

Sharing the Vision



“It is time for all stakeholders in the Alberta education system to take mutual responsibility for creating inclusive education province-wide. This means believing in and valuing all learners and going beyond



classroom integration to a belief system that anchors behaviours, practices and processes that are inclusive and respectful.” (Setting the Direction, 2010)

When building an inclusive learning environment it is important for all stakeholders to have a clear understanding of what inclusion means and to be committed to making this vision a reality. This requires a clear communication of values and the establishment of a culture of inclusion within the school and throughout the community. This tip sheet provides some suggestions on how school leaders can share this vision of inclusion with staff, students, parents and the community.

Sharing the vision with staff and parents:

Include all stakeholders in the conversation

- Within an inclusive learning environment, *all* students are the responsibility of *all* staff. There is no distinction between “my” students and “your” students within an inclusive environment.
- An inclusive learning environment depends on a community of educators and parents working in collaboration with each other, and this is best accomplished when all the staff and parents in the community are included in the conversation.

Lead by example

- The vision of inclusion starts with school leaders: the way in which this vision is implemented will determine the culture of the school.
- School leaders can demonstrate support for inclusive learning environments by ensuring teachers have the time, flexibility, resources and support they need.
- Celebrating successes as a school is as important as celebrating the successes of individual students. Celebrating successes throughout the year can help establish a strong school culture and build an environment of inclusion.

Build relationships with the parents and community

- An inclusive learning environment often depends on the support of experts and parents within the school community; it is the work of school leaders to build these relationships and establish these connections.
- It may be helpful to plan one or two parent meetings throughout the year to discuss the inclusive model and answer any questions that parents may have.
- Parents play a critical role in the process of inclusion and should be included in conversations about the supports their child may benefit from.



Sharing the vision with students:

Honour student voice

- Involve students as active participants in conversations around inclusion and give them a voice in selecting what support is most appropriate for their learning needs.

Build awareness

- Ensure teachers take the time to identify students' strengths, interests and needs, discuss learning choices, share information about different supports that are available and showcase technologies that may assist in learning.
- Help students become aware of their own strengths and challenges.
- Build awareness within the classroom that every student is unique to help establish student advocacy and eliminate the stigma that is often associated with requiring support.

