Inclusive Education
Practice Guide

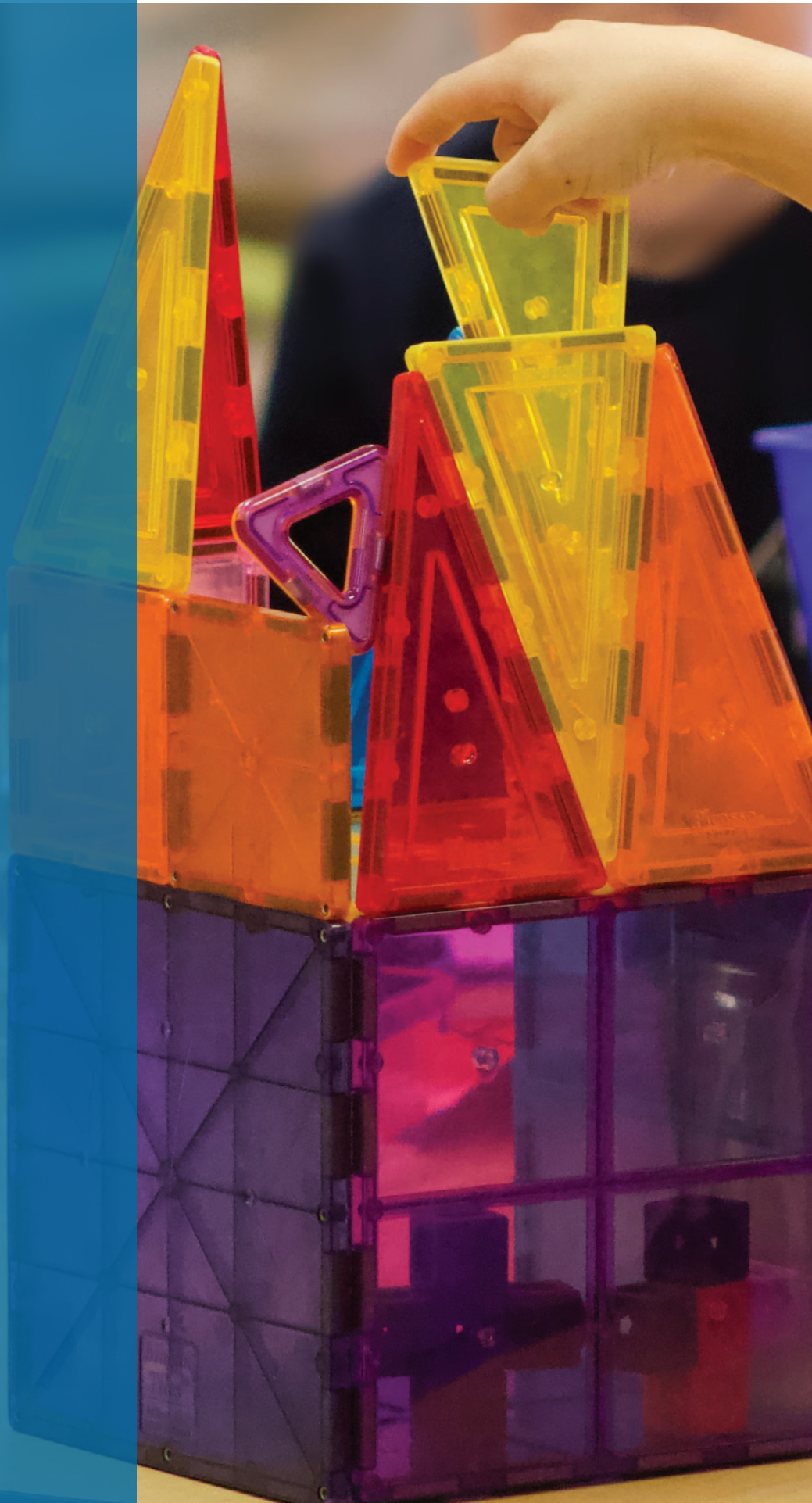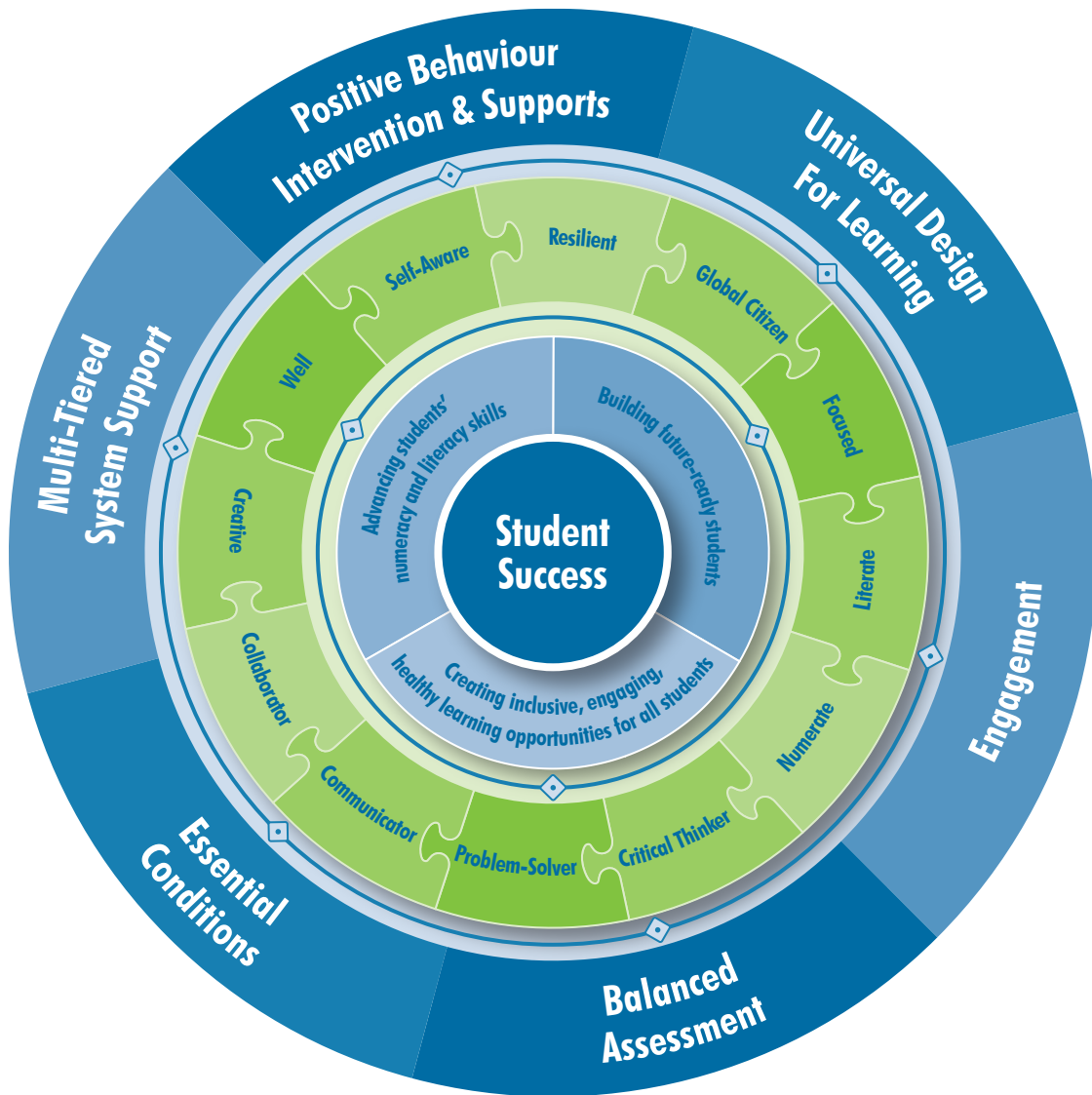July, 2023

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Self-Aware
Resilient
Global Citizen
Well
Focused
Creative
Literate
Collaborator
Numerate
Communicator
Problem-Solver
Critical Thinker

Inclusion in Rocky View Schools

Developing Cultures of Collision

Rocky View Schools (RVS) is committed to a holistic approach of designing an inclusive education system where all students feel welcome, valued, respected and heard without discrimination. We know that positive meaningful relationships are foundational to our success and therefore strive to leverage the diverse strengths, talents, and passions of our collective whole in fostering learning communities where all students feel they belong and see themselves meaningfully represented within their learning, their schools, and their communities. As RVS moves along the inclusive education continuum, we are committed to being intentional and reflective practitioners, who use research-informed practices and data to inform and guide our actions.

If our definition of inclusiveness does not reach beyond the boundaries of our own personal comfort, can we call ourselves truly inclusive?

~ Rabbi Brad Hirschfield

As the complexities of our classrooms continue to grow, RVS is committed to digging deep into the questions and answers of "why" and "how". Why is inclusive education important? How are students' diverse and complex needs met within an inclusive environment? How do we remove barriers to inclusive education?

In RVS, we aim to answer these queries from a place of curiosity and a growth mindset. We will use our collective wisdom, strengths, talents, and passions to develop cultures of collision and innovation, where the why, wonder, challenges and constraints of our work become the tipping points for new ideas, solutions, and limitless possibilities.

To put this into action, together, we will:

• Use design thinking processes to create, iterate, teach, and learn.

• Provide robust, researched, and focused professional learning opportunities to build teacher and leader efficacy in bringing inclusive education to life within the structures, routines and learnings of schools and classrooms.

• Design sustainable, multi-tiered systems of teaching, learning, supports and services to meet the diverse academic, social- emotional, mental health and behaviour needs of all students; and

• Consistently and continuously use multiple, triangulated data sources to guide and inform decisions, practice, and pedagogy.

Introduction

Designed for leaders, educators and staff, RVS' Inclusive Education Practice Guide serves to build a shared understanding of an inclusive education system where all students can access and fully participate in academic, social, and behavioural learning, alongside their similar- aged peers. It endorses five significant bodies of research as some of the most effective strategies to create inclusive school communities: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports, Classroom and School-Wide Diversity Profiles, Universal Design for Learning and Balanced Assessment. Emphasizing practical, tangible, and focused solutions, this guide aims to provide a framework with accompanying, but not exhaustive resources on how we can collectively build an inclusive education system while maximizing staff efficacy, broadening limited resources, and ultimately designing for diversity in an equitable and inclusive manner.

What keeps me going and encouraged in the complex world of teaching and leading is the core belief that what we do greatly matters, not just to the future of our students, but to our nations and the world.

~ R. Routman

This practice guide is organized into six major sections:

1. Understanding Inclusion
2. Taking Action Towards Inclusive Education
3. Key Approaches to Inclusion in RVS
4. Recommended Course of Action
5. Additional Resources & Tools
6. Definitions

While we would encourage readers to read through the entire practice guide, it has been designed with the expectation that the reader will refer to different sections at different times to provide practical assistance with specific initiatives and activities.

Why: Understanding Inclusion

Why Is Inclusive Education Important?

As defined by the Constitution Act (1982, 15.1), every individual has the right to be treated fairly and equitability; however, across all levels of society inequitable treatment is experienced by individuals due to race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

Schools have the ability to break down these societal norms. Given they are the de facto structure and public institution most children and youth must attend for extended periods of time throughout their formative years, schools are a place of great influence, on the neurological structures of their developing brains, their lives and on the future created when they leave school.

School cultures, where children and youth learn to feel safe, to belong, to understand and respect each other deeply and to celebrate and support rather than fear differences, are powerful constructs that can foster the social and mental well-being and academic success of all students — and over time, extend to the health and well-being of teams, volunteers, community groups, future employees, future employers and the community-at-large.

An inclusive education system is: "a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance of, and belonging for, all students. Inclusive education in Alberta means a value-based approach to accepting responsibility for all students. It also means that all students will have equitable opportunity to be included in the typical learning environment or program of choice" where such a placement is appropriate and is undertaken in full consultation with a child's parents/guardians, teachers, school officials, and relevant community service providers. Inclusion and choice must never be considered in a vacuum.

~ Alberta Education

Through inclusive education, students, teachers, support staff, and parents strive to actively, collaboratively, and intentionally remove barriers faced by children and youth related to gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, or disability. Inclusive societies and social justice are the why, meaningful relationships and instruction are the how.
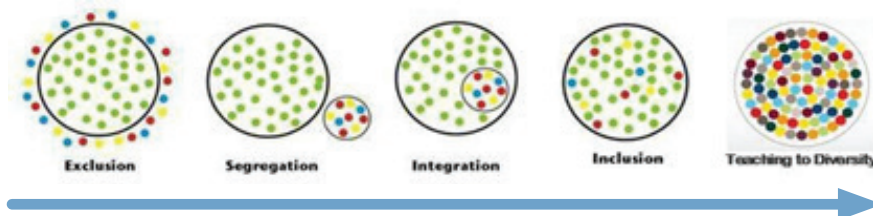
How Are Students' Diverse and Complex Needs Met Within Inclusive Environments?

Although Alberta Education's mandate to move towards an inclusive education system dates to 2009, full implementation has varied with most boards progressing along a continuum, based on the availability of provincial and local resources for learning, professional learning, and a progressive implementation plan. Within RVS, we too recognize our schools are at varying stages, but strive to design learning to diversity along a continuum of systems and supports. We recognize inclusive education is different from the following approaches and practices and continue to strive to design learning to diverse learning communities along a continuum of systems and supports.

We are diverse, all of us. We all have strengths, we all have stretches, and we all need to get better at something. The difference in teaching to diversity, however, is that we don't start with our deficits; we start with our strengths, and this includes students, teachers, support staff, custodians, bus drivers and parents. My good friend Leyton Schnelert refers to this collective as "the ecology of learning communities." Inclusive education relies on the diversity of its ecosystem, to not only promote coexistence and tolerance, but to thrive on the learning and interaction of each person in the community.

~ Shelley Moore

1. **Exclusion** – Students are unable to access academic and social- emotional learning in their community school with similar aged peers.

2. **Segregation** – Students access academic and social-emotional learning in separate environments, designed or used to meet their needs or challenges in isolation from other students, or with a small group of students with similar needs in a segregated setting. These settings typically provide no meaningful participation within the academic, social, or behavioural life and learning of the whole school alongside similar-aged peers.

3. **Integration** – Students are placed in schools, classrooms with their similar-aged peers, however, do not have access or entry points into the overall design of learning happening in the setting. Often students are assigned learning assistants and are kept in a separate group, in a separate space with different tasks and/or learning occurring, limiting their ability to fully access and participate in the overall social and academic learning.

4. **Inclusion** – Students are in classrooms with their similar-aged peers and access learning through differentiated instruction and assessment based upon the diverse needs of the classroom. Individual students, groups of students or classrooms are sometimes allocated additional resources to support identified needs within the classroom.

Exclusion Segregation Integration Inclusion Teaching to Diversity

The Evolution of Inclusion S. Moore (2018)

5. **Teaching to Diversity** – Students are in classrooms with their similar-aged peers and access social and academic learning that has been designed based on classroom community strengths, talents, and student learning preferences. All students in the class have valued roles, responsibilities, peer connections, voice, and choice. Diverse needs are met through co-teaching, co- collaborating, and if required, with the flexible assignment of additional resources to classrooms and classroom teachers to support the overall and individual learning and needs of all students, empowering students to support students.

How Do We Remove Barriers to Inclusive Education?

Alberta Education defines inclusive education as a continuous search to find new and better ways of supporting diversity and human differences. "It is an ongoing process of identifying and removing barriers so that all children and youth are engaged within the social and academic learning opportunities, within welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments."

As we move along the continuum, efforts to increase inclusiveness must take place at the individual and organization level. At the individual level, we must recognize our conscious and unconscious biases and examine how they translate when we interact with others. At the organizational level, we must analyze the impacts of our values, practices, and procedures. Do they support welcoming learning environments where children and youth feel a sense of belonging and have a voice? Do they create disadvantages for certain groups, i.e., children with severe socioeconomic disadvantages? Are they responsive to individual needs and aspirations?

Working towards inclusion takes persistence and commitment of the entire learning community. School leaders need to set the tone by establishing the standards and expectations. They also must openly acknowledge that inclusion will not be accomplished overnight and there will be barriers and challenges ahead.

While barriers and challenges may be unique to each school, limited time, resources, knowledge, and supports are the four most cited categories. Regardless of how these barriers present themselves, four key strategies to overcoming barriers are:

Innovative Leadership and Professionalism

- How we think has a major impact on how we engage ourselves and others in our schools;

- It is a set of mind frames that underpin our every action and decision in a school

Prioritizing — When inclusion is deemed a priority, it will become embedded in all facets of school life — from instructional design, structures, routines, and student codes of conduct, to budgeting and building partnerships.

Allocating Resources — Dedicate staff, money, time and resources toward inclusion, accessibility, and accommodation. Build strong learning supports teams in each school to provide consultation, coaching, co-teaching, and problem-solving related to teaching to diversity and inclusion. Build timetables to support collaboration, professional learning communities, class reviews and team meetings.

Educating — Educate all members of the learning community, including parents, on diversity and inclusion. While this can be accomplished in many ways, it should be included to some extent in all professional learning activities.

Collaborating — Provide staff with opportunities to learn from each other, design together, co-teach and problem- solve with each other. Partner with colleagues across the division to share, learn and grow from each other, to acquire a deep understanding of how to create inclusive classrooms and schools.

What: Taking Action Towards Inclusive Education

In RVS, we accept responsibility for the education of all our children and youth within their community schools, by embracing diversity and differences and promoting equal academic and social learning opportunities for all.

It is not legislation that reforms and transforms social change, but human behaviour that brings about collective shifts.

~ Appiah

Beliefs

1. All children and youth can and **want to learn**.

2. All children and youth must feel **accepted, valued** and physically and emotionally **safe** in order to take the risks necessary for growth.

3. Some children and youth come to school with exceptional academic and social/emotional needs, which must be addressed before meaningful learning can occur.

Principles

1. **Anticipate, Value and Support Learner Differences** – Welcoming, caring, respectful and physically and emotionally safe learning environments create a sense of belonging for all learners and their families. All learners have voice and choice in their learning.

2. **Hold High Expectations for All Learners** – Creating a culture of high expectations begins with academic and social inclusion. This is achieved through accessible social-emotional and academic curricula, with multiple entry points that validate student identity through meaningful and relevant learning experiences.

3. **Use a Strength-Based Approach to Meeting Learner Needs** – Identify strengths, talents and learning preferences to design meaningful, mulit-modal instruction and assessment for learning with multiple entry points for all learners. Provide voice and choice in students' learning and multiple ways for students to learn and show what they know in meaningful ways.

4. **Remove Barriers Within Learning Environments** – Work collaboratively and consistently to remove social, academic, and physical barriers within learning environments to ensure all learners are successful and can participate meaningfully within their school community.

5. **Build Capacity** – All stakeholders have ongoing responsibilities, opportunities, relationships, and resources that develop, strengthen, and enhance their understanding, skills, and abilities to create flexible, physically, and emotionally safe and responsive learning environments.

6. **Collaborate for Success** – School and system staff, families and community partners are committed to ongoing and meaningful collaboration to support the success of all learners.

Approach to Supporting Indigenous Education

RVS recognizes Canada's relationship with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples is a fractured one. We understand reconciliation can only be achieved by acknowledging the profound and long-term impact of colonization and residential schools and the loss of culture, identify and language through systemic discriminatory policies and practices. Recognizing the residual effects of inter-generational trauma on the brain, learning, mental health, and wellness, we are committed to actively supporting recommendations made by Canada's Truth and Reconciliation calls to action by fostering respectful, supportive, inclusive, and welcoming learning environments. By incorporating these practices, we will be supporting the inclusion of all.

Approach to Mental Health

According to Alberta Education, inclusive learning environments address four of the most significant determinants of mental health: social inclusion, academic inclusion, freedom from discrimination and violence and access to resources. They also narrow gaps that impact learners' achievement, such as poverty, social and academic exclusion, marginalization, and mental health issues.

It is precisely because education is the primary tool of oppression of Aboriginal people, and miseducation of all Canadians that we have concluded that education holds the key to reconciliation.

~ Senator Murray Sinclair

In alignment with RVS' six principles of inclusive education previously identified, research suggests we support positive mental health in schools by:

1. Promoting **healthy cognitive, social, and emotional development** through positive school cultures.

2. **Addressing barriers** to students' learning and social behaviour using strength-based approaches.

3. Providing a c**ontinuum of social/emotional support** for students, families, and staff.

4. **Promoting a sense of belonging**, autonomy, and opportunities for mastery.

5. Creating **positive, predictable, consistent, and safe** school communities.

6. Nurturing learning communities where **all cultures are accepted.**

7. Ensuring **academic success** for all learners by designing authentic, relevant learning experiences for all.

Approach to Play

Rocky View Schools recognizes the importance of play in learning, brain development and executive functioning from kindergarten through to adulthood. The role of play, structured and unstructured, leads to discovery, wonder, problem-solving, critical thinking, failure, and the building of resilience. These six factors of play throughout the life span have been identified as critical for the future of entrepreneurship, healthy societies, and life-long learning.

Play, by its very nature, supports inclusion. It allows for diversity and flexibility in learning opportunities and, by design, is accessible to all children regardless of ability or background. In play, students of all ages and stages can be themselves, explore their limits and take risks; they can exercise choice, learn at their own pace, and feel a sense of control.

Developing a deeper understanding and awareness of its impact on learners and cultivating play within classrooms will move RVS forward on the inclusive education continuum.

Approach to Work with Parents

Rocky View Schools believes building positive, collaborative relationships with parents and guardians provides students with the best opportunities for success. As their primary caregiver, parents/guardians have a deep understanding of their child's strengths, talents and challenges and serve as an invaluable resource in helping to predict their child's response to intervention strategies. Parent/guardians also provide a different perspective of their child's school and community experiences, which can help educators in designing meaningful and relevant learning experiences for all children.

A visionary leader doesn't look at what is, rather they look at what could be.

~R. Mickley

Through an inclusive lens, we too recognize that parents and guardians come to us along their own continuum of parenting skills, abilities, histories, and access to resources that affect their ability of parenting, their ways of knowing and being. Parents do the best they can, with what they have and what they know.

Approach to Implementation – Essential Conditions

We understand that successful implementation will require coherence among numerous plans and priorities across the jurisdiction. To advance all RVS schools in designing learning to diversity, essential conditions to be fostered are:

1. **Shared Vision** – Stakeholders share an understanding of and commitment to intended outcome(s).

2. **Leadership** – Leaders at all levels have the capacity to champion the shift from the current reality to the intended outcome(s).

3. **Research and Evidence** – Current research, evidence and lessons learned inform implementation decisions.

4. **Resources** – Human resources, materials, funding, and infrastructure are in place to realize the intended outcome(s).

5. **Professional Learning** – Staff knowledge, skills and attributes are enhanced through ongoing professional learning.

6. **Time** – Time is provided to support implementation.

7. **Community Engagement** – Parents, school councils, students, community members, businesses, industry, and post-secondary institutions are partners in supporting implementation.

How: Key Approaches to Inclusion in RVS

In RVS, we are committed to designing inclusive learning environments, supported by current research on teaching, learning, and mental health. As we move forward together, we will focus on the implementation of five significant bodies of research deemed as some of the most effective strategies in building inclusive educational settings: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports, Classroom and School-Wide Diversity Profiles, Universal Design for Learning and Balanced Assessment.

Implementation of these key approaches provides all educators the tools they need to design inclusive learning environments, structures, and instruction for students on all ends of the spectrum.
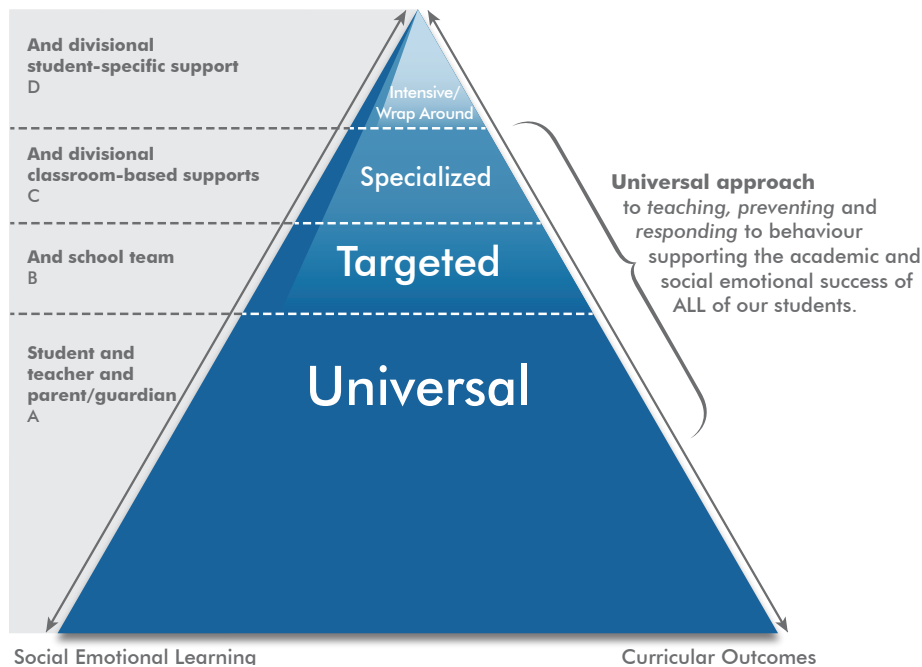
Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is the evolution of the Response to Intervention (RTI) approach. It is a systemic, proactive, and continuous improvement framework in which data-based problem- solving and decision making is practiced across the universal, targeted, and intensive tiers for supporting all students. Key components of MTSS are:

- Shared, articulated and visible narrative and vision of inclusive learning.

- Administrator supported; teacher driven.

- System-wide implementation and collaboration.

- Primary prevention – foundation of robust, positive, consistent universal supports for all.

- Multi-tiered system of supports for enrichment and interventions for academic, social emotional and behavioural learning; and

- Data-driven problem-solving and decision-making and on-going progress monitoring.

A visual representation of MTSS is presented below:

And divisional student-specific support
D

And divisional classroom-based supports
C

And school team
B

Student and teacher and parent/guardian
A

Intensive/Wrap Around

Specialized

Targeted

Universal

Universal approach
to *teaching, preventing* and *responding* to behaviour supporting the academic and social emotional success of ALL of our students.

Social Emotional Learning

Curricular Outcomes

Resources
- RVS – Planning for Success: Learning Support Teams; Designing Student Supports and Services; Collaborative Problem-Solving Planning (see Appendix A)

Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports

Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an evidence- based MTSS framework that uses design and effective and explicit teaching to create safe, positive, predictable, and inclusive school cultures. Key components related to positive behavioural supports in schools include, but are not limited to a:

For the majority of children with significant behaviour challenges, the more time they spend with their peers in inclusive positive predictable classroom settings, the more likely they will change behaviour over time.

~ Sugai & Homer

- Focus on building and nurturing positive relationships schoolwide.

- Design and structure of the physical learning environments to optimize student success for all.

- Design differentiated instruction to intentionally make learning engaging, meaningful and effective for all students.

- Explicitly teach social-emotional skills as part of curriculum and the routines, structures of the school.

- Set and teach clear schoolwide behavioural expectations, positive acknowledgement practices and consistent consequences along a continuum.

- Positive acknowledgement, reinforcement through descriptive feedback.

- Fair and predictable consequences, including clear and helpful feedback.

- Collect and use data to make decisions and measure effectiveness; and

- Collaborative team planning and monitoring.

Resources

- Alberta Education – Positive Behaviour Supports
- PBIS – Tier 1 Support
- PBIS – Tier Fidelity Inventory
- PBIS – Data-Based Decision Making
- PBIS – Materials/Tools

Classroom and School-Wide Diversity Profiles

To design learning environments where all students are successful, educators first need to know and understand the dynamics of the students within their learning spaces. Classroom and school-wide profiles provide educators and leaders with an essential tool in identifying the collective strengths, talents, and challenges of students.

The four main concepts of the class profile are: strengths of the entire class, overall concerns or challenges of the class, learner preferences and trends, and identified strength-based goals for the whole based on individual needs of students across the entire classroom. The profile is used as a guiding tool to inform the design of physical learning environments, inform the identification and establishment of routines and structures, inform instructional design and assessment that meets the complex and diverse needs of individual classrooms and whole schools and provide data on how, where and when to allocate additional resources.

Resources
- Faye Brownlie – Faye Brownlie
- Faye Brownlie, Judith King – Learning in Safe Schools: Creating classrooms where all students belong (2011)
- Faye Brownlie, Catherine Feniak, Leyton Schnellert – Student Diversity: Teaching strategies to meet the learning needs of all students in K-10 classrooms (2016)

Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a research-based educational approach to teaching and learning for all students. UDL provides educators with the tools they require to reduce barriers to learning and to address the varied academic, social and behaviour learning needs of all students through the design of multiple entry points to social-emotional and academic learning for all students. A universal design for learning approach can increase student engagement, academic, social-emotional, and behavioural success and help teachers best support the diversity of learners in their classrooms.

UDL offers a new way of thinking about creating multiple learning opportunities in every area of course design. Once you start thinking this way, the sky's the limit!

~ Sandra Yang

Pillars of UDL:

1. **Multiple Means of Representation** – Provide all learners with multiple ways to acquire information and to learn.

2. **Multiple Means of Expression** – Balanced assessment (ongoing observations, conversations, and products) provides all learners with multiple ways to demonstrate understanding and learning.

3. **Multiple Means of Engagement** – Provide explicit academic, social emotional and behaviour curricula that are relevant, meaningful and represent the diversity of all students and tap into learners' motivations, strengths, and talents.

Resources
- CAST – Universal Design for Learning
- Jennifer Katz – Three Block Model of Universal Design for Learning
- Jennifer Katz – Teaching to Diversity: The Three Block Model of Universal Design for Learning (2012)
- Jennifer Katz – Resource Teachers: A Changing Role in the Three Block Model of Universal Design for Learning (2013)
- Jennifer Katz – Ensouling Schools: A Universally Designed Framework for Mental Health, Well-being, and Reconciliation

Balanced Assessment

The primary goal of assessment of student learning is to inform teaching, promote student learning and identify opportunities for all students to be successful. Balanced, authentic assessment is triangulated, ongoing, meaningful, and consistent. Balanced assessment is equitable for all students and comprised of ongoing observations, conversations and products that embrace multiple means of representation to ensure all students can show what they know in meaningful ways. Regular, descriptive feedback to students and parents is expected.

Inspired leaders and organizations find their deepest purpose — their 'why?' and attract followers through shared values, vision, and beliefs.

~ J. Kerr

- **Assessment for Learning** – Before, during and after learning, teachers and students gather information that helps determine next steps for skill development towards the learner outcome.

- **Assessment as Learning** – Both during and after learning, the teacher encourages students to build knowledge of themselves as learners. This process of being aware of and evaluating their own thinking processes is called meta-cognition. It is a core skill for a self- directed learner.

- **Assessment of Learning** – Assessment of learning is the summation of all the learning evidence. It may come at the end of the learning or at regular points during learning. Teachers ensure students have a range of opportunities and a variety of ways to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitudes that confirm progress toward the learner outcome. Teachers balance this evidence in their assessment.

Resources
- Alberta Assessment Consortium
  username: RVS41 password: balance
- Anne Davies – Connect2Learning/Free Resources
- Damian Cooper, Ken O'Connor, Lorna Earl – Canadian Assessment for Learning Network
- Tom Schimmer, Cassandra Erkens, Nicole Dimich Vagle – All Things Assessment
- Rick Wormeli – Fair Isn't Always Equal Video Series Playlist

How: Recommended Course of Action

Regardless of where each school may fall on the continuum to implementation, to effectively break down barriers a recommended course of action for schools to consider is:

Great leaders don't set out to be a leader, they set out to a make a difference. It's never about the role — Always about the goal.

~ L. Haisha

Shared Vision — Establish a culture of professional trust where everyone on staff is committed to a shared narrative of the school, to each other and to all students to bring that shared narrative to life. Establish a culture of respect and trust, where all things are possible, possibilities are endless. Create a foundation that makes risk-taking and openness to change and flexibility become the norm.

Prioritizing — Prioritize inclusion by developing a progressive implementation plan at your school to support the successful roll-out of Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports, including implementation of school-wide Tier 1 PBIS at 80 per cent fidelity as measured by the Tiered Fidelity Inventory.

Allocating Resources — Build strong learning support teams for your school to provide consultation, coaching, co- planning and problem-solving toward teaching to diversity and creating inclusive learning environments. Allocate scheduled time, human and financial resources to prioritize inclusive practices and initiatives.

Educating — Build a school-based professional learning plan based on staffs' familiarity of Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports, Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports, Classroom and School-Wide Diversity Profiles, Universal Design for Learning and Balanced Assessment.

Collaborating — Work collaboratively to build a thorough understanding on the use of classroom and school profiles to effectively allocate resources, and identify effective instructional practices and assessments based on current strengths, talents and needs of students in each class and the overall learning community.

Professional Learning by Learning Supports and Services

RVS believes in empowering all staff to achieve excellence in learning, teaching, and leading to ensure every child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged within inclusive learning environments. RVS will provide ongoing learning opportunities to support the approaches identified in this guide. Professional learning aligned with the education plan initiatives will be provided through full day and half-day sessions throughout each school year by invited guests, as well as by RVS staff and specialists. Professional learning to support the implementation of the identified approaches will be provided at Learning Support Teacher Network meetings, at Leadership Team meetings, through full day and half day sessions, and in-schools as requested. Learning Services staff will provide ongoing consultation, collaboration and coaching to all staff as requested through identified processes. Identified Learning Supports staff will be assigned to provide ongoing coaching to all school based PBIS teams as they implement the PBIS Framework in accordance with the Tiered Fidelity Inventory.

Funding and Allocation of Resources

Inclusive education funding from Alberta Education is allocated to school authorities with the aim to ensure an equitable distribution of funding throughout the province. Once received, RVS allocates funds to schools by leveraging funding from a variety of budgets, grants, and resources that vary year-to-year.

What works best is anything that increases the quality and number of relationships in a child's/youth's life. People, not programs, change people.

~ Bruce Perry

Specifically, inclusive education funds are distributed to schools using a formula that includes a per pupil base to ensure all schools receive a foundation amount. Remaining funds are distributed through a percentage formula that factors in children and youth with multiple and complex needs requiring wrap-around medical and/or mental health supports. Funds are not distributed based upon "Special Education coding" or in a formula that allocates funds equivalent to one-to-one learning assistant support for individual students.

Aligned with Alberta Education, school principals are responsible for ensuring their school has processes and a learning support team in place to provide consultation, planning, instruction, and problem- solving related to programming for children and youth with complex education needs.

RVS' Learning Supports Branch allocates human and financial resources and services to support teams through a multi-tiered, interdisciplinary system of teams, supports and services. Inter- disciplinary teams are assigned to schools and are designed to work together to coach, consult, collaborate and provide at-elbow support to schools, school teams and classroom teachers to meet the diverse needs of their school communities. Learning Supports staff provide professional learning, universal, targeted, and intensive supports through a multi-tiered framework of supports accessed through a referral process as defined by the Planning for Success – Designing Student Supports and Services (See Appendix A).

Additional Resources and Tools

Assessment

- Kathleen Gregory, Caren Cameron, Anne Davies – Knowing What Counts
  - > Book 1: Setting and Using Criteria
  - > Book 2: Self-Assessment & Goal Setting
  - > Book 3: Conferencing & Reporting
  - > Book 4: Collecting Evidence & Portfolios

- Sandra Herbst, Anne Davies, Rick Wormeli, Sheree North – Grading, Reporting, and Professional Judgment in Elementary (2016)

- Tom Schimmer, Garnet Hillman, Mandy Stalets – Standards-Based Learning in Action (2018)

- Tom Schimmer – Grading from the Inside Out (2016)

- Thomas Guskey, Susan Brookhart – What We Know About Grading (2019)

- Thomas Guskey – On Your Mark: Challenging the Conventions of Grading and Reporting (2014)

Inclusive Education

- Alberta Education – Inclusive Video Series

- Alberta Education – Inclusive Education

- Doug Anderson, Julie Comay, Lorraine Chiarotto – Natural Curiosity 2nd Edition: The Importance of Indigenous Perspectives in Children's Environmental Inquiry (2017)

- Education Solutions Manitoba – Planning Inclusive Cultures in Schools Diversity and Inclusion (2016)

- Jo Boaler – Mathematical Mindsets: Unleashing Students' Potential Through Creative Math, Inspiring Messages and Innovative Teaching (2016) YouCube https://www.youcubed.org

- Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, Steve Van Bockern – Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future (2002)

- Lee Ann Jung, Nancy Frey, Douglas B Fisher, Julie Kroener – Your Students, My Students, Our Students: Rethinking Equitable and Inclusive Classrooms

- Regie Routman – Read, Write, Lead: Breakthrough Strategies for Schoolwide Literacy Success (2014)

- Shelley Moore – Video Series to Support Inclusive Education

- Shelley Moore – One Without Other: Stories of Unity Through

Leadership

- Alberta Education – Teacher Quality Standards

- Alberta Education – Leadership Quality Standards

Mental Health

- Alberta Education – Mental Health in Schools

Definitions

All of these definitions may not be in RVS' Inclusion Practice Guide but are common definitions within inclusive education.

Academic Inclusion: providing all students with access to learning curricular outcomes, instructional activities, interactions with teaching personnel alongside same age peers, with multiple entry points to the learning within the classroom.

Adaptations: programming, strategies and pedagogical approaches that retain learning outcomes, where adjustments to the instructional process or the way in which information and concepts are presented or practices ensure each student has access to the learning based upon identified needs (differentiation, preferred seating, chunking, more time, devices etc.)

Assessment: ongoing process of collecting triangulated data about students using a variety of formal and informal processes and sources, including, but not limited to conversations, observations, and products across a variety of domains relevant to performance (behavioural, communicational, intellectual, learning, or physical characteristics) to guide, design teaching and learning for all students.

Behaviour Support Plan: a document that is designed to change the behaviour of adults with the expectation that if adult behaviour changes, the behaviour of the student will respond and change.

Students with behaviour disabilities may respond to some universal strategies used in the school-wide positive behaviour support system. However, some students require additional intensive and individualized strategies and support, which need to be documented and communicated in a formal individual behaviour support plan based on these students' unique and individual characteristics. Behaviour Support plans need to include:

- Key understanding of student's strengths, talents, learning preferences.
- Hypothesis of function of behaviour, conditions, or antecedent events.

- Continuum of supports and strategies designed to help student increase his, hers, their abilities; and
- Continuum of supports to diffuse the situation.

Coaching Conversation: learning-focused conversation where one person is the primary source of information and analysis — the other support person or specialist paraphrases and inquires to increase awareness, enlarge perspectives, and clarify details.

Collaborative Conversation: learning-focused conversation; the support person or specialist and colleague(s) co-develop ideas, co- design strategies and co-analyze and reflect upon situations, work products and other data.

Consultative Conversation: learning focused conversation — support person or specialist supplies information, identifies and offers expert

analysis of gaps, provides solutions, thinks aloud about cause-effect relationships, and makes connections to principles of practice.

Complex and Intensive Medical: students requiring one or more of the following complex medical procedures that must be performed by or supervised by a registered nurse and/learning assistant:

- Ventilator care
- Tracheostomy care
- Suctioning (tracheal/pharyngeal)
- Nasogastric tube care and/or feeding
- Complex administration of medication (e.g., via infusion pump, nasogastric tube, injection other than EpiPen or equivalent)
- Central or peripheral venous line interventions
- Other regulated interventions

Complex and Severe Behaviour: students with multiple diagnoses associated with severe behaviours requiring highly specialized programming and intensive wrap-around support services at school, at home and within the community. This applies to students whose diagnosed needs meet all the following criteria:

- violent, aggressive behaviours that cause physical harm to self and/or others chronically and persistently, with a high level of frequency, intensity, and duration daily and over a long period of time (months/years), that also are pervasive and negatively impact all environments – home, school, and community

- a combination of supports and services from outside of Alberta Education are essential and in place to meet the diverse needs of the child and family. E.g., Youth Justice, Child, and Family Services (Children's Services)

Community school: the school the child/youth would attend with siblings, peers, and neighbors.

Individualized Program Plan: a written commitment of intent by the learning team to ensure appropriate strengths-based planning for students with special education needs. It is a working document and a record of student progress that contributes to a common understanding and coordination of efforts.

Informed Consent: parents/guardians have all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought, understand, and agree, with documentation, to the carrying out of the activity for which their consent is sought and understand that the granting of consent is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time.

Learning Supports Teams: typically comprised of one or more of the following specialists: learning support teacher(s), school counsellor(s) and/or child development advisor and administrator(s). Learning Supports teams work together as an interdisciplinary team to support, coach, consult, collaborate with teachers and support staff to implement universal, targeted, and intensive structures, processes and supports within classrooms to meet the varied, diverse, and exceptional needs of all students.

Mental Health: Mental health is an overall state of physical and brain/mental well-being in which the individual realizes their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a meaningful contribution to their community.

Mental Illness: Mental illnesses are described as disturbances in thoughts, feelings, and perceptions that are severe enough to affect day-to-day functioning, as diagnosed by a licenced medical professional. Mental illness may also be referred to as brain or neurological illnesses. Some examples of diagnosed mental illnesses are Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Schizophrenia, and Attention Deficit Disorder.

Modified Programming: programming in which the learning outcomes are significantly different from the provincial curriculum and are specifically tailored to meet students' exceptional needs.

Non-referred work: ongoing professional conversations among disciplines; coaching and/or consultative support for a staff member, school team regarding general interventions related to an area of expertise.

Referral: arranging for students, school teams or teachers to receive specialized assessments and/or supports and services beyond consultation from divisional learning supports personnel e.g., psychologist, occupational therapist, family school liaison, speech and language pathologist or learning supports/learning specialist.

Social Inclusion: all students have opportunity to be part of the school community and classroom communities by learning and exercising their citizenship and democratic rights while in school alongside their same-age peers. Students feel a sense of belonging, see themselves represented and valued within the school community.

Specialized Assessment: individualized measurement across a variety of domains for the purpose of developing and providing effective teaching and programming for students. Specialized assessments include assessment of intellectual abilities, academic performance, emotional and behavioural development, and physical development relevant to students' educational performance and success.

Specialized or Exceptional Needs: children with mild, moderate, and severe needs, and those who are gifted and talented, may require targeted, intensive, or specialized adaptations, modifications in addition to rich universal learning approaches. A diagnosis of an exceptionality or specific disability is not enough evidence for the allocation of additional resources, supports and services, adaptions, or modifications. The prime consideration for alterations to learning through additional supports is how the characteristics of the identified needs affect learning and functioning within the classroom. The determination for alterations to learning is done in collaboration with parents/guardians, medical practitioners, teachers and learning support teams.

Student Success Plan: strengths-based, student-specific action plan that outlines specific instructional strategies and interventions needed to set students up for success i.e., Student Success Plans include Personalized Learning Plans, Behaviour Supports Plans, Individualized Program Plans.

Wrap-around Supports: a process for meeting the complex needs of students and their caregivers that involves the collaborative efforts of multiple systems on collaborative goals that impact home, school, and community.

Appendix A

Planning for Success: Learning Support Teams

Membership of a student support team will vary according to the needs of the student. The team should reflect the student's individual needs and the resources available to the school.

The following diagram identifies some personnel who may be part of the learning support team.

Collaborative Problem Solving: Designing Student Supports and Services

Note: If strategies and student-specific interventions have been implemented with fidelity, without enough student progress, move to the next level of support.

Consultation/ Collaboration	**Universal (Classroom Teacher, Student and Parent/Guardian)** • Identifies student-specific concerns/challenges impacting student learning and strengths to leverage learning • Contact's parent/guardian • Uses reflection questions to guide planning • Completes classroom profile and collaborative problem-solving guide with colleagues • Employs universal design and MTSS instruction/strategies in the classroom • Collects data regarding success of instruction and strategies • Consults regularly with colleagues, school-based and divisional staff
	Targeted (Classroom Teacher and School-Based Team) • Reviews completed success planning guide and discusses reflective questions • Identifies additional strategies and interventions for classroom teacher to employ and develops a student success plan • Student success plan implemented with fidelity by classroom teacher and school-based learning support team over an identified and mutually agreed upon time frame • Data collected to assess success of plan • Consults regularly as a team
Formal — Referrals, Specialized Assessment, Supports and Services	**Specialized (School-Based and Divisional Learning Support Team)** • School-based team formally consults with divisional learning support team (SLSG); collaborative problem-solving guide form will be reviewed • Team uses reflection questions to guide planning • Updates are made to the student success plan to reflect additional supports and/or administration of specialized assessments • Revised student success plan implemented with fidelity by classroom teacher and school-based learning support team with the support of divisional learning support team over an identified and mutually agreed upon time frame • Data collected to assess success of revised strategies and interventions • Review dates determined and set
	Intensive (School-Based, Divisional Learning Support Team and Outside Agencies) • Outside agencies brought in to consult with school-based team and division learning support team to review student success plan and need for wrap-around supports • Student success plan revised to include universal, targeted, and intensive strategies, including wrap- around services • Data collected to assess success of revised strategies and interventions • Review dates determined and set for six to eight-week intervals

Collaborative Problem Solving: Planning for Success: Reflective Questions

Universal

- Has a positive relationship been established with student and parent? Does this student feel safe and cared for at school?
- Is differentiated instruction and triangulated assessment in place? Does the student have multiple ways to access learning and demonstrate knowledge?
- Are classroom structures and routines clear and consistent?
- Has the classroom environment been intentionally designed to meet student needs?
- Have academic, behavioural, and social-emotional expectations been well-defined and clearly communicated?
- Have expectations been taught and practiced using a method of gradual release (I do, we do, you do)?
- Is praise (four positives: one negative), acknowledgment, and reinforcement, both academic and behavioural, provided for this student?
- Has Information been gathered regarding the individual student to inform planning (i.e., file review, data collection regarding frequency, severity, impact on learning)?

Targeted

- Have strategies been implemented at the classroom level to support this student? Has the Collaborative Problem-Solving and Planning Guide been used to assist in this process?
- Have strategies been implemented with fidelity and for a reasonable period of time?
- Has data been collected regarding the effectiveness of each strategy? What evidence supports the determination of success?
- Is further information required to support the development of an action plan?
- What school-based resources are available to support this student?
- How might use of flexible groupings support this student?
- Who is responsible for the implementation of the plan at the school level?
- What is a reasonable date for review?

Specialized

- Have strategies been implemented at the school level to support this student? Has the Collaborative Problem- Solving and Planning Guide been used to assist in this process?
- Have strategies been implemented with fidelity and for a reasonable period of time?
- Has data been collected regarding the effectiveness of each strategy? What evidence supports the determination of success?
- Is further information required to support the development or revision of an action plan?
- What supports and services can be provided by the divisional learning support team?
- Is informal consultation with divisional learning support staff (i.e., SLP, OT, FSL, psychologist, behaviour specialists…) necessary in the creation of an action plan or student success plan?
- Who is responsible for the implementation of the plan at the school level? What role will divisional staff have in the implementation? If specialized assessments or supports are required, a referral is completed.
- What is a reasonable date for review?

Intensive

- Has the Student Success Plan been reviewed? Does it include information regarding the effectiveness of strategies at the universal, targeted, and specialized levels?
- Have both universal and targeted supports been exhausted and interventions implemented for a reasonable period of time?
- What support(s) (divisional and otherwise) would be beneficial for this student?
- How would we prioritize the needs of this student? Is wrap-around support necessary, and if so, have we filled all gaps to support needs?
- Who is responsible for the implementation of the plan at the school level? What role will divisional staff have in the implementation?
- Set team review dates every six – eight weeks to review data, success and assess.

Collaborative Problem-Solving and Planning Template

Date:

SECTION 1 – TO BE COMPLETED BY CLASSROOM TEACHER and SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT PERSON

Student Name:

Referring Teacher:

SECTION 2 – TO BE COMPLETED BY CLASSROOM TEACHER and SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT PERSON

Identify the concern/challenge.

Are there particular places and/or times where the concern or challenge is more of an issue?

Are there particular places and/or times where the concern or challenge is less of an issue?

What are possible triggers that may be influencing the concern or challenge?

Please identify other relevant information that is impacting the success for the student (attendance, previous assessment information, medical concerns, other stressors, etc.).

SECTION 3 – TO BE COMPLETED BY REFERRING TEACHER

Actions taken (briefly describe)

Strategy/Intervention	Amount of time strategy has been implemented (i.e., # of days)	Level of success 1 – Successful 2 – Inconsistently successful 3 – Unsuccessful

SECTION 4

Class Review/Profile Completed:

Date of problem-solving meeting with school learning support team:

Participants (name & role):

Divisional Review/Profile Completed:

Participants (name & role):

Next Steps

Strategy/Intervention	Who is going to do it?	By when?

Suggest consultation with:

Next review date:

Date parents/ guardians notified:

Dossier referral submitted: