

Student Supports

Diversity and Equity

The Ministry and its partner boards of education strive to ensure that all learners are supported to participate in school, to develop their individual potential, and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need for a successful personal future and to contribute positively to society and to the economy.

The school system strives to create and maintain conditions that foster success for all students. These conditions include:

- ✓ equitable access to and equitable participation in quality education for all students
- ✓ school cultures that value diversity and respond to the diverse social and academic needs of individual students
- ✓ school cultures that promote understanding of others and respect for all
- ✓ school environments that are safe and welcoming
- ✓ policies and practices that promote fair and equitable treatment
- ✓ decision-making processes that give a voice to all members of the school community

Honouring diversity, within the school system, is based on the principle that if our differences are acknowledged and utilized in a positive way, it is of benefit to the quality of our learning and working environments.

Website: Diversity in BC Schools <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/diversity/>

Students With Special Needs

Inclusion – British Columbia promotes an inclusive education system in which students with special needs are fully participating members of a community of learners. Inclusion describes the principle that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their educational programs.

The practice of inclusion is not necessarily synonymous with full integration in regular classrooms, and goes beyond placement to include meaningful participation and the promotion of interaction with others.

Placement – A school board must ensure that a principal offers to consult with a parent of a child who has special needs regarding the student's placement in an educational program. A school board must provide a student who has special needs with an educational program in a classroom where the student is integrated with other students who do not have special needs, unless the educational needs of the student with special needs or other students indicate that the educational program for the student with special needs should be provided otherwise.

The emphasis on educating students with special needs in neighbourhood school classrooms with their age and grade peers, however, does not preclude the appropriate use of resource rooms, self-contained classes, community-based programs, or specialized settings. Students with

special needs may be placed in settings other than a neighbourhood school classroom with age and grade peers.

This should only be done when the school board has made all reasonable efforts to integrate the student, and it is clear that a combination of education in such classes and supplementary support cannot meet their educational or social needs, or when there is clear evidence that partial or full placement in another setting is the only option after considering their educational needs or the educational needs of others.

Integration – is one of the major strategies used to achieve inclusion. Students with special needs are included in educational settings with their peers who do not have special needs, and provided with the necessary accommodations determined on an individual basis, to enable them to be successful there. The principle of "placement in the most enabling learning environment" applies when decisions are made about the extent to which an individual student is placed in regular classrooms, or assigned to an alternate placement.

English Language Learning (ELL)/Apprentissage de la langue anglaise (ALS) (students for whom English is a new language)

People from all parts of the globe contribute to the social, cultural, and linguistic fabric of our province. This diversity is mirrored in our schools' population, both in the contributions made and in the unique needs that must be addressed. ELL/ALS students come from many linguistic and cultural backgrounds and have had a wide variety of life experiences — attributes that can significantly enrich the life of the school and help enhance learning for all students.

English Language Learning (ELL)/Apprentissage de la langue anglaise (ALS) services enable students whose primary language or languages of the home is/are other than English to achieve the expected learning outcomes of the provincial curriculum, and to develop their individual potential within British Columbia's school system.

Services for students who speak a variation of English significantly different than that used in school are referred to as **English as a Second Dialect (ESD)** services.

Considerations for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

All learners are entitled to guidance and support as they strive to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies they need for a bright future; and access to opportunities to extend their learning into areas of personal interest and passion.

Personalized learning recognizes each student as an individual learner, with his or her own learning style and unique gifts. It also recognizes and values a student's own individual interests and future goals.

Differentiated Instruction (DI) – is a flexible approach to teaching in which a teacher plans and carries out varied approaches to address content, learning processes, learning style, practical procedures, presentation strategies, and assessment tools. It results in a more personal, proactive learning environment, inclusive of a wide variety of learners.

When teachers differentiate instruction, they provide students with the structures to maximize strengths, work around weaknesses, and experience timely remediation. This enables students to take advantage of effective learning strategies as they begin to understand their own personal learning styles, interests, needs, and engage with their learning. As a result, student motivation increases.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – is a framework of instructional approaches that recognizes and accommodates varied learning styles. It provides learning activities that expand students’ opportunities for acquiring information and demonstrating learning, as well as for enhancing social participation and inclusion.

The driver for universal design is the philosophy of proactively addressing needs. Universal design for learning is integrated into regular instructional planning as a mechanism to make diversity the norm. It provides support for all students and motivates through the element of choice.

Response to Intervention (RTI) – is a framework for formative assessment that involves collecting data on a regular basis to make instructional decisions in a multi-tier model. RTI is based on the principle of prevention and early intervention. By using ongoing assessment to inform teaching practice and allocate instructional resources, teachers are able to provide appropriate, evidence-based interventions.

Central elements of all RTI models include early screening of all students to identify those at risk for academic difficulties, implementing research-based interventions matched to student need and increasing intensity of intervention when needed. RTI also involves continuous monitoring and recording of student progress during interventions to guide decisions for both the student (e.g. further assessment, individualized planning) and the teacher (e.g. using small group or one-to-one learning contexts, topics for professional development).

Although RTI originates from special education, it is intended for use with all students in general education.
