



MEMORANDUM

February 14, 2023
Regular Board Meeting

TO	Board of Trustees
FROM	Shauna Boyce, Superintendent
ORIGINATOR	Dr. Meg Miskolzie, Associate Superintendent, Student Supports and Services
RESOURCE	Bryn Spence, Division Principal, Student Services
GOVERNANCE POLICY	Board Policy 1: Division Foundational Statements Board Policy 2: Role of the Board Board Policy 12: Role of the Superintendent
ADDITIONAL REFERENCE	Administrative Procedure 210: Inclusive Education BP 2: Section 5. Supports and Services Education Act
SUBJECT	STUDENT SERVICES REPORT

PURPOSE

For information. No recommendation required.

BACKGROUND

The Board of Trustees reviews and approves annual educational goals for the Division and adheres to the Board Annual Work Plan. The following report is in response to these responsibilities.

REPORT SUMMARY

The Student Services Report highlights the various ways in which the Student Services Team, in Parkland School Division, supports schools to provide an inclusive, safe, supportive, academic learning environment that serves the needs of a diverse population of students from Kindergarten to Grade twelve. The Student Services Department coordinates resources and agencies with schools and PSD families to facilitate a variety of programming and support services.

Administration would be pleased to respond to any questions.

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STUDENT SERVICES REPORT

February 2023

Presented to the Board of Trustees, February 14, 2023
 Dr. Meg Miskolzie, Associate Superintendent, Student Supports and Services
 Resources: Bryn Spence, Division Principal, Student Services

Our Students Possess the confidence, resilience, insight and skills required to thrive in, and positively impact, the world.

BACKGROUND

Specific to Student Services, The *Education Act* outlines the Board responsibilities 33(1) as follows: A board, as a partner in education, has the responsibility to

- (a) deliver appropriate education programming to meet the needs of all students enrolled in a school operated by the board and to enable their success,
- (d) ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the board and each staff member employed by the board is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging,
- (e) provide a continuum of supports and services to students that is consistent with the principles of inclusive education,
- (f) collaborate with municipalities, other boards and community-based service agencies in order to effectively address the needs of all students and manage the use of public resources.

The vision for Student Learning in Alberta, as per the Ministerial Order on Student Learning, is that “Students will gain the knowledge and skills to form the foundations for successful and fulfilling lives, and make meaningful contributions to their communities and the world”.

In addition to the *Education Act* and the Ministerial Order on Student Learning we are guided by the Standards for Special Education (2004) and the 6 principles of Inclusive Education as per Alberta Education:

- Anticipate, value and support diversity and learner differences
- High expectations for all learners
- Understand learners’ strengths and needs
- Remove barriers within learning environments
- Build capacity
- Collaborate for success.

Administrative Procedure 210: Inclusive Education states:

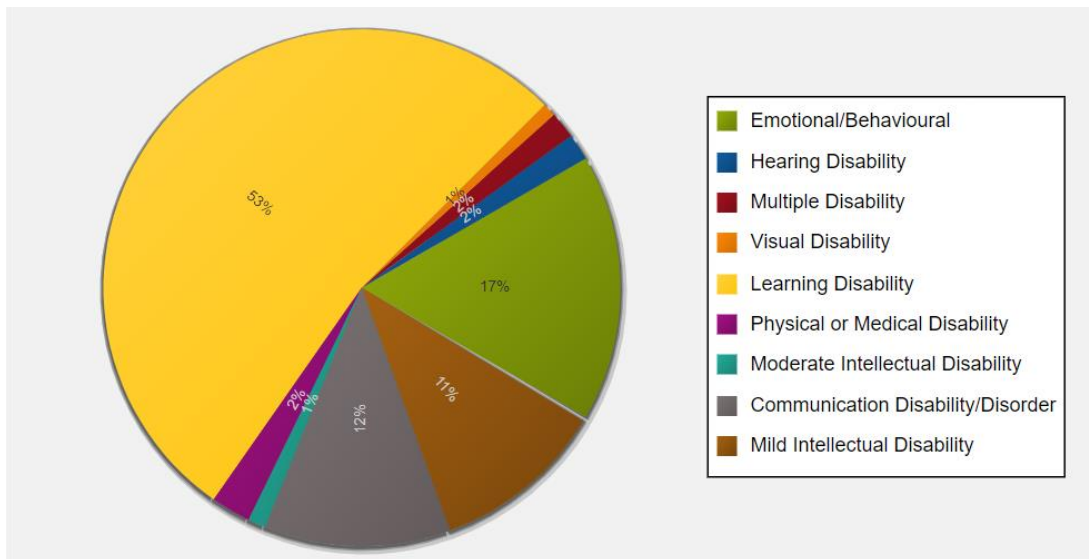
An inclusive education system is one that demonstrates behaviours and decisions that reflect valuing all students. Within an inclusive education system all students experience the most appropriate learning environments and opportunities to best achieve success. Each student belongs and receives a quality education no matter his/her ability, disability, language, cultural background, gender or age.

The success of inclusive education programming relies on the engagement, collaboration and involvement of students, parents, staff and community.

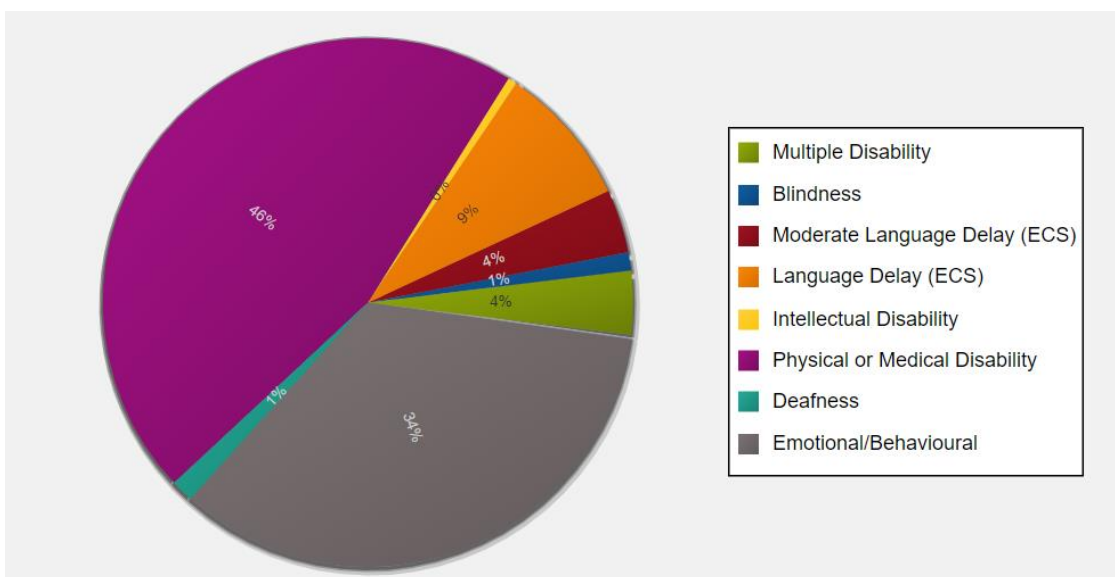
Our Students

Our Division values diversity and the unique contributions that each student brings to the classroom. Capturing diverse learning needs quantitatively is challenging, as diagnoses and learning needs are only one factor in each student’s learning profile. The code summaries listed below indicate the number of Kindergarten to Grade 12 students with identified diagnoses and learning needs within the Division to date in the 2022-2023 school year. **These charts must be interpreted with caution as many students have multiple diagnoses/codes, and this data only captures the most severe coding for each student.** We have seen an increase in needs in our division in students meeting the criteria for both Mild/Moderate and Severe coding.

For the 2022-2023 year (to date) PSD serves 905 students whose primary diagnosis/coding falls within the mild or moderate range (up from 767 students in 2021-2022).

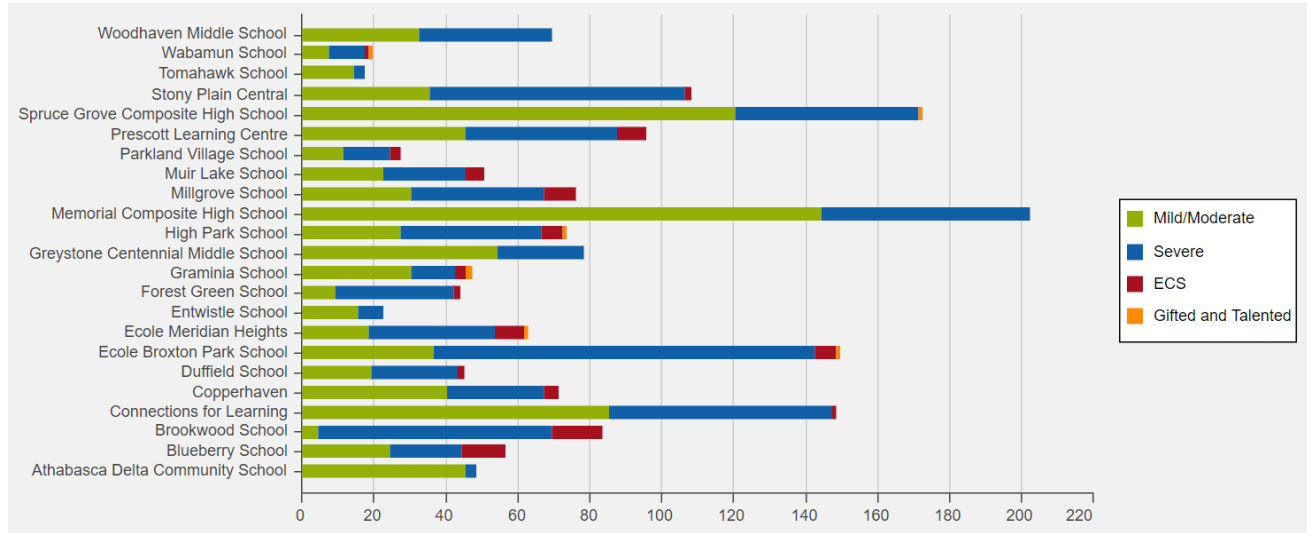


For the 2022-2023 year (to date), PSD serves 806 students whose primary diagnosis/coding falls within the severe range (up from 739 students in 2021-22).



Code Breakdown by School

The graph below shows the breakdown of coded students by school. It is important to note that Ecole Broxton Park School, Memorial Composite High School, and Spruce Grove Composite High School house congregated programs for students with complex needs, which accounts for the larger student numbers at these sites.



English Language Learners

In addition to the student learning needs listed previously, our **English Language Learners (ELL)** population is continuing to grow. The majority of ELL supports are provided through Instructional Services; however the Student Services team supports individual ELL students who also present with diverse learning needs.

2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023 (to date)
Identified ELL Students: 148	Identified ELL Students: 174	Identified ELL Students: 217

Schools support ELL students through the implementation of English as a Second Language (ESL) strategies. Schools contact both Instructional Services and Student Services when additional support is required.

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Students Services Staff and Supports

The Student Services Team, in conjunction with schools, provides appropriate support and services to meet the needs of diverse learners in the Parkland School Division within an Inclusive Education Model, as mandated by Alberta Education.



The Student Services team includes:

- Division Principal- Student Services
- 2.0 FTE Complex Needs Facilitators
- 2.0 FTE Social-Emotional Supports Facilitators
- 2.6 FTE Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs)
- 1.6 FTE Speech-Language Assistants (SLAs)
- 1.4 FTE Occupational Therapist (OT)
- 1.0 FTE Secretary
- External Consultants for low-incidence populations (blind/low-vision; deaf/hard of hearing; Complex Communication Needs)

Supports and Services provided include, but are not limited to:

- Providing and facilitating access to specialized professional services (i.e., assessment and intervention) to ensure students with diverse needs have the guidance, support services, and resources they require to be successful in their educational program.
- Building capacity around evidence-based practices for supporting diverse learners in meeting the outcomes of the Programs of Study, specifically in the areas of literacy and numeracy.
- Promoting access, clarity, and visibility to a continuum of supports and services within our schools.
- Assisting in the coordination, implementation and evaluation of Specialized Programs.
- Supporting the implementation of Individual Education Program Plans (including Individual Program Plans, Behaviour Support Plans, Individual Care Plans, Safety Plans, and Success-in-School plans).
- Ensuring that provincial legislation and jurisdiction policy/ and procedures applicable to Student Services are implemented.
- Supporting the use of assistive technology by students.
- Supporting best practices for English Language Learners with diverse learning needs.
- Supporting Health Services, delivered within the school setting.

School-based teams include:

- Administrators
- Inclusive Education Leads (IELs)
- School staff
- Additional consultants and service providers may be contracted by schools as needed.



PSD Specialized Programs

Current Practice & Future Directions

As outlined in *AP 210: Inclusive Education*, the Division ensures that community schools are the first choice in placement decisions for students, and that students are at the center of all decisions related to their learning. The majority of our students with identified learning needs are served within their community schools. Through collaboration between school staff, parent(s)/guardian(s), and Student Services staff some students benefit from the services and support available within the following specialized programs:

- **Relating Everyday Academics & Life Skills (REAL) Program** (*Currently 30 students enrolled within 3 classrooms at Ecole Broxton Park*): The REAL classroom provides an alternate classroom program for students with moderate to severe cognitive delays. More information can be found about the REAL program on the [PSD website](#).
 - **Annual Program Highlight - Dedicated SLP/OT Support in REAL & LAWS Classrooms:** This year we were able to adjust existing funds that are allocated within the REAL and LAWS programs to provide dedicated 0.6 FTE Speech Language and 0.4 FTE Occupational Therapy support. Therapy Staff are now able to allocate time on a more consistent and regular basis to be in classrooms to provide recommendations and work directly with students. This dedicated support has also resulted in our other OT/SLP staff having additional time to provide support to students with complex needs who are learning in inclusive classrooms across the division.

- **Life, Academic, and Work Skills (LAWS) Program** (*Currently 46 students enrolled within 4 classrooms- 2 classrooms at SGCHS and 2 classrooms at MCHS*): The LAWS program provides an alternative non-credited classroom program for students with mild/moderate to severe cognitive delays and a significant impact on their adaptive functioning for students in grade 10-12. More information can be found about the LAWS program on the [PSD website](#).
 - **Annual Program Highlight - Transition to Adulthood for Students with Complex Needs:** We know that the transition to adulthood is a challenging time for all students but especially for students with complex needs. There are multiple systems that need to be coordinated to ensure that individuals have what they need to be successful. A key role of our LAWS program is to help families ensure that the evidence they need to get kids connected is available and provide support and understanding as they navigate this new system. We are continuing to strengthen our understanding of requirements for PDD and AISH and the evidence that is needed for individuals to access these supports through conversation with Alberta Disability Services. As part of the LAWS handbook we will be including information and guidance for families around navigating the transition to adulthood as well as updated links and contacts to support families in accessing these services.

- **STEPS Program** (*Currently 22 students enrolled in 4 classrooms - 1 classroom at Forest Green, 2 classrooms at Stony Plain Central, and 1 classroom at Woodhaven*): The STEPS Program is a transitional program for students with mental health needs who exhibit internalizing behaviours (e.g. fearfulness, social withdrawal, nervousness, etc.) and/or externalizing behaviours (e.g. physical aggression, defiance, relational aggression, etc.) that **significantly impact** their ability to achieve personal success in a typical classroom within their community school. A contracted AHS Mental Health Nurse supports staff, students, and families one day per week. More information can be found about the STEPS program on the [PSD website](#).
 - **Intended Program Outcome:** The intended outcome of this program is to support students in gaining the skills needed to successfully step back into their community school and classroom. Last year we had 6 students transition from the specialized classrooms back into typical classrooms with 2 more reaching nearly full integration within the first few months of this school year. We are currently in the process of transitioning an additional 7 students at varying levels depending on student needs.

- **Annual Program Highlight - Professional Learning to Support Complex Social Emotional Needs of Students:** Multiple professional learning opportunities are offered for staff within the STEPS Program to deepen their understanding collectively on how to support the academic and social-emotional growth of students who have mental health needs. This year staff participated in a two day session with Psychologist Ross Greene which was focused on the implementation and use of the Collaborative Problem Solving Approach to behavioural intervention.
- **Area for Planned Development:** While we see success for some students who attend our STEPS Programs, we also know that there are students who finish the STEPS Program in grade 9 and experience challenges in their transition to high school. The Student Services department is in the process of doing a literature review of research and best practices within the areas of supporting students with complex mental health and behavioural needs, specifically in relation to students in Junior High. Additionally, Student Services is networking with other divisions to better understand current practices throughout the province to further improve our ability to meet the needs of these students and their families. These findings will support PSD in refining the STEPS Program and PSD's current approaches in meeting the needs of students with complex mental health and behavioural needs.

Highlights

Inclusive Education Parent and Community Advisory Panel:

- In June 2022, PSD established the Inclusive Education Parent and Community Advisory Panel (IPAC) to be a mechanism for ensuring continuing involvement of parent and community members in the operational aspects of inclusion within PSD.
- This Panel provides for dialogue between the Administration (PSD Executive, CFE Division Principal, and/or School Administration) and panel members, relating to operational practices and PSD procedures regarding inclusive education and will help the Division strengthen our inclusive education system by:
 - enhancing understanding and consideration of parental and community perspectives,
 - enhancing how Inclusive Education operational procedures and practices are implemented,
 - providing information and advice to Division administrators; and,
 - working to bring Alberta Education's *Principles of Inclusive Education* to life in our classrooms.
- The Panel includes 6 parents from schools across our division (with urban and rural representation), the Associate Superintendent of Student and Support Services and the Division Principal of Student Services. Members of this Panel are serving a two-year term.
- The IPAC has held three meetings to date this school year. In addition, panel members sit on sub-committees focused on addressing short term objectives in a variety of committee-identified areas including:
 - *Playground Accessibility & Recess Supported Activities,*
 - *Inclusive Field Trip Considerations,*
 - *Parent Communication, and*
 - *Total Inclusive Communication*

Alberta Education Specialized Assessment Coordination

- To address issues around accessing specialized assessments caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Alberta Education provided grant funding for specialized assessments for the 2022-2023 school year. In order to be eligible, students had to be on a waitlist for an assessment for more than 6 months as of June 30, 2022.
- PSD submitted 105 students to this grant who met the criteria and all were approved to receive these assessments. Service Providers coordinated through Alberta Education are currently conducting assessments with students across our schools.
- In January, Alberta Education announced an expanded list of criteria to include a wider range of students. Student needs are currently being reviewed to determine eligibility of additional students to be put forward for assessments based on the expanded criteria.

Supporting Continuums of Support within our Schools

- We have continued to expand our implementation of Continuums of Support within our schools through the Collaborative Response Process. Eight of our schools moved into their third year of the program where they are focused on embedding and strengthening this continuum. The remaining schools are continuing their journey in either year 1 or 2 of the program which includes professional development sessions focused on developing an understanding of the Collaborative Response model and building a plan to implement a Continuum of Supports within their unique school context. All schools in the division are now engaged in this process.

Speech Sound Intervention & Programming

- The Student Services team has continued to refine and improve delivery of speech and language support for students who require speech sound intervention. This programming is delivered through small group pull out programs that are facilitated by a 1.0 SLP and 1.6 SLA in addition to identified EA supports at individual schools. This year we have been able to provide support to 425 students across the division.

WRaP Project 2.0 FASD Sessions for Inclusive Education Leads:

- The *Wellness Resiliency and Partnership (WRaP) 2.0 FASD Project* is a collaborative instructional coaching project offered in partnership between Alberta Education, Human Services and Alberta's Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD Network). This project aims to provide instructional coaching for teachers in meeting the needs of students with FASD. This year our Inclusive Education Leads have spent 4 half days working through the modules offered by this program to build capacity and provide leadership within their building in meeting the needs of students with FASD. These sessions have been very well received with several schools looking to further expand the use of the WRaP Coaches in their building to further support classroom teachers.

Emergent Literacy/Numeracy Lending Kits

- The Student Services team developed Emergent Literacy/Numeracy Lending Kits. These are bins that are designed to be a comprehensive resource to support students with significant identified learning needs who are working at the emergent level regardless of the grade they are enrolled in. All of the bins include themed books, activities, games, alternative pencils, core boards and a variety of other manipulatives. Each bin also comes with information on implementing emergent literacy or numeracy activities along with specific lesson plans. We currently have 11 different themes for our literacy bins and 5 different numeracy themed bins.

Moving Forward

- ***Student Records Digitization:*** Three years ago, in accordance with the direction from Alberta Education, PSD began the process of the digitization of student cumulative files. This is a monumental task that has required a significant amount of time and attention in order to properly review, scan and store documents for upload to the provincial database. Schools are at varying points, nearing the end of completion of this process. In addition to the standards for digitization required by the province, the Student Services team has established standards to ensure that the information for students with Diverse Learning Needs can be accessed consistently by appropriate school staff throughout the division. In response to this need, the Student Services team has hired and outfitted a team of temporary secretaries to support schools in digitizing student records. Student files will be fully digitized by the end of the school year across this division within Alberta Education's Provincial Approach to Student Information (PASI) system.
- ***Coding Review Initiative:*** As noted above, the process of capturing diverse learning needs is challenging. One factor in trying to accurately capture needs within a school is through the use of Special Education Coding using the Coding Criteria from Alberta Education. Although students' needs in PSD are already identified appropriately according to the guidelines issued by Alberta Education, we have initiated a division-wide coding review where Student Services staff will work with school-based IELs to review the records of all students with diverse learning needs to ensure that their learning needs are fully represented. This will further improve our ability to capture a clear profile of student needs, especially for students presenting with multiple disabilities and codes.
- ***Inclusive Education Lead Handbook:*** A key role of the leadership team within PSD schools is the Inclusive Education Lead (IEL). An IEL is responsible for coordinating and supporting inclusive education at each site. This multifaceted role requires a significant amount of content knowledge and experience in working with students and families with diverse learning needs. Currently the resources and procedures that IELs use exist in a variety of locations as they have evolved over time to align with best practices. The Student Services team is currently working on establishing an IEL Handbook that will gather guidelines, procedures, and instructions into one location. This handbook will be updated on a yearly basis to ensure that IELs have a single point of reference to ensure that they are able to make the most of their time with students and have resources available as needed.
- ***Updated Standards for Inclusive Education:*** We continue to await the release of the Standards for Inclusive Education. The current Standards for Special Education were last amended in 2004, and we have learned a great deal since then on what quality inclusive programming looks like. In the interim, Alberta Education has released the following Resource Guide for School and School Authority Leaders, designed to provide context and operational support for inclusive education systems: [Implementing a Continuum of Supports and Services](#).
- ***CASS' Inclusive Education Action Committee:*** CASS has struck an Inclusive Education Action Committee, charged with providing advice and insight into the development of learning resources to support system education leaders in implementing a Continuum of Supports and Services. Meg Miskolzie will be sitting on this committee, which will meet several times over the upcoming months.