

Policy 29

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

1. RATIONALE

Inclusive Education means that every student has equitable access to learning, opportunities for achievement, and the chance to reach their full potential in all parts of their school program.

The Board of Education is committed to providing inclusive and equitable learning environments where all students are respected, valued, and able to participate fully. The Board is committed to providing education that is responsive to student strengths, needs, and cultures, and works to reduce barriers so every learner can succeed, as aligned with the BC curriculum.

Students of all neurotypes, cultures, abilities, and lived experiences do well when they are recognized, respected, and supported. Schools that honour diversity, uphold anti-ableism and anti-racism, and support each student's identity help build dignity, confidence, and a strong sense of belonging.

In British Columbia, Boards of Education must provide students with disabilities and diverse abilities access to an educational program in classrooms with peers who do not have disabilities or diverse abilities. Meaningful inclusion means more than physical placement, it includes active participation, access to learning, social belonging, and emotional safety.

Meaningful inclusion requires layered supports in classrooms and schools. These supports may include differentiated instruction, flexible curriculum and assessment approaches, assistive technology, Individual Education Plans (IEPs), collaboration with staff and peers, and strong partnerships with families. While learning with same-age peers is the goal, some students may use alternative or specialized settings for periods of time when needed.

This policy is based on:

- [BC Ministry of Education Inclusive Education Policy](#)
- [Accessibility Act of British Columbia](#)
- [BC School Act](#)
- [BC Human Rights Code](#)
- [New Westminster Schools Accessibility Plan](#)

The Board assigns the Superintendent of Schools, and designates, to put this policy into action. The Inclusive Education Staff Handbook is the district's operational guide and is updated as needed to reflect best practice and provincial requirements.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 New Westminster Schools ensures that all students have equitable access to meaningful learning experiences and opportunities to achieve their full potential.

2.2 Inclusive education in the district follows a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). The classroom teacher leads planning, instruction, and daily monitoring for all students, and works with families, school teams, and district specialists as needed. MTSS includes three levels of support:

- Universal supports: strategies and practices used by the classroom teacher with all students in the classroom.

- Targeted supports: short-term or small-group help, usually led or coordinated by the classroom teacher and supported by the school-based team, for students who need more than universal supports.
- Intensive supports: individualized services for students with more complex needs, developed through teamwork between the classroom teacher, families, school teams, and/or district specialists.

Monitoring in MTSS is ongoing, data-informed, and collaborative. The goal is to give students the right support at the right time and to adjust support when needed.

2.3 School staff work together to plan, put in place, and review supports through the School-Based Team (SBT), with help from the district's Inclusive Education Team as needed.

2.4 The district follows a rights-based and culturally responsive approach to inclusive education. This includes applying anti-racism, accessibility, and human-rights principles in daily practice.

2.5 The district supports this policy through Administrative Procedures that set clear guidelines for inclusive practices in all schools. It provides guidelines that explain what staff need to do, including work on MTSS, IEPs, and School-Based Teams, and will support this through monitoring, training, and leadership.

2.6 The district is committed to safe and supportive environments for students and staff. When supporting students with complex needs, schools plan for safety, provide training, and use clear procedures. Teams work together to identify possible challenges and take steps early, making sure staff have the support and resources they need to do their jobs safely.

2.7 The district uses different types of information to see how well inclusive education is working including and to guide ongoing improvements including:

- Student learning and achievement
- Participation and engagement
- Progress on IEP goals
- Student and family feedback
- School climate and sense of belonging

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

At New Westminster Schools, we will:

3.1 Ensure every student has equitable access to meaningful public education, with high expectations for all, regardless of ability, background, or identity.

3.2 Prioritize early identification and timely help to support long-term student success.

3.3 Include diverse cultural perspectives and elevate Indigenous voices in alignment with the BC curriculum.

3.4 Create inclusive and flexible learning environments by giving students meaningful access to grade level learning in ways that reflect their needs, cultures, learning style and level.

3.5 Use culturally responsive and varied assessment and support practices that recognize students' strengths, needs, and ways of communicating, while keeping high expectations for learning.

3.6 Ensure educators have the tools, training, and collaboration needed to affirm student identity, including disability, neurodiversity, mental health and well-being, and academic growth.

3.7 Offer ongoing professional learning that builds inclusive and culturally responsive classrooms, including targeted training to support staff working with students with complex learning, behavioural or medical needs

3.8 Work closely with caregivers and educational partners through clear, responsive communication that reduces language and access barriers.

3.9 Build strong partnerships with community organizations to increase access to services that support the well-being of students and families

3.10 Ensure schools have what they need to support inclusive education. This includes consideration of class composition, staffing levels, access to specialist services, collaborative planning time, and safe and regulated learning environments.

3.11 Support inclusive education practices with structures and resources that promote both student success and staff well-being. Effective inclusion requires ongoing training, collaboration, and access to appropriate supports, particularly when working with students who have complex needs.

3.12 Ensure inclusive education is a shared responsibility. When roles are clearly defined and respectful among teachers, administrators, support staff and specialists, it helps teams work well together, stay accountable, and support student success.

Glossary:

Anti-ableism describes that identify and remove barriers, biases and unfair treatment that affect people with disabilities. Cultural Responsiveness in education means planning teaching and learning so students' cultures and experiences are seen as strengths. Educators and schools adapt their practices to meet the needs of their students.

Inclusive Education team is made up of various professionals who consult with schools when requested to provide specialized support for students.

Neurotypes describe the different ways people's brains work, affecting how they learn, communicate, and experience school and life.

School-Based Team (SBT) is a multidisciplinary team of school staff who meet regularly to problem-solve, make recommendations, plan interventions and monitor progress for students with identified support needs.

SD No. 40 (New Westminster)

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