



**MEMORANDUM**

February 18, 2025  
 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  
 Christine Ross, Division Principal, Wellness and Community Partnerships

**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  
 Administrative Procedure 220: Early Childhood Development and Services  
 Education Act

**SUBJECT** **STUDENT SERVICES REPORT**

**PURPOSE**

For information. No recommendation required.

**BACKGROUND**

The Board of Trustees reviews and approves the annual educational goals for Parkland School Division and provides a continuum of support and services to students. This report is in support of these responsibilities.

**REPORT SUMMARY**

The Student Services report highlights the various ways in which the Student Services team supports schools and coordinates resources to provide an inclusive, safe, supportive, academic learning environment that serves the needs of a diverse population of students throughout the school division. This collaborative approach supports the goal of a seamless integration of support and services for children enrolled in both Early Education programming and students in Kindergarten to Grade 12. Existing supports are reviewed, as well as highlights and areas of challenge.

Administration would be pleased to respond to any questions.

MM:kz



## STUDENT SERVICES REPORT

### FEBRUARY 2025

Presented to the Board of Trustees, February 18, 2025  
 Dr. Meg Miskolzie, Associate Superintendent, Student Supports and Services  
 Resources: Bryn Spence, Division Principal, Student Services  
 Christine Ross, Division Principal, Wellness and Community Partnerships

*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.

In addition to the *Education Act*, 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
- Remove barriers within learning environments
- Understand learners' strengths and needs
- High expectations for all learners
- Build capacity
- Collaborate for success

Aligned with these requirements, our Division also adheres to key Administrative Procedures that further support the implementation of inclusive education and early childhood programming:

- *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.

- *Administrative Procedure 220: Early Childhood Development And Services* states:  
Early Childhood Programs utilize a continuum of programming that is developmentally appropriate and meets the diverse needs of young children and their families. A play-based learning environment shall exist as the standard that guides program development and delivery.

In 2022, Alberta Education released [Implementing a Continuum of Supports and Services A Resource Guide for School and School Authority Leaders](#) to guide the delivery of an inclusive education system. The province continues to promote the use of this framework, to support the delivery of Early Education, Kindergarten, and School-Aged Supports and Services. **This report organizes student services into these three categories, defined as follows:**

- **Early Education:** Preschool-aged children with identified needs are served in an Early Education (EE) program by the school authority, accessing Program Unit Funding (PUF). To qualify for up to two years of PUF, children must enter EE at a minimum age of 2 years 8 months and less than 4 years 8 months. Required hours are 300 for those aged 2 years 8 months to 3 years 7 months and 400 for those aged 3 years 8 months to 4 years 7 months.
- **Kindergarten:** Kindergarten refers to the education program for children in the year before Grade 1 and is part of Early Childhood Services (ECS). Children with identified needs in Kindergarten access services through the Student Learner Support (SLS) Grant.
- **School-Aged:** This category includes students in Grades 1 through 12. Children with identified needs in these grades access services through divisional allocations.

## Student Services Funding

For the 2024-2025 school year, students who are eligible under Alberta Education's Special Education Criteria, are funded in the following ways:

### Early Education & Kindergarten Funding- per child allocation:

-Early Education: Program Unit Funding (PUF) Grant

-Kindergarten: Specialized Learning Support (SLS) Grant

- Base: Mild/Moderate (Code 30): \$3,281.77 (1% increase)
- Moderate Language (48): \$4,488 (2% increase)
- Severe (Code 41-46): \$16,830 (2% increase)
- Severe Language (Code 47): \$11,220 (2% increase)

*(Note: 10% of code 47 students funded at the same rate as other severe codes)*

*\*Using Weighted Moving Average (WMA), with the exception of student identified as code 48*

### School-Aged Specialized Learning Support:

For students in Grades 1 through 12, funding is allocated to the Division as a whole rather than based on individual diagnoses. The Division is responsible for distributing these funds to support student needs, with the expectation of providing a continuum of support and services to students in an inclusive learning environment. Funds are allocated to schools through two primary channels: an inclusion per-student allocation, based on

enrollment, and an identified student allocation. A portion of the funding is reserved to maintain a continuum of supports, including staff dedicated to assisting students with complex learning needs.

### **Jordan's Principle Funding:**

In adherence to Jordan's Principle, PSD collaborates to provide essential support for Indigenous students exhibiting needs beyond typical school resources. The funding encompasses a broad spectrum of health, social, and educational requirements. Upon identifying a student's needs and consulting with parents/guardians, School Administrators and/or Inclusive Education Leads work in tandem with the Student Services Department to facilitate Jordan's Principle referrals. This meticulous process ensures that all referrals align with the intent of Jordan's Principle, streamlining financial and reporting obligations. An update on this year's Jordan's Principle submission is provided later in this report.

## **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.

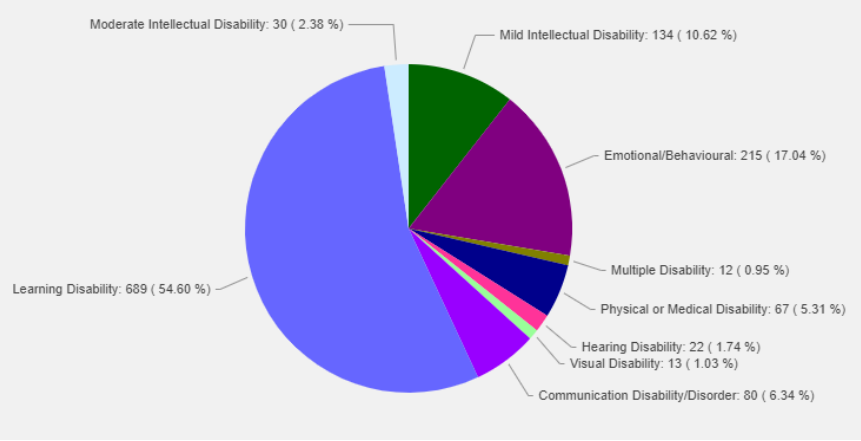
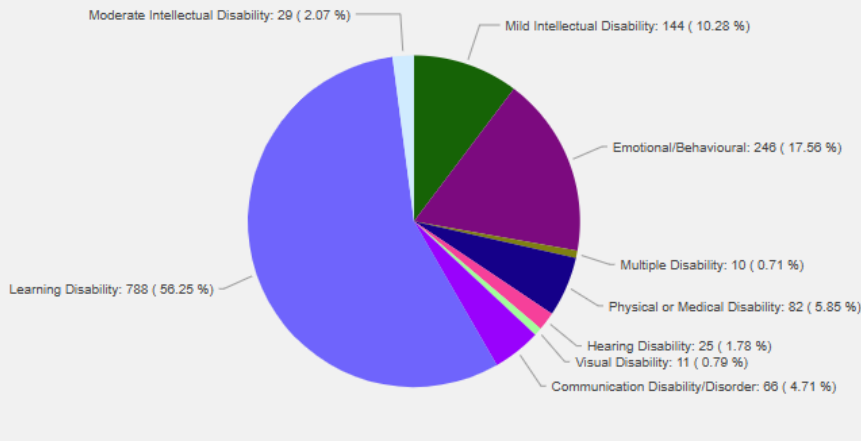
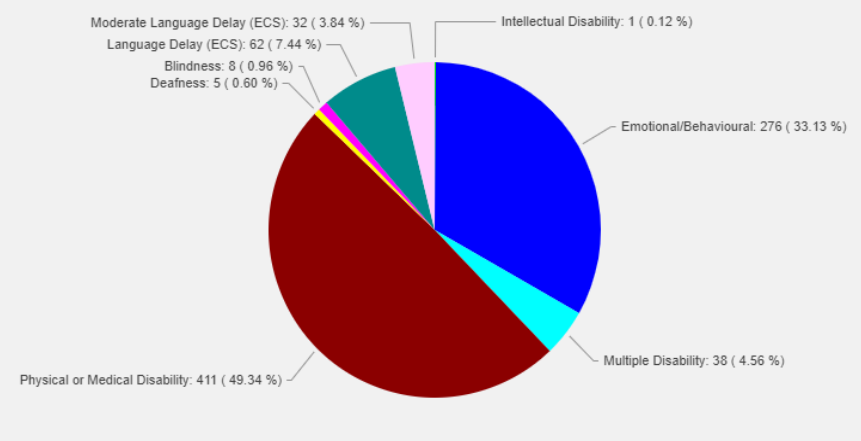
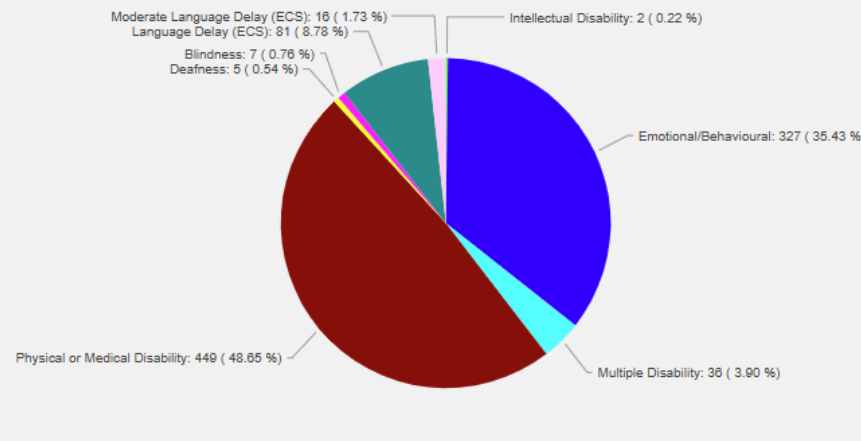
### **Individual Identified Student Needs**

The code summaries listed on the following page provides insight into the number of Early Education and Kindergarten to Grade 12 students with identified diagnoses and learning needs within the Division as of February 2024 (2023-2024 school year) and the current identified needs as of February 2025. **It is crucial to approach the interpretation of these charts with caution, recognizing that the data presented does not fully capture the dynamic nature of student diagnosis and need.**

### ***Key Considerations:***

- Our identified student population has continued to grow, increasing from 13.2% in 2022-23 to 14.7% in 2023-24, and reaching 15.9% this school year. A significant portion of this growth is observed in students from Kindergarten to Grade 2. We are closely monitoring this trend and adapting our services to address the rising needs.
- Overall, although the quantity of students diagnosed with mild to moderate needs has increased slightly compared to Divisional growth, the distribution of student need has remained fairly consistent.
- The most substantial increase in need has been observed among students diagnosed with severe needs, particularly those with severe physical/medical disabilities, whose numbers grew from 411 to 449, and those with emotional/behavioural disabilities, which increased from 276 to 327.
- Kindergarten students can also be identified with mild to moderate speech delays and/or mild language delays (Code 30), which are not reflected on the following page and do not generate additional funding. The number of students with these needs increased from 47 in 2023-2024 to 62 in 2024-2025. This growing need is noteworthy, as many of these students will require additional support and/or further assessment in future years.

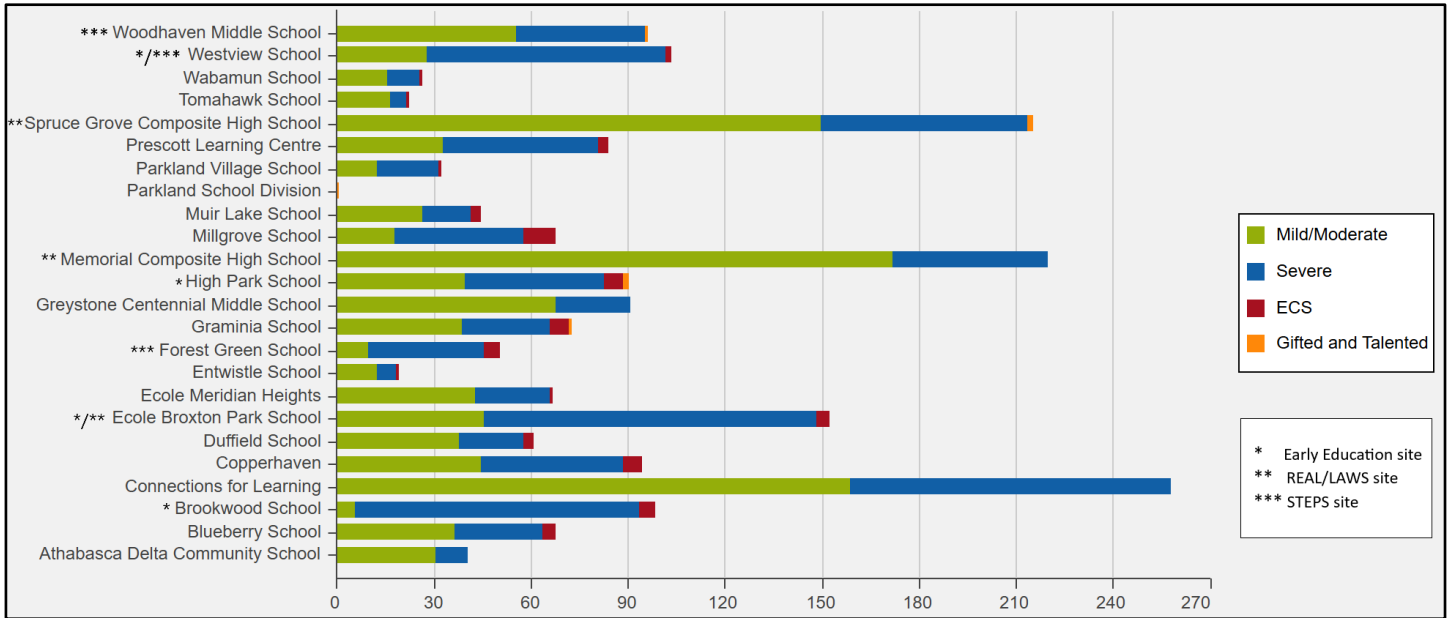
Total Identified Student Population (Early Education to Grade 12)

2023-2024 (February 2024)	2024-2025 (February 2025)																																																												
<p>Identified Student Population: <b>1,863*</b>  <b>14.7%</b> of Total Student Population</p>	<p>Identified Student Population: <b>2058*</b>  <b>15.9%</b> of Total Student Population</p>																																																												
<p>PSD served <b>1262</b> students who had been identified as having a diagnosis that qualified as <b>mild or moderate</b>.</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Mild or Moderate Diagnoses - 2023-2024</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Diagnosis</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Learning Disability</td> <td>689</td> <td>54.60 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Emotional/Behavioural</td> <td>215</td> <td>17.04 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Communication Disability/Disorder</td> <td>80</td> <td>6.34 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mild Intellectual Disability</td> <td>134</td> <td>10.62 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Physical or Medical Disability</td> <td>67</td> <td>5.31 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Multiple Disability</td> <td>12</td> <td>0.95 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hearing Disability</td> <td>22</td> <td>1.74 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Visual Disability</td> <td>13</td> <td>1.03 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Moderate Intellectual Disability</td> <td>30</td> <td>2.38 %</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Diagnosis	Count	Percentage	Learning Disability	689	54.60 %	Emotional/Behavioural	215	17.04 %	Communication Disability/Disorder	80	6.34 %	Mild Intellectual Disability	134	10.62 %	Physical or Medical Disability	67	5.31 %	Multiple Disability	12	0.95 %	Hearing Disability	22	1.74 %	Visual Disability	13	1.03 %	Moderate Intellectual Disability	30	2.38 %	<p>PSD serves students <b>1401</b> (to date) who have been identified as having a diagnosis that qualifies as <b>mild or moderate</b>.</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Mild or Moderate Diagnoses - 2024-2025</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Diagnosis</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Learning Disability</td> <td>788</td> <td>56.25 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Emotional/Behavioural</td> <td>248</td> <td>17.56 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Communication Disability/Disorder</td> <td>86</td> <td>4.71 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mild Intellectual Disability</td> <td>144</td> <td>10.28 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Physical or Medical Disability</td> <td>82</td> <td>5.85 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Multiple Disability</td> <td>10</td> <td>0.71 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hearing Disability</td> <td>25</td> <td>1.78 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Visual Disability</td> <td>11</td> <td>0.79 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Moderate Intellectual Disability</td> <td>29</td> <td>2.07 %</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Diagnosis	Count	Percentage	Learning Disability	788	56.25 %	Emotional/Behavioural	248	17.56 %	Communication Disability/Disorder	86	4.71 %	Mild Intellectual Disability	144	10.28 %	Physical or Medical Disability	82	5.85 %	Multiple Disability	10	0.71 %	Hearing Disability	25	1.78 %	Visual Disability	11	0.79 %	Moderate Intellectual Disability	29	2.07 %
Diagnosis	Count	Percentage																																																											
Learning Disability	689	54.60 %																																																											
Emotional/Behavioural	215	17.04 %																																																											
Communication Disability/Disorder	80	6.34 %																																																											
Mild Intellectual Disability	134	10.62 %																																																											
Physical or Medical Disability	67	5.31 %																																																											
Multiple Disability	12	0.95 %																																																											
Hearing Disability	22	1.74 %																																																											
Visual Disability	13	1.03 %																																																											
Moderate Intellectual Disability	30	2.38 %																																																											
Diagnosis	Count	Percentage																																																											
Learning Disability	788	56.25 %																																																											
Emotional/Behavioural	248	17.56 %																																																											
Communication Disability/Disorder	86	4.71 %																																																											
Mild Intellectual Disability	144	10.28 %																																																											
Physical or Medical Disability	82	5.85 %																																																											
Multiple Disability	10	0.71 %																																																											
Hearing Disability	25	1.78 %																																																											
Visual Disability	11	0.79 %																																																											
Moderate Intellectual Disability	29	2.07 %																																																											
<p>PSD served <b>833</b> students who had been identified as having a diagnosis that qualified as <b>severe</b>.</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Severe Diagnoses - 2023-2024</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Diagnosis</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Physical or Medical Disability</td> <td>411</td> <td>49.34 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Emotional/Behavioural</td> <td>276</td> <td>33.13 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Multiple Disability</td> <td>38</td> <td>4.56 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Language Delay (ECS)</td> <td>62</td> <td>7.44 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Moderate Language Delay (ECS)</td> <td>32</td> <td>3.84 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Intellectual Disability</td> <td>1</td> <td>0.12 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blindness</td> <td>8</td> <td>0.96 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Deafness</td> <td>5</td> <td>0.60 %</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Diagnosis	Count	Percentage	Physical or Medical Disability	411	49.34 %	Emotional/Behavioural	276	33.13 %	Multiple Disability	38	4.56 %	Language Delay (ECS)	62	7.44 %	Moderate Language Delay (ECS)	32	3.84 %	Intellectual Disability	1	0.12 %	Blindness	8	0.96 %	Deafness	5	0.60 %	<p>PSD serves <b>923</b> students (to date) who have been identified as having a diagnosis that qualifies as <b>severe</b>.</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Severe Diagnoses - 2024-2025</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Diagnosis</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Physical or Medical Disability</td> <td>449</td> <td>48.85 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Emotional/Behavioural</td> <td>327</td> <td>35.43 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Multiple Disability</td> <td>38</td> <td>3.90 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Language Delay (ECS)</td> <td>81</td> <td>8.78 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Moderate Language Delay (ECS)</td> <td>16</td> <td>1.73 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Intellectual Disability</td> <td>2</td> <td>0.22 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blindness</td> <td>7</td> <td>0.76 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Deafness</td> <td>5</td> <td>0.54 %</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Diagnosis	Count	Percentage	Physical or Medical Disability	449	48.85 %	Emotional/Behavioural	327	35.43 %	Multiple Disability	38	3.90 %	Language Delay (ECS)	81	8.78 %	Moderate Language Delay (ECS)	16	1.73 %	Intellectual Disability	2	0.22 %	Blindness	7	0.76 %	Deafness	5	0.54 %						
Diagnosis	Count	Percentage																																																											
Physical or Medical Disability	411	49.34 %																																																											
Emotional/Behavioural	276	33.13 %																																																											
Multiple Disability	38	4.56 %																																																											
Language Delay (ECS)	62	7.44 %																																																											
Moderate Language Delay (ECS)	32	3.84 %																																																											
Intellectual Disability	1	0.12 %																																																											
Blindness	8	0.96 %																																																											
Deafness	5	0.60 %																																																											
Diagnosis	Count	Percentage																																																											
Physical or Medical Disability	449	48.85 %																																																											
Emotional/Behavioural	327	35.43 %																																																											
Multiple Disability	38	3.90 %																																																											
Language Delay (ECS)	81	8.78 %																																																											
Moderate Language Delay (ECS)	16	1.73 %																																																											
Intellectual Disability	2	0.22 %																																																											
Blindness	7	0.76 %																																																											
Deafness	5	0.54 %																																																											

*\*Note: Some students have multiple diagnoses and needs, resulting in multiple codes and multiple supports required.*

### Identified Student Needs by School

The graph below shows the distribution of students with identified needs by school. Schools hosting specialized programs are highlighted, contributing as a distinctive factor influencing student needs at each respective site. In instances where students meet the criteria for multiple diagnosis/codes, the graph represents the diagnosis/coding considered most significant.



## PSD Specialized Programs

As outlined in *AP 210: Inclusive Education*, community schools are the first placement consideration for students. Although the majority of our students with identified learning needs are served within their community schools, through collaboration with parent(s)/guardian(s), some students benefit from the services and support available within the following specialized programs:

- 1. Early Education** (Currently 120 students enrolled within 12 classrooms at Brookwood, Broxton Park, Westview, and High Park School): The Early Education Program operates four mornings or afternoons per week, providing play-based learning enriched with specialized supports to the following children:
  - children aged 2 years 8 months to 4 years 8 months with an identified severe delay or diagnosis.
  - children aged 3 years 8 months to 4 years 8 months with an identified mild to moderate delay.
  - PSD continues to offer *Play Partners* as an option for Early Education students who are not eligible for Alberta Education funding, where space and resources allow. *Play Partners* allows for high quality, inclusive programming for children in the community who do not have identified special education needs, and as an added benefit are language models for our students with identified speech needs. *Play Partners* access this program for a fee.
  - This year we did not have any parent requests to support their child within community preschools.

Our Early Education enrollments have decreased slightly this year. In 2023-2024 we had 138 students enrolled in Early Education (year 1 and 2). This school year, we had 167 students register for early education; however, after assessments and intake 121 students were enrolled in the program. This was

due to several factors, including students not meeting age or program eligibility criteria or enrolling in other programs. We ran an Early Education Open House on January 29th at the Centre for Education to provide information to prospective families for the 2025-2026 school year. More information can be found about the Early Education program on the [PSD website](#).

**Annual Program Highlight:** While 300 and 400 hours are the minimum program requirements for 3 and 4 year-olds, this year we are providing 422 hours for 3 year-olds in their first year of services and 506 hours for 4 year-olds in their second year. These additional hours enhance access to programming for children and families. This increase has also enabled us to introduce four *Play Café* sessions, a new initiative where parents are invited to attend school with their child to interact with their child's learning team, build connection and community with other parents, and learn about topics such as Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), emergent literacy, and numeracy.

2. **Relating Everyday Academics & Life Skills (REAL) Program** (*Currently 49 students enrolled within 5 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:** In response to an increase in identified student needs across the division, as well as a rise in parental inquiries about specialized programming, we have expanded the REAL program for the second consecutive year, now offering five classrooms. Additionally, this year we have extended support to identified Kindergarten students, further enhancing early intervention efforts.

3. **Life, Academic, and Work Skills (LAWS) Program** (*Currently 66 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:** This year, the LAWS program continued to prioritize consistency between school sites, ensuring alignment between school and division goals. Additionally, the program has increased opportunities for students to enroll in elective courses, providing opportunities to explore interests, develop practical skills, and build meaningful peer relationships in diverse learning environments.

4. **STEPS Program** (*Currently 32 students enrolled in 5 classrooms - 1 classroom at Forest Green, 2 classrooms at Westview, and 2 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 Mental Health Nurse supports staff, students, and families in the program. 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 9 students transition from the specialized classrooms back into typical classrooms.

**Annual Program Highlights:** Staff in the STEPS program have placed increased focus on fostering collaboration between classrooms to align behavioral expectations and strategies. This approach has enhanced consistency in supporting students' needs, minimized the impact of transitions, and reinforced positive behaviors across settings.

## Students Services Staff and Supports

Supporting children with identified needs, alongside their families, is a team effort, requiring a comprehensive continuum of supports and services. In addition to supporting classroom-based teams at all of our school sites, Student Supports and Services offers support through several specialized programs including Early Education, REAL, LAWS, and STEPS at sites across the division. **The team is composed of both staffed and contracted supports, and includes:**

### Staffed Supports:

- Classroom teachers
- School Administrators
- Inclusive Education Leads
- Educational Assistants (EAs)
- Early Education Facilitator
- Early Education Coordinator
- Complex Needs Facilitators (K-12)
- Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs)
- Speech-Language Assistants (SLPAs)
- Occupational Therapists (OTs)
- Family Support Workers
- Division Psychologist

### Contracted Supports:

- Physical Therapy
- Educational Psychology
- Blind/Low Vision
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Educational Audiologist
- Additional SLPs for assessments
- Behavioural Consultant
- Mental Health Nurse
- Nursing and Respiratory Consultant

### Therapy Model Restructuring

As the identified student population within the Division continues to expand, a reassessment of the Student Services Therapy model became imperative to effectively allocate our existing resources in response to the growing needs. In our previous model, schools accessed support from multiple Therapists who served numerous sites across the Division. However, this model presented several challenges with a growing Division:

- Difficulty in building relationships between school staff and Therapists due to the geographic spread of caseloads,
- Substantial travel time for some Therapists, and
- Transitions between Early Education, Kindergarten and Grade 1, despite being intentionally planned, necessitated a change in Therapy staff even if the student remained at the same school site.

A new Therapy model was introduced this school year based on the success of the Complex Needs Facilitator restructuring that occurred in 2023-2024. This revised model maintains service levels to students while ensuring we continue to dedicate resources and time to early intervention. Within this new model, Therapy Staff now support students at 4 to 5 assigned school sites, reducing travel time and optimizing relationships and existing resources. This change involved reassigning therapists without reducing overall staffing levels. As a result, therapists are supporting a broader portfolio of needs across their assigned schools, which we have been addressing through capacity building and enhanced team collaboration. This model further strengthens a Continuum of Supports and Services from Early Education to Grade 12 by reducing transitions between therapy teams.



**Therapy Model Restructure Example:**

2023-2024	2024-2025
<p><b>Westview School: 7 Therapy Connections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1 SLP (Early Education &amp; Kindergarten)</li> <li>● 1 SLA (Early Education &amp; Kindergarten)</li> <li>● 1 SLP (Grade 1-4 Speech)</li> <li>● 1 SLA (Grade 1-4 Speech)</li> <li>● 1 SLP (Complex needs- Grade 1-9)</li> <li>● 1 OT (Early Education &amp; Kindergarten)</li> <li>● 1 OT (Complex needs- Grade 1-9)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Westview School: 3 Therapy Connections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1 SLP (Early Education to Grade 9)</li> <li>● 1 SLA (Early Education to Grade 4)</li> <li>● 1 OT (Early Education to Grade 9)</li> </ul>

**Impacts of this model restructure include:**

- Enhanced Service Delivery: By reducing the number of schools on therapists’ caseloads, therapists can dedicate more time on-site at specific schools.
- Coordinated Transitions: The new model facilitates smooth transitions between Early Education (when possible), Kindergarten, and Grade 1, as well as transitions between multiple schools. This ensures a more cohesive and supportive experience for students, parents, and educational staff during critical educational phases.
- Promotion of Sustainability and Succession Planning: By assigning each Therapist to a diverse range of school grades and demographics, the model fosters a more robust and adaptable support system.

These strategic changes are aimed at addressing the identified challenges and enhancing the overall effectiveness of our Student Services Therapy delivery model.

**Highlights**

**Student Services Handbook**

During the 2023-2024 school year, we developed a Student Services Operational Handbook, finalized it over the summer, and rolled it out to Administrators and Inclusive Education Leads this fall. This resource is designed to support school staff in addressing the evolving needs of their student populations, while also serving as a quick-reference guide with easily accessible information. The handbook will be continuously updated to reflect changes in legislation, internal processes, and best practices, ensuring it remains a relevant and effective tool.

**Adapted Physical Activity**

Recognizing the diverse abilities and needs of our students, we focused resources and professional learning on creating more accessible and inclusive opportunities in Active Living to promote student success and well-being. In collaboration with the Steadward Centre at the University of Alberta, we organized a two-part learning series for staff, emphasizing strategies for supporting neurodiverse learners and students with varying physical, cognitive, and sensory needs. To complement this learning, we invested in Adapted Physical Activity resources designed for students in Early Education through Grade 4. These resources are available for teachers to borrow through a dedicated Google site, ensuring accessibility across schools.

**PUF/SLS Verification Process (Audit):**

Alberta Education reviews PUF/SLS submissions in depth to ensure students meet the criteria for funding. Submissions are typically due to Alberta Education in January of each school year.

- In the 2024-2025 school year:
  - Parkland School Division received an exemption from the Verification process from Alberta Education, as PSD has had a 100% approval/accuracy rate over the past 3 years.
  - Alberta Education added a second count to identify students. Students who are new are registered between December 2nd, 2024 and February 3, 2025 can be added, and will receive 50% funding. All files submitted for the second count will be audited. 7 additional Early Education students started with us during this timeframe and are being submitted.

**Inclusive Education Parent and Community Advisory Panel**

The Inclusive Education Parent and Community Advisory Panel (IPAC) is a mechanism for ensuring continuing involvement of parent and community members in the operational aspects of inclusion within PSD. The Panel fosters dialogue between PSD Administration and its members on procedures and practices related to inclusive education, helping to strengthen PSD's inclusive education system. This year, the Panel expanded from 7 to 10 parent members and has held three meetings to date. Advisory discussions have covered a range of important topics, including:

- Access to Family Support services
- Counselling and wellness services
- Student Inclusion and safety parameters
- Medication management and Individual Care Plans

## Challenges

**Jordan's Principle Submission**

Submissions for the 2024-2025 school year were initially sent to Jordan's Principle in July. Over the summer, updated requirements led to additional paperwork, which we submitted in August. We were initially advised that results would be available by the end of September. However, upon follow-up in the fall, we learned that all group requests nationwide were under review by the National Review Committee, rather than the Provincial team.

Ongoing and evolving changes in submission requirements from National Headquarters further delayed progress. The Provincial team later informed us that our submission had not been advanced and recommended splitting it into two parts. The first portion was submitted to National Headquarters by the Provincial team in early December, with the second portion submitted earlier this month. The Provincial team emphasized that, since the request was escalated to the national level, the review process, decision, and timeline are beyond Alberta Region's authority. They have communicated our concerns to National Headquarters, stressing the potential negative impact on students caused by these delays.

On January 31, 2025, we were informed that, due to Parliament being in prorogue, certain funding decisions—including those requiring supply bills for government funds beyond departmental reference levels—are paused. While we continue to await approval, we are assessing the impact on student needs and Division resources and exploring potential contingency plans.

## Moving Forward

### CASA Mental Health Classroom

Parkland School Division has partnered with CASA Mental Health to establish a CASA Mental Health Classroom for the 2025-2026 school year, formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding. This program will provide specialized support for up to 12 identified students in Grades 4 to 6 each semester. The CASA Classroom is a medically integrated, recovery-focused, school-based initiative that addresses both the mental health and academic needs of students through individualized treatment and programming. Supported by a multidisciplinary team of mental health professionals, a specialized teacher, and support staff, the program offers a comprehensive and holistic approach to care. Collaboration with caregivers and school staff is central to the program, including education to enhance mental health understanding and develop effective coping strategies. By providing assessment, treatment, and transitional support, the CASA Classroom will enable students to reintegrate into community-based services and their home schools successfully.

### 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](#).