on the skills the student needs to enhance his or her quality of life now and in the future.
- Teachers need to set high but attainable modified goals in the areas of:
  - functional academic skills
  - independent living skills
  - participation in activities in the community
  - personal relationship skills
  - self-management and decision-making
  - personal safety and health



## A framework for teaching and learning for students with special needs



## Questions and answers

### **The IEP does not seem to be working and goals are not being met. Are we implementing the planned interventions properly?**

The following questions need to be answered:

- Were all the key players involved in developing the IEP?
- Do all these key people support and understand the IEP?
- Are all resources, materials and other necessary supports (such as personnel, in-service and equipment) in place?
- Are the timelines for achieving the goals realistic?
- How is the student's progress being measured?

Practices should be adapted to ensure a positive answer to all these questions.

### **How do we make arrangements to have a student's Grade 12 provincial exams adjudicated?**

If the student has had adaptations for school tests and exams in prior years and his or her program includes at least one course that adheres to the provincial learning outcomes, the school principal can ask the Ministry of Education for permission to adapt the exam conditions. The adaptations must be noted in the student's IEPs for the previous two years and submitted to the board with the adjudication request. Adaptations could include: Braille, large print, taped, sign language, adapting the student's method of recording, adapting the setting, changing the length of the exam session and allowing supervised breaks.

(See [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/handbook/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/handbook/))



# Section 2

## Educational practices

Reporting—E

# Reporting

## Key points

### THE BIG IDEA

*Principals ensure the provincial policy of reporting is followed in an effective and timely way so staff can provide relevant information and parents can respond appropriately.*

#### Legislative requirements

- Teachers are required to regularly provide parents with reports regarding students' progress in school. Reports must be made at least five times during a school year, and must include three written reports and at least two informal reports.
- Expectations for how schools will provide the three written reports are described in the B.C. Student Progress Report Order (191/94). This order, which should be reviewed in full as schools examine reporting practices, requires that:
  - All students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will have their progress in relation to expected learning outcomes reported with written comments. Parents must also be provided with oral or written comments on the student's school progress in intellectual, human and social development with reference to the expected development for students in a similar age range.
  - All students in grades 4 to 7 who are working on outcomes of the provincial curriculum will have their progress reported using letter grades and written comments.
  - All students in grades 8 to 12 who are working on learning outcomes of the provincial curriculum will have their progress reported using letter grades or percentages, and where appropriate, written comments.
  - A letter grade may only be assigned for a student with special needs where that student is able to demonstrate his or her learning in relation to the expected learning outcomes set out in the curriculum for the course or subject and grade. This will include students whose programs include adaptations to learning resources, instructional strategies or assessment procedures that allow them to pursue the expected learning outcomes of the curriculum.
  - In those instances where a student is not able to demonstrate his or her learning in relation to the expected learning outcomes set out in the curriculum, the student's progress reports must contain written comments in relation to the expected learning outcomes (individualized goals; modifications) set out in that student's Individual Education Plan.
  - Written comments for all students, including those with special needs, will reflect:
    - a) what the student is able to do
    - b) the areas in which the student requires further attention or development, and
    - c) ways of supporting the student in his or her learning

# Practices

- Reports should include progress related to all components of a student’s program in addition to the IEP goals. They should also indicate the adaptations and modifications made to the student’s educational program and the student’s progress in relation to the IEP goals.
- Principals can support staff by providing training that ensures assessment, evaluation and reporting take into account individual variations in learners and allow for differences in styles and rates of learning
- Principals can provide staff training that ensures:
  - reporting information is brief, relevant, descriptive, free of jargon and supported by evidence
  - reporting criteria are efficient, focused and succinct and communicate clearly to parents
  - students understand their written reports and are involved in self-evaluation and in conferences with their parents whenever possible
  - when possible parents are consulted beforehand and, if appropriate, asked to contribute their views of their child’s strengths and needs and the way they can provide support
  - parents are invited to comment, express concerns and ask questions once they have read the report
  - reports are personalized by making references to things students have done
  - informal reporting—such as telephone calls, communication books, notes home, e-mail correspondence and informal conversations—takes place throughout the year, as part of the ongoing communication between parents and teachers
- Effective reporting enhances learning. It requires choosing language that accurately describes the student’s accomplishments and needs and establishes the basis for dialogue.
- Classroom teachers have the prime responsibility for their students’ ongoing classroom assessment, evaluation and reporting even when other professionals are involved in assessing and evaluating students.
- If a professional support person, other than the classroom teacher, is responsible for providing a portion of the student’s educational program (i.e. a speech and language pathologist) that person should provide written reports on the student’s progress to include with the classroom teacher’s report.

## Definition of terms

### Adaptations

Adaptations are strategies that support students in achieving the learning outcomes of the provincial curriculum. Adaptations may include adjustments to assessment, instruction, environment or resources.

### Assessment

Assessment is a systematic process for gathering information from many sources in order to make appropriate educational decisions for a student. It is a progressive process identifying the student’s strengths and needs, and results in the design and implementation of selected educational strategies. Assessments are conducted on a continuum and include formal and informal assessments.

### Modifications

Modifications are changes to learning outcomes that result in students’ learning outcomes being substantially different from those of the provincial curriculum. Modifications are specifically selected to address a student’s special needs.

### Questions and answers

#### **Can schools give students letter grades for some parts of the curriculum and written comments for others?**

Yes. Letter grades are given for the subjects in which students are able to perform in relation to the prescribed outcomes, with or without adaptations. Structured written comments are used for reporting in the areas in which the IEP indicates modifications have been made.

#### **Legal references**

The B.C. *School Act*, sections 79 (3) and 168 (2)—  
[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/)

B.C. Provincial Letter Grades Order (M192/94)—  
[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/)

B.C. School Regulation 265/89; Reg. 4(1)j, 4(2), 4(3)—  
[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/)

B.C. Student Progress Report Order (M191/94)—  
[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/)

Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines,  
B.C. Ministry of Education, 1995, Section G, Page 39

#### **Resources**

**The Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching**, Ministry of Education,  
Province of British Columbia, 2000

## Section 2

# Educational practices

**Records management—F**

# Records management

## THE BIG IDEA

*Principals, working with school staff, ensure the school's methods of storing and maintaining student records are efficient, accurate and current.*

## Key points

### Legislative requirement

- Schools must follow policy and procedures set by their individual school boards in accordance with relevant provincial legislation. For example, the B.C. Student Records Disclosure Order (M14/91) requires that boards include current IEPs in students' permanent records.

### Common understandings

- Records for students with special needs will typically include information related to identification and assessment, Individual Education Plans and relevant follow-up and review information related to progress and placement.
- Records for students with **special health needs** will typically include a care plan and may include a medical alert plan containing precautions to take and step-by-step procedures in case of a medical emergency.
- Records for students with **behavioural needs** that could lead to violent behaviour will typically include a risk-management plan in case of an emergency.



# Practices

- Principals should have up-to-date information about the students in the school who have special needs and help develop practices to ensure records are current. IEPs should be kept in students' permanent records. Transitory notes should be destroyed when they are no longer useful.
- The B.C. Ministry of Education requires school boards to report the number of students in the district with special needs for accountability purposes and to ensure additional funding for these students. Schools submitting information on Form 1701 enrolment forms should ensure students meet the appropriate guidelines. (Forms can be found at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/datacollections/collectionforms/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/datacollections/collectionforms/))
- Records should be maintained for those students in the district who have been placed in Provincial Resource Programs or in programs in other districts.
- Student records must be stored in a cost-efficient manner that ensures confidentiality for students and their families and easy retrieval and use of the information. All student records should be treated as confidential and stored in a secure environment where access is limited.
- Very sensitive personal records, such as psychological reports and counselling records, should be retained separately from the student's general file (in accordance with local policy) to ensure they cannot be accessed by anyone other than those with a need to know.
- If a principal, counsellor or teacher has kept a personal file on a student, that file remains the staff person's personal file until the information becomes part of the student's school file. Staff members who keep such files must manage them in accordance with the B.C. *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and ensure they are protected from unauthorized access. Principals should review these guidelines with staff on an annual basis.
- Increasing litigation regarding human rights is a reality of our times. Accurate, complete records documenting assessment, planning, achievement and parent consultation are critical in these cases.

## Legal references

B.C. *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, Section 19

B.C. *School Act*, sections 79(3) and 168(2)

B.C. Student Records Disclosure Order (M14/91)—  
[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/)

B.C. Permanent Student Record Order (M190/91)—  
[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/)

Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, B.C. Ministry of Education, 1995, Section G, Page 39

## Records management cont.

### Questions and answers

#### **How long should files of students with special needs be maintained?**

- B.C. legislation requires school boards retain the Permanent Student Records of all students for 55 years from the date students withdraw or graduate from school.
- It is prudent, though not required by law, to retain any files that might be requested in the future.

#### **Is written parental permission necessary when disclosing a student record to a government ministry or agency delivering or planning to deliver health services, social services or other support services to the student?**

Written permission from the student's parent or guardian is preferred but not required by law. Principals are legally authorized to disclose student records to ministries or agencies providing these services.

#### **Can students and parents access all student records kept at the school for that student?**

According to B.C. legislation the answer is generally yes. A student and parents of a student are entitled to examine all records kept by the school pertaining to that student. However, access to a record is not absolute. If the principal feels the disclosure of certain information could harm the safety, mental or physical health of the student or of another person, that information may be withheld under the B.C. *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (Section 19.1.a and 19.1.b). The decision can be appealed to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

At the school level, the principal or designate should remain with the parents or guardians and student as the student's file is reviewed and interpret all records for the parent or guardian and student.

#### **How can we ensure confidentiality and give staff the information needed to respond appropriately to a critical incident or a medical emergency for students with special needs?**

All staff who have contact with these students should have access to the risk-management plans, critical incident response plans, medical alert forms and IEPs in the students' files.

# Section 2

## Educational practices

**Health and safety—G**

# Health and safety (WCB/Risk management)

## Key points

### THE BIG IDEA

*Principals must understand safety regulations and make sure they are followed for the protection of all students and staff.*

#### Legislative requirements

- Staff members working with students who present a health risk have a right to know the risks involved and the school has a responsibility to develop safety plans to minimize the risks.
- Regulations of the Workers' Compensation Board of B.C. cover situations or activities that pose a personal health risk to an employee. This includes all physical interactions with students (such as lifting and moving) and violent situations.

#### Common understandings

- Strategies for reducing health risks must balance the rights of the student with protection of staff and other students.
- Schools determine whether a student poses a health risk based on his or her history and reports from caregivers and organizations who have dealt with the student.

## Resources

**Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines,** Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, 1995  
([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm))

# Practices

- Principals should ensure there is a process for informing staff members who may be at risk due to a student’s aggressive behaviour. In some cases, the school-based team will inform whoever is at risk. Staff with this information should be reminded about confidentiality requirements.
- Safety plans that include non-violent intervention plans should be in place. Training should be provided to appropriate school staff and reviewed regularly.
- IEPs, where necessary, should contain safety plans with non-violent intervention strategies and universal precaution plans which cover procedures for dealing with the cleaning and disposal of body fluids.
- Universal precaution training, including where special equipment is stored, must be provided to appropriate school staff and reviewed regularly. Principals must ensure appropriate equipment is available. Refer to Universal Precautions, B.C. Ministry of Health, Health Files No. 29, June 1997—[www.hlth.gov.bc.ca](http://www.hlth.gov.bc.ca)

## Definition of terms

### Safety plans

Safety plans deal with aggressive behaviour or other situations in which students or staff are at risk for harm.

### Universal precaution plans

Universal precaution plans are required by the Workers’ Compensation Board in B.C. They cover procedures for cleaning up body fluids and disposing of clean-up materials. They should be included in relevant IEPs.

## Relevant legislation

Workers’ Compensation Board of B.C.  
Regulations—  
[www.wcb.bc.ca](http://www.wcb.bc.ca)

Risk Management Regulations, from the B.C. Ministry of Finance

The B.C. *School Act*, sections 106(1) and 182(2)(k)—  
[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw)

# Health and safety (WCB/Risk management) cont.

## Questions and answers

### **How do schools develop appropriate sets of non-violent interventions for specific students?**

A meeting involving all key people should be called. Discussion should take place around circumstances when problems are likely to occur, what strategies have worked in the past and the development of a plan to address a potential risk. Outside experts can be asked to attend when relevant. Once a plan is in place, any necessary training should be provided. The plan must be monitored and modified as necessary.

### **How are school and district rules and policies of student conduct and discipline applied to students with special needs?**

All students are expected to follow the school's code of conduct requiring them to make the most of their opportunities and respect the rights of others. Schools are responsible for helping all students meet these expectations. Specific plans to help students who have behaviour problems may have to be put in place. Discipline applied to students with special needs should be appropriate for their level of understanding and ability. When aggressive behaviours are beyond a student's capacity to understand or control, the principal will need to help school staff decide how to respond.

### **How much information should be given to parents and students about another student's medical condition that may require intervention?**

In consultation with the student and family, principals need to decide how detailed the information to other individuals should be. When it is possible that other students or parents may witness an event that is disturbing, it is better they be forewarned than have them upset by an event that is not understood.

### **What is required if someone is injured at the school or at a school-sanctioned activity?**

- If an *employee* is injured, a **Form 7**, available from the **Workers' Compensation Board of B.C.** must be completed. It includes three forms and must be forwarded by the employee's supervisor to the District Administration Centre within 24 hours.
- If a *student, parent or visitor* is injured, a **Risk Management Report** (as required by the B.C. Ministry of Finance) must be completed by a school principal and forwarded to the school board office. Forms should be available at the school board office.

## Section 2

# Educational practices

**Critical incidents and crisis response—H**

# Critical incidents and crisis response

## THE BIG IDEA

*Principals support the development of school-wide plans and contingency plans for students with special needs to ensure proper responses to crises or critical incidents.*

## Key points

- School protocols for managing a crisis should include plans to deal with individuals at risk and ensure the safety of students with special needs.
- Some students are more vulnerable to a critical incident because of their circumstances. This can include students:
  - from minority cultural backgrounds
  - with English as a second language
  - on visas who may lack parental guidance while residing in Canada
  - who have a close relationship with those at the centre of the critical incident
  - who have recently suffered a personal loss
  - with emotional or behavioural disorders resulting in particular sensitivity to the turmoil of emotions and changes in routine
- Students with behaviour disorders, who often have poor self-esteem, may react disproportionately to a crisis or trauma, even if the event does not directly affect them. They may need additional support to understand and deal with an incident.



## Practices

- Critical incident response protocols should be in written form and provided to appropriate staff.
- Copies of plans relating to individual students should be placed in students' files and also kept in a central location in the school. The people responsible for that student in a crisis should understand their roles and be comfortable with the support they will provide in an emergency situation.
- Appropriate staff, along with individual students with special needs, should prepare for implementing the emergency procedures.
- Parents and guardians of these students should be given a copy of the emergency plans.
- Each student's emergency plan should be reviewed annually with appropriate staff and evaluated following an incident.
- Separate critical incident response protocols may be required for students in alternative programs. Some of these programs have a large population of students at risk. Plans should take into consideration the need to maintain close contact between students and staff with trusting relationships. It may be important to minimize contact with outside personnel and representatives from the community. These issues should be discussed during the development of the protocol.
- Whenever possible, the staff should implement school-based interventions for students with special needs that are applicable to the majority of students. However, there may be times when particular students should be temporarily removed from the school environment. Parents should be involved in planning for these students.
- Staff should take particular care in planning support for students who are considered high risk of suicide. These students should be offered help at the time of the incident and on an ongoing basis, especially at significant times during the year: anniversaries of a death, birthdays, holidays, the expected graduation date and the high-risk student's own birthday.

### Definition of terms

#### **Critical incident response plans**

Critical incident response plans are plans developed at the school level to help the school deal with an incident such as a violent event, sudden death or accident which has the potential to adversely affect students, staff and the community.

# Critical incidents and crisis response cont.

## Questions and answers

### **How can we ensure confidentiality and still give staff the information needed to respond appropriately to a critical incident or a medical emergency for a student with special needs?**

All staff who have contact with the student should have access to the risk-management plans, critical incident response plans, medical alert forms and IEP in the student's file if this information is needed for the effective education or safety of the student or others.

### **Why are students with special needs at greater risk after a critical incident such as suicide?**

Some students are particularly high-risk and more susceptible to depression and self-destructive behaviours such as suicide. This may be due to their difficulty understanding and expressing their feelings or because they feel isolated. Special support is needed for these students. This high-risk category also includes any student who:

- participated in any way with the suicide or accident
- knew of the attempt but did not try to stop it
- feels guilty about things said, done or not done prior to the death
- recently punished or threatened to punish the deceased
- was a relative, best friend or mentioned in the suicide note
- identifies with the victim's situation, has a history of suicidal threats, is desperate and now considers suicide a viable alternative

## Resources

**Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**, Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, 1995  
([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm))

**Responding to Critical Incidents: A Resource Guide for Schools**, Ministry of Education, Province of B.C., 1998 ([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/rci/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/rci/))

# Section 3

## Appendices

### **Part I—Policy, procedures, guidelines**

- Definition of terms—A**
- Relevant legislation—B**
- Provincial policy—C**



# Section 3

## Appendices

### Part I—Policy, procedures, guidelines

#### Definition of terms—A

# Definition of terms

## **Adaptations**

Adaptations are strategies that support students in achieving the learning outcomes of the provincial curriculum. Adaptations may include adjustments to assessment, instruction, environment or resources. See the definition of Modification.

## **Assessment**

Assessment is a systematic process for gathering information from many sources in order to make appropriate educational decisions for students. It is a progressive process identifying the student's strengths and needs, and results in the design and implementation of selected educational strategies. Assessments are conducted on a continuum and include formal and informal assessments. (See pages 29 to 33 for a more complete discussion.)

## **Collaboration**

Collaboration is an interactive process where a number of people with particular expertise come together as equals to generate an appropriate program or process or find solutions to problems.

## **Critical incident response plans**

Critical incident response plans are plans developed at the school level to help the school deal with an incident such as a violent event, sudden death or accident which has the potential to adversely affect students, staff and the community.

## **Culture**

Culture refers to the customary beliefs, social forms and traits of a racial, religious or social group that may also consist of a set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices.

## **Cultural competence**

Cultural competence is the ability to integrate and transform knowledge about individuals and groups of people into personal attitudes and then use this awareness to develop appropriate policies and practices to produce better outcomes and increase the effectiveness of communication and services.

## **Diversity**

Diversity is the ways in which individuals differ from each other. Some of these differences may be visible (e.g. race, gender, age) while others are less visible (e.g. culture, ancestry, language, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic background).

## **Educational program**

An educational program is an organized set of learning activities designed to enable students to develop to their potential and acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society.

## **Empathy**

Empathy is understanding the emotional make-up of other people and responding to people in an appropriate way and in accordance with their emotional reactions.

## **Inclusion**

Inclusion is the value system which holds that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their education. The practice of inclusion transcends the idea of physical location and incorporates basic values that promote participation, friendship and interaction.

## **Individual Education Plans (IEPs)**

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are written records which document the individualized planning processes for students with special educational needs. Individualized planning is a continuous and integrated process of instruction, assessment, evaluation, decision-making and reporting.

## **Integration**

Integration is the practice of placing students with special needs in educational settings with peers who do not have special needs.

## **Interventions**

In the field of special education, interventions are putting into practice plans, strategies and support to facilitate the learning and address the special needs of students.

## **Modifications**

Modifications are changes to learning outcomes that result in students' learning outcomes being substantially different from those of the provincial curriculum. Modifications are specifically selected to address a student's special needs. See the definition of Adaptations.

## **Parent/Guardian**

According to Section 1 of the B.C. *School Act*, *parent* means “in respect of a student or of a child registered under Section 13, a) the guardian of the student or child, b) the person legally entitled to custody of the student or child, or c) the person who usually has the care and control of the student or child.”

## **Placement**

Placement means the level, grade, classroom or setting that is most suitable for the student.

## **Safety plans**

Safety plans deal with aggressive behaviour or other situations in which students or staff are at risk for harm.

## Definition of terms cont.

### **School-based team**

A school-based team is an ongoing team of school-based personnel which functions as a problem-solving group to assist classroom teachers in developing and implementing instructional and management strategies and to coordinate support resources for students with special needs within the school.

### **Students with special needs**

According to the B.C. Special Needs Students Order (M150/89), students with special needs are those who have disabilities of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioural nature, who have a learning disability or have exceptional gifts or talents.

### **Transition**

Transition is the passage of students from one environment to another at key points in their development from childhood to adulthood, for example: into Kindergarten or from elementary school to middle or secondary.

### **Universal precaution plans**

Universal precaution plans are required by the Workers' Compensation Board in B.C. They cover procedures for cleaning up body fluids and disposing of clean-up materials. They should be included in relevant IEPs.



# Section 3

## Appendices

### Part I—Policy, procedures, guidelines

#### Relevant legislation—B

# Relevant legislation

## THE BIG IDEA

*Principals, as school leaders, model the belief that all children have the right to develop their individual abilities in a climate of respect and understanding.*

The decisions made by principals to assist students with special needs should be guided by the principles of the UN Rights of the Child, Canadian Constitution and provincial legislation. Here are excerpts from those documents that may help the decision-making process.

### **United Nations Rights of the Child**

(paraphrased)

The document developed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, convened by the United Nations General assembly in 1989, states:

- children are entitled to the rights set out in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child without discrimination due to race; colour; sex; language; religion; political opinion; national, ethnic or social origin; property; disability; birth or other status
- children with special needs should enjoy full and decent lives in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community
- children with special needs have the right to special care and assistance appropriate to the child's condition and the circumstances of the parents or others caring for the child and free of charge whenever possible
- the child with special needs should receive education, training, health care and rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities in order to achieve the fullest possible social integration and individual, cultural and spiritual development

### **The Canadian Constitution Act (1982)**

(paraphrased)

The *Canadian Constitution Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* protect all Canadian citizens.

#### **Equality rights—Section 15**

(paraphrased)

The Supreme Court of Canada, under Section 15, protects those groups who suffer social, political and legal disadvantage in society. Discrimination occurs where, for example, a person—because of a personal characteristic—suffers disadvantages or is denied opportunities available to other members of society.

1. Every individual is equal before and under the law. Everyone has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

2. The previous statement does not preclude any law, program or activity that has, as its object, the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those who are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

## **The B.C. Multiculturalism Act (1996)**

(paraphrased)

The purpose of the *Multiculturalism Act* is to:

- a) recognize that the diversity of British Columbians as regards race, cultural heritage, religion, ethnicity, ancestry and place of origin is a fundamental characteristic of the society of B.C. which enriches the lives of all British Columbians
- b) encourage respect for the multicultural heritage of British Columbia
- c) promote racial harmony, cross-cultural understanding and respect for the development of a community that is united and at peace with itself
- d) foster the creation of a society in B.C. in which there are no impediments to the full and free participation of all British Columbians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the province

## **The B.C. Human Rights Code (1996)**

(paraphrased)

The purpose of the Human Rights Code is to:

- promote a climate of understanding and mutual respect where all are equal in dignity and rights
- prevent discrimination which is prohibited by this code
- identify and eliminate persistent patterns of inequality associated with discrimination
- provide a means of redress for those persons who are discriminated against
- monitor progress in achieving equality in B.C.
- create mechanisms for providing the information, education and advice necessary to achieve the purposes set out above

## **The B.C. School Act—(Revised statutes 1996)**

(paraphrased)

*Section 2* of the B.C. *School Act* states school boards must make educational programs available to all school-age children living in their districts.

## Relevant legislation cont.

Exceptions are made for students who are home-schooled or attend an independent school.

The B.C. Statement of Education Policy Order (OIC1280/89) includes the mission statement:

The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.

School attributes include:

**Accessibility**—a variety of programs is available to address the full range of student needs

**Relevance**—programs are current and relevant to the needs of students

**Equity**—resources are allocated fairly

**Quality**—professional teaching and administration are of high quality

**Accountability**—resources are allocated in a cost-effective manner and parents and the community are informed of the progress of schools and involved as partners in planning

The B.C. Special Needs Students Order (M150/89) states:

- 1) A board must ensure an administrative officer offers to consult with a parent of a student with special needs regarding the placement of that student in an educational program.
- 2) A board must provide a student with special needs with an educational program in a classroom where that student is integrated with other students who do not have special needs, unless the educational needs of the student with special needs or other students indicate that the educational program for the student with special needs should be provided otherwise.

(See pages 39 to 43 for information about the B.C. Individual Education Plan Order [M638/95]).

## Resources

The B.C. *School Act* web site: [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw)

**Section 3**  
**Appendices**  
**Part I—Policy, procedures, guidelines**

**Provincial policy—C**

# Provincial policy

## THE BIG IDEA

*Principals inspire  
a shared vision  
that “all students  
are unique, all  
students are  
valued and all  
students can  
learn.”*

*—Sawatsky and  
Jacobsen, 1992*

### *Meeting the educational needs of all students*

The Special Education Policy Framework for B.C. was developed in 1994 and sets the tone for special education in schools throughout the province. The following sections have been adapted from the framework to help school principals understand provincial policy.

British Columbians want an education system which reflects their belief that “all students are unique, all students are to be valued and all students can learn (Sawatsky and Jacobsen, 1992).” Based on this belief, and the growing recognition that we cannot afford, either socially or economically, to leave untapped the potential of anyone, British Columbia has been moving toward an inclusive education system in which students with special needs are fully participating members of a community of learners.

It is this vision of what British Columbians want for our schools that is reflected in the policy for special education. This policy framework, and the guidelines which support it, provide some practical planning and delivery tools to assist in making this vision a reality.

Diversity in a school population poses both challenges and opportunities for students, parents and teachers. It demands we examine what we do and how we do it, in a way that is in the best interests of all students in our schools.

#### **Goals for education**

The primary goal of the B.C. school system is to support the intellectual development of students, with the support of families and the community. Enabling students to achieve the goals of human and social development and career development is a responsibility shared by schools, families and the community. These goals apply to all students.

To help realize these goals for students with special needs, the education system in B.C. is working toward removing barriers and providing appropriate services and programs to ensure the school system is:

- equitable
- of high quality
- relevant
- accessible
- accountable

## Resources

**Meeting the Diverse Needs of Secondary Students in the Regular Classrooms: A Strategic Problem-Solving Process**, D.C. Sawatsky and S.S. Jacobsen, Special Education Association Conference, Richmond, B.C. March 1992

## Creating an equitable education system

The B.C. *School Act* requires school boards give all school-age persons living in the district access to educational programs. This entitlement stands as an important inclusionary statement for all students. In addition, a B.C. ministerial order requires students with special needs be integrated with the schools' student population.

Integration is one way to achieve inclusion. Integration encourages students with special needs to participate and interact fully with other students in neighbourhood schools and to develop friendships. Integration involves placing students with special needs in classrooms with their age and grade peers, then providing them with the necessary support, accommodations and adaptations—determined on an individual basis—to enable them to be successful.

This does not mean students with special needs must spend 100 per cent of every day in neighbourhood school class placements with their age and grade peers. The goal is to meet their educational needs and the educational needs of all students. This goal does not preclude the appropriate use of resource rooms, self-contained classes, community based training or other specialized settings.

## Alternatives to the integrated classroom

A student with special needs should only be placed in settings, other than a neighbourhood school classroom with age and grade peers, when the school board has made all reasonable efforts to integrate the student. It should be clear that a combination of education in such classes and supplementary support cannot address his or her educational or social needs or there is clear evidence that partial or full placement in another setting is the only option after considering that student's educational needs or the educational needs of others. Evidence could include frequent and significant disruption of the learning environment (despite appropriate classroom interventions) or the probability of physical harm to the student or others.

If alternatives to neighbourhood school classes with their age and grade peers are necessary, then placement in alternative settings should be done as part of a regularly reviewed plan and updated in consultation with parents and school-based teams (if applicable) with a view to returning these students to neighbourhood school classrooms as soon as it is feasible. Alternatives might include special classes for part of a student's program or alternative settings or learning environments in the community.

## Definition of terms

### Inclusion

Inclusion is the value system which holds that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their education. The practice of inclusion transcends the idea of physical location and incorporates basic values that promote participation, friendship and interaction.

### Integration

Integration is the practice of placing students with special needs in educational settings with peers who do not have special needs.

### Students with special needs

According to the B.C. Special Needs Students Order (M150/89), a student with special needs is one who has a disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioural nature, has a learning disability or has exceptional gifts or talents.

## Provincial policy cont.

### *Planning appropriate programs*

#### **Integrated planning**

Some students with special needs may require programs and services not usually provided to other students. Schools and school districts should provide educational programs and services to students with special needs. This may include planning with community agencies and service providers where necessary.

At the school level, teachers, whose classrooms include students with special needs, should have timely access to support. All schools should have formal problem-solving units, such as school-based teams, to plan and coordinate available support services for these students and to assist teachers in developing effective strategies.

### **Resources**

B.C. Ministry of Education web site: [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed)

**Special Education Policy Framework for British Columbia**, Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, 1995 ([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm))



# Section 3

## Appendices

### Part II—Roles, rights, responsibilities

	<b>Students—A</b>
	<b>Parents—B</b>
	<b>Teachers—C</b>
	<b>Teachers' assistants—D</b>
<b>School-based special education teachers—E</b>	
	<b>School principals—F</b>
	<b>School district support staff—G</b>
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# Section 3

## Appendices

### Part II—Roles, rights, responsibilities

**Students—A**

# Roles, rights and responsibilities

## THE BIG IDEA

*Principals, as school leaders, need to be clear about the roles, rights and responsibilities of everyone in the education system and ensure everyone is working together for the benefit of students.*

### Students

#### Legislation—

Students have the opportunity to:

- avail themselves of a quality education consistent with their abilities
- share in the shaping of their educational program
- determine their career and occupational goals

They have a responsibility to make the most of their opportunities, to respect the rights of others and to cooperate with fellow students in the achievement of their goals.

Students have the responsibility to comply with the school rules authorized by school principals and the codes of conduct or any other rules and policies established by school boards (B.C. *School Act*, Section 6).

According to the B.C. *School Act* Section 9 (1) a student and the parents of a student of school age are entitled, on request and while accompanied by the principal or a person designated by the principal, to interpret the records and examine all student records kept by a board pertaining to that student.

The B.C. Individual Education Plan Order (M638/95) states:

Where a board is required to provide an IEP for a student under this order, the board—

- a) must ensure the IEP is reviewed at least once each school year following the year the IEP is developed, where necessary, it is revised, or cancelled, and
- b) must offer a parent of the student, where appropriate, the student the opportunity to be consulted about the preparation of the IEP.

#### Suggested approaches—

All students should be afforded opportunities to learn in environments that are safe and welcoming. Students with special needs should have their needs identified in a timely way, have these needs assessed in a comprehensive manner and receive an appropriate response to those strengths and needs in the delivery of their educational programs. Many students with special needs can contribute to the process of assessment and planning for their own educational programs and provide an evaluation of the services available to them.

# Section 3

## Appendices

### Part II—Roles, rights, responsibilities

**Parents—B**

# Roles, rights and responsibilities

## Definition of terms

### Educational program

An educational program is an organized set of learning activities designed to enable learners to develop their individual potential and acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes to contribute to a health society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.

### Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are written records which document the individualized planning processes for students with special educational needs.

Individualized planning is a continuous and integrated process of instruction, assessment, evaluation, decision-making and reporting.

### Students with special needs

According to the B.C. Special Needs Students Order (M150/89), students with special needs are those who have disabilities of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioural nature, have a learning disability or have exceptional gifts or talents.

## Parents

### Legislation—

Parents have the right and responsibility to participate in the process of determining the educational goals and services provided for their children. They have a primary responsibility to ensure that children are provided with the healthy and supportive environment necessary for learning. They have a responsibility to help shape and support the goals of the school system and to share in the tasks of educating their children. Elected parents have a role as members of school planning councils to set improvement goals for schools.

Under the B.C. *School Act*, Section 7(1) and (2), parents are entitled to be informed of their children's attendance, behaviour and progress in school and to receive, on request, annual reports respecting general effectiveness of educational programs in the school district. They are entitled to examine all records kept by the board pertaining to their children, in accordance with the provisions of Section 9 of the *School Act*.

The B.C. Special Needs Students Order (M150/89), requires parents be consulted regarding the placement of their children with special needs. The Individual Education Plan Order (M638/95) requires parents be offered the opportunity to consult on the development of their child's IEP.

If parents disagree with how the educational program is being carried out, it may be resolved through a review of the IEP to determine how classroom activities can best relate to the stated goals. Every attempt should be made to resolve differences at the school or district level.

Section 11 of the B.C. *School Act* states parents of a student may appeal to the school board a decision of an employee that affects the education, health or safety of a student. This includes choosing not to make a decision. All school boards must establish an appeals procedure to handle such appeals.

### Suggested approaches—

Parents play a vital role in the education of their children with special needs by working in partnership with educators and other service personnel.

Schools should involve parents in the planning, development and implementation of educational programs for their children in a timely and supportive way and parents' input should be respected and acknowledged.

School staff need to be aware of any special factors which may place a child with special needs or other students at risk. Parents are an important source of information. Principals need to provide structure to their registration procedures to ensure parents are given an opportunity to provide this information.

For students in care of the B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development, schools should consult with the children's case workers about who should receive relevant school information.

# Section 3

## Appendices

### Part II—Roles, rights, responsibilities

**Teachers—C**

# Roles, rights and responsibilities

## Teachers

### Legislation—

Teachers have the right to exercise professional judgement in providing instruction to students in accordance with specified duties and powers. They have a corresponding responsibility to ensure each student is provided with quality instruction, to participate in all normal school activities and to monitor the behaviour and progress of each learner in accordance with provincial and local policies. They have a responsibility to communicate with students and parents and are accountable to the school board and its delegates.

Sections 17(1) and (2) of the B.C. *School Act* and School Regulation 265/89 spell out the duties of teachers within the school system.

Teachers are responsible for:

- designing, supervising and assessing educational programs
- providing instruction to individual students and groups of students
- modifying and adapting materials to address students' needs
- determining effective teaching strategies and practices
- determining methods of evaluating progress and reporting achievement

### Suggested approaches—

Teachers provide a vital service by being among the first to identify students with special needs.

They should exercise professional autonomy in instructional decisions for their students and the ability to manage their classrooms. This should be balanced with respect for the advice and role of parents.

Teachers, who are responsible for students with special needs, design, supervise and assess the educational programs for those students. If students require specialized instruction, it is best to consult with the resource personnel available, the parents and the student before implementing changes.

When students' programs involve specialized instruction by staff other than classroom teachers, collaborative processes are required to make best use of the expertise of available specialists and ensure a co-ordinated approach.

In secondary schools, where several teachers may be involved in students' programs, co-ordinated planning is especially important.

## Resources

### Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers and Teachers' Assistants:

BCTF/CUPE Joint Paper, 2001 ([www.bctf.ca/education/SpecialEd/TeacherTA-Roles/](http://www.bctf.ca/education/SpecialEd/TeacherTA-Roles/))

The B.C. *School Act*: [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/)



# Section 3

## Appendices

### Part II—Roles, rights, responsibilities

**Teachers' assistants—D**

# Roles, rights and responsibilities

## Teachers' assistants

### Legislation—

Section 18 of the B.C. *School Act* specifies:

- (1) a board may employ persons other than teachers to assist teachers in carrying out their responsibilities and duties under this act and the regulations
- (2) persons employed under Subsection 1 shall work under the general supervision of a teacher or principal, vice principal or director of instruction.

### Suggested approaches—

Teachers are expected to design programs for students with special needs. Teachers' assistants play a key role in many programs for students with special needs, performing functions which range from personal care to assisting the teacher with instructional programs. Under the supervision of a teacher, they may play a key role in implementing the program.

While teachers' assistants may help collect information for evaluating student progress, teachers are responsible for evaluating and reporting on the progress of the student to parents.

In cases where teachers' assistants are required to perform health-related procedures, they should be given student-specific training provided by a qualified health professional.

## Resources

### Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers and Teachers' Assistants:

BCTF/CUPE Joint Paper, 2001 ([www.bctf.ca/education/SpecialEd/TeacherTA-Roles/](http://www.bctf.ca/education/SpecialEd/TeacherTA-Roles/))

**The B.C. *School Act*:** [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/)

# Section 3

## Appendices

### Part II—Roles, rights, responsibilities

**School-based special education teachers—E**

# Roles, rights and responsibilities

## School-based special education teachers

### Legislation—

Like all teachers, learning assistance/resource teachers have the right to exercise professional judgement in providing instruction to students in accordance with specified duties and powers. They have a corresponding responsibility to ensure each student is provided with quality instruction, to participate in all normal school activities and to monitor the behaviour and progress of each learner in accordance with provincial and local policies. They have a responsibility to communicate with students and parents and are accountable to the school board and its delegates. Sections 17(1) and (2) of the B.C. *School Act* and School Regulation 265/89 spell out the duties of teachers within the school system.

Teachers are responsible for:

- designing, supervising and assessing educational programs
- providing instruction to individual students and groups of students
- modifying and adapting materials to address students' needs
- determining effective teaching strategies and practices
- determining methods of evaluating progress and reporting achievement

### Suggested approaches—

Learning assistance/resource teachers provide school-based support services designed to support classroom teachers and their students. These teachers help to organize, maintain and integrate services in the school and, as part of the school-based team, provide the link between the school and support services available at the district level. Responsibilities of the school-based support staff include:

- consulting with the school-based team to review student needs and assist in the problem-solving process
- acting as case manager and taking responsibility for leading the implementation of students' Individual Education Plans
- assisting classroom teachers with assessment and evaluation of students (to the special education teacher's level of training and qualifications)
- assisting teachers with planning adaptations and modifications including alternative learning materials and resources
- providing direct instruction to students as required
- communicating and collaborating with all school personnel, parents and community members

# Section 3

## Appendices

### Part II—Roles, rights, responsibilities

**School principals—F**

# Roles, rights and responsibilities

## School principals

### Legislation—

School principals exercise professional judgement in managing the school in accordance with specified duties and powers. They have a corresponding responsibility to ensure each student is provided with opportunities for a quality education. Principals are to provide administrative leadership, in consultation with teachers and the community, that reflects the aspirations of parents and the school community and that is consistent with provincial and district guidelines. They cooperate with parents and the community in the delivery of non-educational support services to students and focus on the following areas of school concern:

- student access and achievement
- quality teaching
- communication with parents and the community
- accountability to parents and to the school board

The powers and duties of principals are set out in Section 5 of the School Regulation 265/89. With respect to students with special needs, these include:

- consulting with students or their parents concerning the students' education programs
- ensuring individualized programming occurs for students with special needs and that the programs are implemented
- overseeing the placement of students
- ensuring parents are regularly provided with reports concerning their children's progress

### Suggested approaches—

The Code of Professional Practice of the B.C. Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association states:

*Principals and vice-principals provide leadership to their colleagues in the design of programs to meet the unique needs of all students.*

*Principals and vice-principals work with teachers to develop appropriate methods of instruction that meet the needs of individual students.*

*In order to establish and maintain a positive school climate, principals and vice-principals:*

- *are advocates for students*
- *support effective instruction*
- *provide a welcoming environment and atmosphere for students, parents and community*

*Principals and vice-principals maintain effective communication with the community including parents, community organizations, the general public, colleagues, district personnel, schools, colleges and universities.*

To accommodate students with special needs, schools should be organized in ways which allow flexibility in their response. School principals should ensure teachers receive the information they need to work with students who have special needs and provide appropriate in-service training in special education. They should also ensure the school is organized to provide resource support on-site.

Principals should ensure a school-based team is operational in the school and facilitate the collaborative efforts of the team.





# Section 3

## Appendices

### Part II—Roles, rights, responsibilities

**School district support staff—G**

# Roles, rights and responsibilities

## School district support staff

### Legislation—

District officials have a duty to exercise professional judgement in managing the district in accordance with specified powers and duties. They have a corresponding responsibility to provide professional leadership in the design and implementation of education programs in districts and are accountable to the local school board.

### Suggested approaches—

District support staff may include specialists such as speech and language pathologists, school psychologists, integration support teachers and itinerant teachers for the visually impaired, hard of hearing and Deaf.

Most school districts have itinerant and consultative services and programs designed to support students with special needs. The major role of district support staff is to provide advice and assistance to principals, classroom teachers, school-based support teachers and school-based teams. This could include:

- providing information to principals on district services and human and financial resources
- assisting the school-based team in providing an orientation for staff and students related to students with specific disabilities
- assessing and evaluating students with special needs upon request from the school-based team
- providing direct services to students in areas such as hearing, vision, speech/language and behaviour
- providing in-service sessions on effective educational practices
- consulting with the school-based team, the special education teacher and the classroom teacher during all stages of program development, implementation and evaluation

# Section 3

## Appendices

### Part II—Roles, rights, responsibilities

**School superintendents or designates—H**

# Roles, rights and responsibilities

## School superintendents or designates

### Legislation—

School boards must appoint superintendents of schools for their school districts who, under the general direction of those boards:

- have general supervision and direction over the educational staff employed by the boards
- are responsible for the general organization, administration, supervision and evaluation of all educational program and the operation of schools in those districts
- must perform other duties set out in the regulations

Additionally, superintendents of schools shall assist in making the B.C. *School Act* and regulations effective and in carrying out a system of education in conformity with the orders of the minister of education.

# Section 3

## Appendices

### Part II—Roles, rights, responsibilities

#### School boards—I

# Roles, rights and responsibilities

## School boards

### Legislation—

School boards have a duty to govern districts and their schools in accordance with specified powers in a fiscally responsible and cost-effective manner. They have a responsibility to:

- ensure schools provide students with opportunities for a quality education
- set education policies that reflect the aspirations of the community and that are consistent with overall provincial guidelines
- provide leadership and encouragement to schools and the community
- cooperate with the community and social service agencies in the delivery of non-educational support services to students
- focus on the following areas of district concern:
  - implementation of provincial and local education programs
  - school finance and facilities
  - student access and achievement
  - teaching performance
  - accountability to parents, taxpayers, the community and the province

# Section 3

## Appendices

### **Part II—Roles, rights, responsibilities**

**B.C. Ministry of Education—J**

# Roles, rights and responsibilities

## B.C. Ministry of Education

### Legislation—

The Ministry of Education provides legislation and sets broad policy for the B.C. public school system.

The ministry:

- sets results-based standards
- provides flexible, equitable funding for school boards
- focuses on improving student achievement
- holds schools and school boards accountable

For provincial services related to special education, see *Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines*, Ministry of Education, Province of B.C.

([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm))



# Section 3

## Appendices

### Part II—Roles, rights, responsibilities

**The public—K**

# Roles, rights and responsibilities

## The public

### Legislation—

The public of B.C. has the right to expect schools that operate effectively and efficiently and that schools are accountable for evaluating and reporting their progress on a regular basis. The public has the corresponding responsibility to provide schools with the necessary resources and moral support to fulfill their mission.

## Resources

**The B.C. School Act:** [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/)

**Special Education/Education Policy Order**

B.C. Ministry of Education web site: [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/)

**Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines,** Special Education Branch, Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, 1995 ([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm))

**Parents' Guide to Individual Education Planning,** B.C. School Superintendents' Association, 2002 ([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/iep/cover.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/iep/cover.htm))

# Section 3

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Ministry of Education, **Kindergarten to Grade 12 Plan Reporting Order Policy**. Province of British Columbia, Victoria, B.C., 2000

Ministry of Education, **The Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching**. Province of British Columbia, Victoria, B.C., 2000

Ministry of Education, **Responding to Critical Incidents: A Resource Guide for Schools**. Province of British Columbia, Victoria, B.C., 1998

Ministry of Education, **Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**. Province of British Columbia, Victoria, B.C., 1995  
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## Web sites pertaining to special education in B.C.

**Ministry of Education Performance Plan for 2000/01—2002/03:**  
[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/annualreport/perf\\_plan/2000-2001/welcome.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/annualreport/perf_plan/2000-2001/welcome.htm)

This site includes:

- the minister's message
- information about the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system
- the ministry vision, mission and values
- the ministry's core business and organization
- a ministry link to government priorities
- an environmental scan
- the ministry's goals and objectives

**Aboriginal education:** [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/branches/abed](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/branches/abed)

**The B.C. School Act:** [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/)

**Enrolment Forms:** [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/datacollections/collectionsforms/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/datacollections/collectionsforms/)

**Parents' Guide to Individual Education Planning:**  
[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/iep/cover.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/iep/cover.htm)

**Primary Program document:** [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/primary\\_program/toc.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/primary_program/toc.htm)

**Responding to Critical Incidents—A Resource Guide for Schools:**  
[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/rci/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/rci/)

**Reading, Writing and Numeracy Performance Standards:** [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/classroom\\_assessment/perf\\_stands/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/classroom_assessment/perf_stands/)

**Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines:**  
[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm)

Special education policy and resource guides: [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs.htm)

This site includes:

**Policy documents—**

- Diversity in B.C. Schools—A Framework
- A Review of Special Education in B.C.
- Review of Learning Assistance Services Report, 1997
- Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

**Resource Guides for Educators**

- Suicide: What you need to know
- Responding to children's problem sexual behaviour in elementary schools
- Focus on bullying: A prevention program for elementary school communities
- Teaching students with mental health disorders—Vol. 1—Eating disorders
- Teaching students with mental health disorders—Vol. 2—Depression
- Framework for independent travel—A resource for orientation and mobility instruction
- Students with visual impairments
- Students with hearing loss
- Gifted education
- Awareness of chronic health conditions—Vol. 1 and Vol. 2
- Students with intellectual disabilities
- Individual education planning for students with special needs
- Teaching students with learning and behavioural differences
- Teaching students with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects
- Teaching students with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
- Focus on suspension
- Teaching students with acquired brain injury
- Career/life transitions for students with diverse needs
- Teaching students with autism
- Responding to critical incidents: A resource guide for schools

**Statement of Education Policy Order (OIC 1280/89):**

[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw)

## **Additional web sites**

**Cultural Competency (Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice):**

[www.cwla.org/programs/culturalcompetence/default/htm](http://www.cwla.org/programs/culturalcompetence/default/htm)

**Crosscurrents Magazine** (Special Education Association of the B.C. Teachers' Federation): [www.bctf.bc.ca/psas/sea/SEA\\_Magazine.htm](http://www.bctf.bc.ca/psas/sea/SEA_Magazine.htm)

**LATA Newsletters** (Learning Assistance Teachers' Association, PSA for the B.C. Teachers' Federation): [www.bctf.ca/psas/LATA/](http://www.bctf.ca/psas/LATA/)

**Fair Schools** (B.C. Ombudsperson, Public Report No. 35, May 1995): [www.ombud.gov.bc.ca](http://www.ombud.gov.bc.ca)

**Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers and Teachers' Assistants: A BCTF/CUPE Joint Paper** (2001): [www.bctf.ca/education/SpecialEd/TeacherTA-Roles/](http://www.bctf.ca/education/SpecialEd/TeacherTA-Roles/)

**Workers' Compensation Board of B.C.:** [www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com)