



## ALBERTA EDUCATION

# WHAT IS INCLUSION

*Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance and promotes a sense of belonging for all learners.*

*Inclusion is not just about learners with special needs. It is an attitude and approach that embraces diversity and learner differences and promotes equal opportunities for all learners in Alberta.*

*Alberta's education system is built on a values-based approach to accepting responsibility for all children and students.*

*When teachers use evidence-based instructional practices and strategies to support student engagement, it can lead to greater achievement and success for all children and students.*

Every learner has unique needs. Some learners have profound and ongoing needs and others have short-term and/or situation-based needs. This calls for flexible and responsive learning environments that can adapt to the changing needs of learners. For some learners, the most responsive and flexible learning environment may include:

- instruction and support in a grade-level classroom with same-aged peers;
- individualized instruction in smaller group settings;
- a specialized classroom or setting;
- one-on-one instruction; or
- a combination of all the above.



## PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The following six principles are key to achieving Alberta’s vision for an inclusive education system. These principles can guide and inform value-based and learner-centred decisions related to policies, practices and actions at every level of Alberta’s education system.

### ANTICIPATE, VALUE AND SUPPORT DIVERSITY AND LEARNER DIFFERENCES

Welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments create a sense of belonging for all learners and their families.

### HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL LEARNERS

Creating a culture of high expectations begins with an accessible curriculum and meaningful and relevant learning experiences. Educators and families act on the idea that, with the right instructional supports, every learner can be successful.

### UNDERSTAND LEARNERS’ STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

Meaningful data is gathered and shared at all levels of the system—by teachers, families, schools, school authorities and the Ministry—to understand and respond to the strengths and needs of individual learners.

### REMOVE BARRIERS WITHIN LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

All education partners work together to remove barriers within the learning environment so that all learners are successful and can participate in the school community.

### BUILD CAPACITY

Government, school and system leaders, teachers, education professionals, families and community partners have ongoing opportunities, relationships and resources that develop, strengthen and renew their understanding, skills and abilities to create flexible and responsive learning environments. Capacity building takes place at the personal, school and system levels.

## COLLABORATE FOR SUCCESS

All education stakeholders, including school and system staff, families, community partners, post-secondary institutions, teacher preparation programs and government are committed to collaboration to support the success of all learners.

## INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY

To support children and students in attaining the goals as stated in the Ministerial Order on Student Learning, school authorities must ensure that all children and students (Kindergarten to Grade 12), regardless of race, religious belief, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, family status or sexual orientation, or any other factor(s), have access to meaningful and relevant learning experiences that include appropriate instructional supports.

*2020-2021 Guide to Education:  
ECS to Grade 12, page 27*

