

On the **PATH TO**  
**INCLUSION** in  
MANITOBA'S K to 12  
EDUCATION SYSTEM:  
Supporting Our Diverse  
Learners in Achieving  
Their Full Potential

November 12, 2022

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Report to the Minister of Education  
and Early Childhood Learning

Prepared by the Minister's Advisory  
Council on Inclusive Education



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# Land and Treaty Acknowledgement

We recognize that Manitoba is on Treaties 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10 Territories and the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabe, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline, Ininiwak, and Nehethowuk peoples. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit.

We respect the spirit and intent of Treaties and Treaty Making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation, and collaboration.

In keeping with our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, we acknowledge the important role that education and schools play to ensure we collectively take time to think about, learn about, honour, and remember those who attended residential and day schools and those who did not come home. Facing difficult truths helps us on our paths toward Truth and Reconciliation.

# Philosophy of Inclusion

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning is committed to fostering inclusion for all people.

Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued, and safe. An inclusive community consciously evolves to meet the changing needs of its members. Through recognition and support, an inclusive community provides meaningful involvement and equal access to the benefits of citizenship. In Manitoba, we embrace inclusion as a means of enhancing the well-being of every member of the community. By working together, we strengthen our capacity to provide the foundation for a richer future for all of us.

*The Public Schools Amendment Act (Appropriate Educational Programming), S. M. 2004, c. 9*, proclaimed on October 28, 2005, reinforces Manitoba's Philosophy of Inclusion and commitment to supporting student participation in both the academic and social life of schools, as set out in legislation and regulation. Regulations and standards provide direction to school divisions and educators, and clarify for parents the obligation to implement appropriate educational programming (AEP) for each student.

# Co-Chairs' Remarks to the Minister

The Report of the Minister's Advisory Council on Inclusive Education (the Advisory Council), entitled *On The Path to Inclusion in Manitoba's K to 12 Education System: Supporting Our Diverse Learners in Achieving Their Full Potential*, offers recommendations in seven areas to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning, Wayne Ewasko.

The Advisory Council was established in June 2021. The mandate—to provide recommendations that support the enhancement of Manitoba's education system and the revitalization of Manitoba's Philosophy of Inclusion—was accomplished over the last 17 months thanks to the dedication, expertise, and experience of members of the Advisory Council and the organizations they represented.

The Advisory Council's recommendations outline the measures to foster the shared beliefs, mindsets, and practices that are necessary to support consistent, effective, and widespread implementation of the Philosophy of Inclusion so that all students are prepared to succeed, to reach their full potential, and to live The Good Life.

The Advisory Council worked together to explore the education system and provide recommendations to build on the many supports that are already in place so education is accessible to all students.

Consistent and equitable implementation of the recommendations will require accountability, investment, collaboration, and leadership. An implementation plan of practical and actionable measures that address each of the Advisory Council's recommendations is required.

Manitoba's education system has made progress over the last 60 years on the path to inclusion. We honour the work of those who came before and invested their energy, passion, and commitment to the education of students with diverse learning needs and abilities. We must continue to journey on this path.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Minister's Advisory Council on Inclusive Education,

Allan Hawkins and Kendra Gowler, Co-Chairs

# Executive Summary

Established in June 2021, the Minister's Advisory Council on Inclusive Education (the Advisory Council) was mandated to provide recommendations and to offer advice to the Minister on advancing inclusive education in Manitoba. The Advisory Council was established in response to [\*Our Children's Success: Manitoba's Future—Report of the Commission on K to 12 Education\*](#), specifically the recommendations listed in Appendix A of this document.

The Advisory Council engaged in collaborative exploration of what is working in our province and in determining appropriate recommendations to advance inclusive mindsets and practices. Believing in the value and importance of inclusion is a necessary precursor to adopting an inclusive mindset (i.e., one's attitudes, how one thinks) and inclusive practices (i.e., one's behaviours, how one acts). Stakeholder feedback has clearly identified that inclusion is not an outcome that is ever flawlessly achieved; it is a continuum of ongoing learning and growth informed by the local context of the school community.

The Advisory Council's mandate was to provide recommendations to enhance inclusive education for all students. We acknowledge that students with identified diverse learning needs are part of this population. We want to ensure that all students have equitable access to the resources they need, all the while recognizing that, in some instances, tailored measures may be required to address student-specific learning needs. Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning can support educators in shaping an inclusive education system around students' learning needs, and this report recommends focusing on supporting inclusive environments through mindsets and practices. All students, including those with diverse learning needs and abilities, reach their full potential when they feel a sense of belonging and safety.

The scope of work established for the project resulted in seven topic areas of focus, each presenting the Advisory Council's observations about the current situation and recommendations for action in regards to advancing the work in these areas:

- inclusion as a shared value: the foundation for inclusive mindsets and practices
- professional learning needs of educators to develop inclusive mindsets and practices
- enhanced classroom-level supports that are inclusive in nature
- student-specific needs and planning
- classroom-based formal assessment and screenings
- clinical services to support student-specific needs and planning
- working together: moving forward on the path to inclusion

The high-level recommendations from this process propose measures to strengthen the concept of ability or presumed competence, continuously improve student outcomes, ensure equity, and promote well-being and inclusion.

There are inherent strengths within our province on which we can build. Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning is committed to fostering inclusion for all people.

**Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued, and safe. An inclusive community consciously evolves to meet the changing needs of its members. Through recognition and support, an inclusive community provides meaningful involvement and equal access to the benefits of citizenship.**

**In Manitoba, we embrace inclusion as a means of enhancing the well-being of every member of the community. By working together, we strengthen our capacity to provide the foundation for a richer future for all of us.**

Inclusive supports and practices must permeate the entire school. Inclusive mindsets and practices are an integral part of everything that happens in the school, giving students the opportunity to learn and socialize together, and to support each other through an inclusive lens. We share an understanding that Manitoba warmly welcomes all students into our classrooms, and we take pride in our incredibly diverse peoples, including those with learning strengths and needs. We share inherent values that everyone belongs and that diversity makes us stronger. Indeed, collaborative engagement in this work can contribute to the acquisition of citizenship as a global competency. “Citizenship involves engaging and working toward a more compassionate and sustainable world through the development and value of relationships with self, others, and the natural world” (MEECL, *Global Competencies*).

The Advisory Council does not support the deficit-based paradigm of “fixing the child” to fit the existing system; instead, it supports the department and all stakeholders fully embracing and realizing the provincial Philosophy of Inclusion so that all students reach their full potential. As a system, we must continue to work on our shared beliefs, mindsets, and practices to support consistent, effective, and widespread implementation of the Philosophy of Inclusion so that all students are prepared to succeed, to reach their full potential, and to live The Good Life.

*The Good Life* refers to living a well-balanced life where all four components of a human are being addressed—emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual. “It is through the taking of responsibility for their own personal healing and growth that individuals will be able to attain *mino-pimatasiwin* (Cree)—the good life” (Hart 44). *Pimadaziwin* is to have “life in the fullest sense, life in the sense of longevity and health” (Overholt and Callicott 151).

This report focuses on high-level recommendations that require focused attention over time. Work remains to transform these recommendations into implementation plans with practical and actionable measures. Successful implementation of these recommendations will require input and collaboration among stakeholders and those with diverse needs and perspectives, including students, parents, and families with lived experience.



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**Note:** The term *parents* refers to both parents and guardians and is used with the recognition that in some cases only one parent may be involved in a child’s education, or that the significant adult in the life of many students may not be their parent. This term may also apply to a student who has reached the age of majority.

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## Introduction

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning is committed to truth and reconciliation, to respecting and honouring the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and to creating committees that respect inclusion and are representative of a diversity of perspectives and lived experiences from urban, rural, and northern areas, including people with diverse abilities, racialized groups, cultures, identities, official languages, and other languages.

Established in June 2021, the Minister’s Advisory Council on Inclusive Education (the Advisory Council) was tasked with providing recommendations to the Minister to transform Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning as a system and to revitalize Manitoba’s Philosophy of Inclusion (see Appendix B for Terms of Reference). Representing diverse perspectives, Advisory Council members (see Appendix C for Advisory Council membership) have worked together over the last year and a half to identify the opportunities to reaffirm Manitoba’s Philosophy of Inclusion and to continue the journey towards inclusion of all learners in Manitoba’s K to 12 education system.

The Advisory Council identified key themes in relation to its mandate. Members sought input from their organizations, yielding valuable insights.

The Advisory Council reviewed key policy and programming documents to inform and align its work, including the 2020 [Report of the Commission on K to 12 Education, Manitoba’s K to 12 Education Action Plan](#), and [Mamahtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With](#). See the references at the end of this document for a complete list of information sources that informed the Advisory Council’s work.

The Advisory Council’s report includes background information on the history of inclusive education in Manitoba. This sets the stage for the findings about the current situation and recommendations for action in regards to the following:

- inclusion as a shared value: the foundation for inclusive mindsets and practices
- professional learning needs of educators to develop inclusive mindsets and practices
- enhanced classroom-level supports that are inclusive in nature
- student-specific needs and planning
- classroom-based formal assessment and screening

- clinical services to support student-specific needs and planning
- working together: moving forward on the path to inclusion

The high-level recommendations propose measures to strengthen and continuously improve student outcomes, ensure equity, and promote well-being and inclusion.

## Background

Manitoba’s education system has evolved over the last 60 years, shifting from exclusion to inclusion. It is important to understand that the path to inclusion is a continuous and evolving process and that, as a province, we continue to make progress.

**Table 1: The Path to Inclusion in Manitoba’s Education System**

Practices	Key Features and Milestones
Exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Prior to 1958, students with different needs were not allowed to attend school or receive an education, even though <i>The Public Education Act</i> stated that every person between the ages of 6 and 21 should have the right to attend school. However, it also stated that if the Board of Trustees of a school division believed that a person attending in their school district had a “mental deficiency,” they could stop them from coming to school.</li> <li>■ In 1965, exclusion was repealed and school boards were given one year to provide buildings and teachers for those whom at that time were identified as “the mentally retarded” (unless or until the person presented to the Board a certificate from two physicians saying they were not a “mental defective,” as defined in <i>The Mental Diseases Act</i>).</li> </ul>
Segregation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ During the 1960s and 70s, student diversity was addressed primarily by offering segregated learning experiences.</li> <li>■ Students with different needs might be in the school but were in a separate classroom or in a completely separate facility.</li> </ul>
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The shift to integration began in the 1980s, occurring around the same time that the <i>Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms</i> became law and, within that law, there was a duty to accommodate disability.</li> <li>■ Students with different needs were “mainstreamed” (i.e., placed in classrooms alongside their peers). However, they were not necessarily a part of the class activities or school communities. In many schools, students considered to be “special needs” were primarily taught through pullout programs or were supervised by an educational assistant in the classroom. It was not uncommon for a student in a wheelchair to be placed at the back of the room.</li> </ul>

Practices	Key Features and Milestones
Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="480 329 1372 457">■ In the 1980s and 90s, the provincial government introduced additional funding for qualified educators to support teachers in meeting the diverse needs of students in their classrooms. It was through the student-specific application process that funding was received.</li> <li data-bbox="480 470 1372 598">■ In 2005, <i>The Public Schools Amendment Act (Appropriate Educational Programming)</i> was proclaimed, making it the law in Manitoba that students receive appropriate educational programming in a classroom of their peers.</li> <li data-bbox="480 611 1372 739">■ In 2006, <i>Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba: Standards for Student Services</i> was developed. "These standards provide school divisions with a framework to use in developing local policy for appropriate educational programming" (MEECL, <i>Standards for AEP</i> 3).</li> <li data-bbox="480 751 1372 974">■ Around 2010, as the practice of inclusion grew in Manitoba schools, people began questioning the process for acquiring student-specific funding. The process was deemed to be time consuming and the supporting information provided by school divisions could be perceived as negative/labelling/stigmatizing, and this practice reinforced a deficit-based approach to meeting students' diverse needs. A task force was struck to review this issue.</li> <li data-bbox="480 987 1372 1052">■ Since 2016/2017, the Special Needs L2/3 Grant is provided to school divisions without the need for student-specific funding applications.</li> <li data-bbox="480 1064 1372 1224">■ The <a href="#">standards for appropriate educational programming in Manitoba</a> were recently revised to "promote consistent and enhanced quality of educational practice within the province so that, irrespective of location, students can access [appropriate educational programming] and services" (3).</li> </ul>



# Findings and Recommendations

## 1.0 Inclusion as a Shared Value

Implementing inclusive educational practices for all requires that inclusion becomes an intrinsic feature of culture, policy, and practice from the classroom to the department and a core expectation of our communities. As Ainscow states, "...the promotion of equity and inclusion is not simply a technical or organisational change—it is a movement in a clear philosophical direction. Moving to more inclusive ways of working therefore requires changes across an education system. These span from shifts in policymakers' values and ways of thinking, which enable them to provide a vision shaping a culture of inclusion, to significant changes within schools and the communities they serve" (Ainscow 129).

Policy, culture, and practice, as stated in [Standards for Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba](#), "must comply with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and *The Human Rights Code of Manitoba*, which specify that there must be reasonable accommodation of students' needs unless they demonstrably give rise to undue hardship due to cost, risk to safety, impact on others, or other factors" (3).

The Advisory Council firmly believes that a necessary foundation for creating a culture of inclusion and ensuring consistent, effective, and widespread implementation of the Philosophy of Inclusion across all our schools is promoting the shared value of inclusion among all partners in the education system. It is essential that we advance inclusive mindsets and practices as we work, play, and live within our diverse classrooms, schools, and communities, and that we find strength in our differences.

*The Public Schools Amendment Act (Appropriate Educational Programming), S. M. 2004, c. 9*, proclaimed on October 28, 2005, reinforces Manitoba's Philosophy of Inclusion and commitment to supporting student participation in both the academic and social life of schools, as set out in legislation and regulation. Regulations and standards provide direction to school divisions and educators, and clarify for parents the obligation to implement AEP for each student (MEECL, *Standards for AEP 1*).

Valuing inclusion is required for purposeful action that will result in the consistent, effective, and widespread realization of the 2022 standards for AEP in Manitoba as minimum standards across the province where, every day, education partners are supporting all students to achieve their full potential and live The Good Life.

The Advisory Council explored two areas of focus to promote the shared value of inclusion:

- awareness
- shared language

## Awareness

### ► Current Situation

Advisory Council members have witnessed examples of leadership in policy, culture, and practice that promote inclusive mindsets. There is evidence of inclusion as a value that is shared by all partners who play a role in Manitoba children's education, from the classroom to the community. There are also stakeholders and partners who have demonstrated inclusive ways of thinking and working in addition to understanding what inclusion is about and what it involves.

The urgency is ensuring that there is consistent, effective, and widespread realization of the 2022 standards for AEP in Manitoba, and the shared value of inclusion across all our schools.

Careful attention is required to ensure education efforts engage partners' heads and hearts in a call to action.

As stated in *Manitoba's K to 12 Education Action Plan*: "Collectively with students, parents/caregivers and educators at the core, partners at all levels share responsibility to improve, respond and adapt to the emerging needs of our education system and the world around us" (11). Through the work of the Advisory Council, there appears to be a lack of sufficient understanding and awareness of the 2022 standards for AEP in Manitoba.

### ► Recommendations for Action

1. Expand awareness and shared understanding of the 2022 standards for AEP in Manitoba through the development and implementation of a provincial education and communications strategy of the revised standards. Include cyclical review and refinement based on research, global societal trends, and stakeholder feedback.
  - Ensure inclusive practices are at the core of curriculum development.
  - Engage people with lived experience—particularly students and their families—to tell their stories of inclusion.
  - Engage educators who are inclusion champions and leaders, including school principals and classroom teachers, to share their inclusive education success stories with their peers.
  - The Advisory Council supports the current funding model review to support equity and the full implementation of the Philosophy of Inclusion in our schools.

## Shared Language

### ► Current Situation

Language shifts culture, and words are important. Adopting a shared language is a priority in building an inclusive culture.

Currently, various terms are used to describe the education of students with diverse learning needs and abilities—such as *special education*, *students with special needs*, *students with disabilities*, or *special learning needs and abilities*. The Advisory Council believes it is important to model the Philosophy of Inclusion “for all” and the principles of equity and diversity in everything we do, including in the shared language we use to describe true inclusion of all the learners that make up Manitoba’s K to 12 education system.

### ► Recommendations for Action

2. Review and update language in existing legislation, including the Special Education Certificate, and all publications to reflect inclusive language such as *inclusive education*, *diverse learners*, and *students with diverse learning needs and abilities*.
  - Use person-first language in all forms of communication while being mindful of situations where identity-first language is preferred.

## 2.0 Professional Learning Needs of Educators to Develop Inclusive Mindsets and Practices

Teacher preparation programs and ongoing professional learning must wholeheartedly embrace the provincial Philosophy of Inclusion. The Advisory Council fully agrees with the following recommendation presented by the Inclusive Education Professors’ Roundtable: “Pre-service and in-service educators at all levels be prepared to use proactive, preventative, child and family centered, evidence-based and positive strengths-based approaches that are universally available to all students. We need to build schools that plan for the inclusion of all students from the outset; rather than planning for ‘average’ students, only to be faced with the need to retrofit policies, teaching and assessment methods and other provisions, after the fact” (Bartlett et al. 5).

Educators must be confident and effective inclusive education providers. When they are adequately supported by pre-service and in-service education systems, educators are more apt to adopt inclusive mindsets and practices. They must be prepared to intentionally universally design, differentiate, adapt, modify, or individualize curriculum learning experiences in response to the unique needs of their learners.

Addressing professional learning gaps in inclusive educational practices will require substantial and sustained efforts, as new educators are not adequately prepared for how to

plan for diverse classrooms. In this context, gaps in inclusive educational practices are not surprising and support is required.

To meet the pre-service and in-service learning needs of educators across the province, the Advisory Council has identified promising and proven professional learning models, methods, and tools currently in use across Manitoba. While certainly not exhaustive or consistently applied across the province, the following list provides best practices that support effective professional learning that leads to positive and sustained changes in educators' practices:

- multi-year or year-long residencies
- divisional learning support teachers or teams that provide job-embedded professional learning including building system capacity through the train-the-trainer model, coaching, mentorship, consultation, and job shadowing with colleagues and experts from the field, including school and divisional supports
- co-teaching, an approach that involves two or more educators or other professional staff working with a group of students (includes co-planning, co-instructing, and co-assessing)
- professional learning communities (PLC) to deepen understanding and foster accountability
- partnership with community agencies that have experience supporting the inclusion of diverse learners (e.g., Cerebral Palsy Association of Manitoba, Inclusion Winnipeg, Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba, Manitoba Possible)
- partnership with post-secondary institutions to guide research and provide professional learning in relevant areas
- development, use, or adaptation of proven existing resource materials to support learning (e.g., handbook of best practices, video courses on various topics)
- visiting, and learning from, schools where inclusive practices have been successfully implemented

The Advisory Council identified two areas of focus for educators' professional learning needs:

- pre-service requirements
- in-service requirements

## Pre-service Requirements

### ► Current Situation

The Bachelor of Education degree requirement includes just one 3-credit-hour course about disabilities and minimal opportunity for practicum experience.



It is imperative that all undergraduate Bachelor of Education students receive inclusive education and AEP training. The Advisory Council believes that the Bachelor of Education requirements should include developing knowledge and skills in areas such as, but not limited to, the following:

- the Philosophy of Inclusion
- the diversity of learners and their learning needs and abilities
- the standards for AEP in Manitoba
- inclusive classroom and school practices for all learners, including universal design, differentiated instruction, and adaptations
- student-specific planning and implementation
- timely and effective communication
- trauma-informed practice

► **Recommendations for Action**

3. Develop and implement a plan for the department to engage with post-secondary institutions to review current guidelines and strengthen Bachelor of Education requirements through the lens of inclusion. This review may include jurisdictional scans relevant to locations/institutions where this is being done well.

## In-Service Requirements

► **Current Situations**

Every school division is responsible for and provides professional development for their staff on a variety of practices and topics responsive to local needs. Ongoing professional learning is essential to ensuring our educators have what they need to remain current and effective and feel supported in embracing the philosophy of inclusive education.

► **Recommendations for Action**

4. Develop a provincial professional learning framework that clearly articulates the needs of educators and that includes inclusive education and supporting children with diverse learning needs and abilities. Invest in continuous professional learning for educators to support each other (within their own school, division, and across Manitoba) in improving inclusive pedagogical practice. This should include but not be limited to
  - understanding curriculum
  - understanding access points to curriculum
  - using strong formative assessment practice

- supporting school teams in appropriate planning to respond to student-distress education in trauma-informed practices, communication, and child-development
- leveraging strengths to inform, address, and respond to needs

The provincial professional learning needs framework will also ensure ongoing individual professional learning opportunities specifically for new teachers in their first five years:

- focus on student learning and classroom practice that begins with Manitoba curricula and considers all students in the initial planning stages
- consistently implement the promising and proven practices for professional learning programs listed above that facilitate positive and sustained changes in inclusive education

### 3.0 Enhanced Classroom-Level Supports That Are Inclusive in Nature

[\*Standards for Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba\*](#) specifies, “Access to learning should be maximized using universal design principles in all planning processes. Universally designed schools, classrooms, curricula, and materials provide all students with access to the resources they need, regardless of their diverse learning needs” (8).

The Advisory Council acknowledges the application of principles of universal design in schools and endorses full compliance with *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*.

Universal design (UD) is proactive in addressing learners’ varied identities, competencies, strengths, and needs. UD assumes diversity in students and provides flexibility and choices around how students learn and how they can share what they have learned. The Advisory Council supports promoting universally designed learning communities that emphasize meaningful opportunities that highlight the strengths of all students. “... [It] is about the design of instructional materials and activities. Second, it states up front that it is about designs that enable learners across a wide array of abilities to learn. Finally, if one thinks about supporting students with differences in their abilities...that makes it about every student in schools, not just students with disabilities” (Wehmeyer 58).

Inclusive classrooms provide students with multiple ways to engage with classroom material, multiple representations of curricular learning experiences, and multiple means for students to express or demonstrate what they have learned. This type of thoughtful, universally designed approach to learning benefits all.

Not only is inclusive education about the physical space and academic curriculum; it is also about social curriculum. Inclusion means all students are a part of the school and classroom community in both the academic and social life of school. This is what it means to be student-centred and it takes purposeful planning.

Classroom teachers benefit from support from school and divisional staff within the classroom to help them plan for universal access for all students. The Advisory Council believes this collaborative approach should be a consistent practice across the province. As stated by Wehmeyer, "...make the kinds of instructional expertise held by special educators available to support all students and, conversely, ensure that all students receive high-quality instruction in typical settings...And, we need to do this in concert with general educators" (Wehmeyer 92).

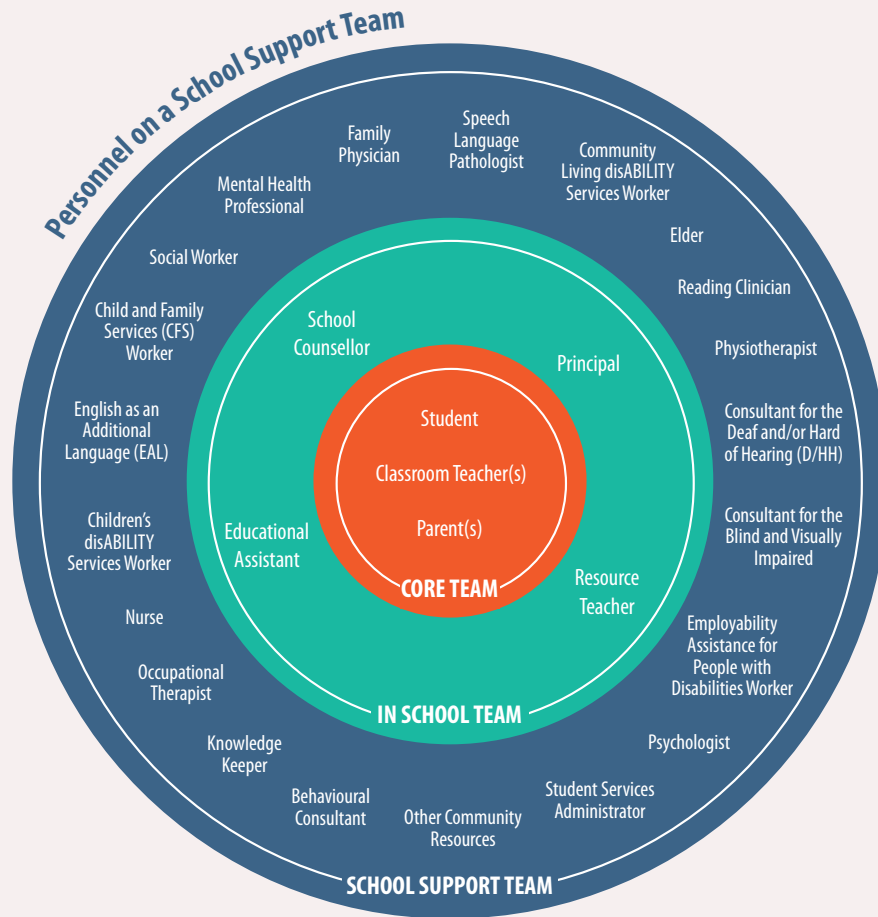
To be able to plan teaching and to assess learning using UD principles, schools and classroom teachers must have access to relevant student-specific information to identify their students' strengths and needs, including their interests and motivators. The Advisory Council recognizes the report [\*Inclusive Education: Understanding Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities\*](#) (UNICEF). The Advisory Council recommends the collection, collation, and evaluation of available data about our diverse learners, their families, and their communities to align with the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, to ensure children are reached with effective services, and to plan for improvements in corresponding policy and practice. The Advisory Council honours the guiding principles of *Mamàhtawisiwin* that place the students at the centre.

Data collection mechanisms, such as student, classroom, and school profiles, provide comprehensive and concise descriptions of current levels of performance, which then inform teaching practice and resource allocation. Data gathering through these profiles is a critical step in collecting evidence to ensure AEP occurs that is responsive to student strengths and needs.

Classroom and school profiles are effective tools to focus on school and classroom practice. Consistent and proficient use of school and classroom profiles will support student and teacher learning plans. Student profiles also support planning for inclusion through student-specific planning.

Profiles open opportunities to identify and place particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalization, exclusion, or underachievement. This indicates the moral responsibility to ensure that Manitoba students deemed statistically more at risk are carefully tracked and supported with AEP. Adequate resources and infrastructure to ensure reasonable class sizes and resources must be in place to meet this responsibility.

The Advisory Council recognizes the importance and value of working as a core team (e.g., teacher, parent, and student). We recognize that the classroom teacher is responsible for assessing students to determine whether they are meeting curricular outcomes, as well as for planning associated with supporting student learning.



Reproduced from *Standards for Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba* (MEECL 6)

The core team includes the student, parent(s), and classroom teacher(s). The in-school team includes those who support students to achieve their full potential and have an important role in planning, developing, and implementing student-specific plans (SSPs). The team benefits from sharing beliefs and values regarding inclusion and each team member understands their own role on the team and the role of other members.

The Advisory Council has identified three areas of focus for inclusive classroom supports and practices to ensure universal access:

- the core team
- instructional design
- service delivery

## The Core Team

### ► Current Situation

Collaboration among the teacher, parent, and student is essential for effective inclusive practice. The Advisory Council reflections indicate a need to revisit and support this key relationship. It appears that not all parents feel they are contributing members of the core team. It must also be noted that student voices are not always included.

### ► Recommendations for Action

5. Support Manitoba schools to clearly identify and communicate core team roles and responsibilities for determining the support needs of the school, teachers, and learners.
6. Explore why students and parents feel they are not contributing members of the core team.
  - Provide instruction on how teachers work collaboratively and respectfully with students and parents.

## Instructional Design

### ► Current Situation

Advisory Council members acknowledge evidence of the application of universal design (UD) principles in school divisions, schools, and classrooms to support inclusive learning. When programming and instructional design are based on the student and class profile, the opportunities for growth improve significantly.

While there is evidence of success, UD principles are applied inconsistently across school divisions, schools, and classrooms in Manitoba. Examples of successful practice include but are not limited to

- ensuring physically accessible environments
- planning and providing multiple and accessible entry points for learning
- increasing access to information/assistive technology for teaching and learning, and a shift to in-class supports (clinicians, resource staff, and counsellors) with a focus on co-teaching and co-planning, and the use of classroom profiles

### ► Recommendations for Action

7. Build the capacity of school principals and teachers through pre-service and in-service professional learning to understand and implement UD. Engage in a jurisdictional scan to identify and promote classrooms and schools in Manitoba that have successfully implemented UD practices.

## Service Delivery

### ► Current Situation

As identified throughout this report, with the diversity of learners in our classrooms, the task of teaching to individual strengths, needs, and learning styles is not an easy one. It requires a well-defined, school-wide approach, a mechanism for educators to support each other's efforts, and a consistent, organized method of record keeping. [\*Supporting Inclusive Schools: A Handbook for Resource Teachers in Manitoba Schools\*](#) includes the following four service delivery models: consultative-collaborative, response to intervention, universal design, and co-teaching (Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning 4). Each service delivery model requires collaboration, effective communication, and teaming. Each model also recognizes that every child learns differently, which requires for planning, instruction, and assessment to be flexible and multi-faceted.

We acknowledge that school divisions with established and formalized service delivery models design learning opportunities to best suit the students within the classroom. The importance of understanding roles and responsibilities within the school setting cannot be understated. The foundation of a service delivery model is the expertise of the team in building capacity at the school level, resulting in the application of new and enhanced skills. Supporting students' learning, social, and emotional needs is an ongoing problem-solving process best accomplished by educators, clinicians, and parents sharing ideas, experiences, and resources.

### ► Recommendations for Action

8. Ensure that all school divisions across Manitoba formalize and employ a framework for delivering service to guide their practice, instruction, and supports to all students in their care.
  - Provide a provincial process to strengthen a shared understanding and use of all profiles for data-informed decision making, including identifying and informing students' learning needs and educators' abilities, and allocating human and educational resources accordingly. Ensure all data collection, collation, and evaluation are inclusive so that they provide relevant information about the diversity of learners at provincial, school division, school, and classroom levels.
  - Support Manitoba schools in the development of a collaborative response to social and emotional learning needs that supports the dignity and social development of students, including students with diverse learning needs and abilities.

## 4.0 Supports for Student-Specific Needs and Planning

The principal is ultimately responsible for the establishment, functioning, and support of the in-school team and for embedding procedures into practice to identify, assess, and provide AEP for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in school.

Members of the in-school team play a vital role in supporting classroom teachers and students who have diverse learning needs and abilities. The Advisory Council acknowledges that effective implementation of the consultative approach supports school staff to gain the necessary skills that can be applied to future situations without the continued and direct support of the in-school or divisional support teams.

The in-school team may determine that some students require additional support because of their exceptional learning, social and emotional, behavioural, sensory, physical, intellectual, communication, and academic or special health care needs. The type of assessment to determine progress, the need for more intense intervention, or the need for a more diagnostic assessment approach to support the student will depend on the decisions made by the in-school support team in collaboration with school division support.

In-school teams may have access to school division supports such as school clinicians and consultants. They are part of the school support team, which may also include external agencies (e.g., Child and Family Services, Children's disAbility Services).

As stated above, many classrooms in Manitoba have a variety of adults supporting student learning throughout the day. One of the significant relationships within the classroom is that of the classroom teacher and the educational assistant (EA). This is essential to supporting effective planning and implementations of interventions that support student outcomes.

The Advisory Council explored three areas of focus for student-specific supports:

- student-specific planning
- transitions
- segregated, alternative school settings

### Student-Specific Planning

#### ► Current Situation

The Advisory Council acknowledges the K to 12 education system's progress in considering the diverse learning needs and abilities of students and meeting the standards for student-specific planning set out in the standards for AEP. Student-specific plans (SSPs) are living documents that use a student-centred, strength-based, holistic approach supported by a multidisciplinary team. Domains for SSPs include supporting students in the areas of academics and can encompass social

and emotional, communication, self-help, and motor skills. Work is needed to ensure student-specific planning and supports are implemented consistently.

A critical aspect of student-specific planning is case management. Case management is an essential part of the student-specific planning process. It has been reported to the Advisory Council that many case managers feel the majority of time is spent on record keeping and paperwork.

Advisory Council members have experienced an inconsistent understanding of the respective roles of EAs and classroom teachers. The Advisory Council believes the assignment of an EA to support classrooms or students should be prioritized by skillsets and abilities, rather than on seniority, as articulated in local collective agreements. Performance management of EAs should be measured in terms of supporting classrooms and SSPs effectively.

### ► Recommendations for Action

9. Develop system capacity through the train-the-trainer professional learning model with divisional student services administrators, including
  - supporting the purpose, development, and implementation of student-specific planning, including planning for students who communicate distress through behaviour
  - ensuring specific training regarding the collaborative process
  - engaging in intentional review, highlighting, and understanding the continuum of supports
  - ensuring that the majority of the time and effort of the case manager and, indeed, all student support personnel is focused on instruction and support of the student and of the educators within the classroom setting
10. Review and update the [Educational Assistants in Manitoba Schools](#) (Manitoba Education) document based on current research and best practices, including
  - determining best practices to build system cohesion through provincial policy and/or guiding principles to inform management and performance evaluation of EAs
  - exploring the viability of leading and supporting standard EA training, and working with post-secondary institutions that offer EA training to ensure courses are reflective of inclusive practices

## Transitions

### ► Current Situation

Transition planning is complex. The implementation of provincial transition protocols requires communication, coordination, and collaboration across multiple departments,



agencies, and authorities. There are three existing provincial protocols mandated for use in the education system in Manitoba: [Protocol for Early Childhood Transition to School for Children with Additional Support Needs](#) (Healthy Child Manitoba), [Bridging to Adulthood: A Protocol for Transitioning Students with Exceptional Needs from School to Community](#) (Healthy Child Manitoba), and [Education and Child and Family Services Protocol for Children and Youth in Care](#) (Healthy Child Manitoba).

Currently, these documents are accessed inconsistently within and across the system as students transition into, throughout, and beyond school. The Advisory Council believes there is work to be done to ensure transition planning is in alignment with AEP.

In terms of facilitating the transition from Early Years to Kindergarten, strong connections with child-care and pre-school service providers are essential. However, the Advisory Council recognizes that not all children entering Kindergarten have access to child-care and pre-school service providers. While some families choose not to access pre-school services, there are reports to the Advisory Council where children have been denied a placement due to the inability to support their diverse learning needs.

Preparing the transition from school to community requires early (starting in Grade 9 at the latest) and thoughtful person-centred planning. Planning must take into account “aging out” of services at 18 years of age, particularly for youth in care and students with diverse learning needs and abilities who are not eligible for Community Living disAbility Services (CLDS). Careful planning of supports and programming from ages 18 to 21 is a collaborative effort that includes education and community living partners.

### ► Recommendations for Action

11. Review and renew interdepartmental transition protocols that support children, youth, and families, including an interdepartmental cyclical process to review all transition protocols to ensure universal accessibility.
  - Ensure all stakeholders and partners are involved in transition review and planning including students, families, schools, and designated service providers.
12. Explore the barriers faced by families in accessing programming to support children prior to entering school.

## Segregated, Alternative School Settings

### ► Current Situation

While we are on the path to inclusion, the reality today is some students attend segregated, alternative school settings. Some specialized school environments offer year-round school, which meets the summer gaps and respite needs of families.

### ► Recommendations for Action

13. Conduct a review and inventory of the use of segregated, alternative school environments within existing school divisions and with independently operated segregated schools to identify possible successes that could be transferred to the public school setting.

## 5.0 Classroom-Based Formal Assessment and Screeners

Timely and relevant assessments for the early and ongoing identification of students' strengths, interests, and needs facilitate decision making and guide teaching practice to support students in achieving their full potential in the classroom setting.

Classroom-based assessments that are student-centred, holistic, and strengths-based yield valuable data that must drive classroom and student-specific outcomes for engaging learning, and shift teacher instructional strategies and inclusive practices.

There are times when formalized assessments and screeners are warranted. Student support teams may carry out these assessments based on their qualifications. Assessments are an important tool in providing valuable information and data that inform instruction and support student-specific planning.

School divisions and schools apply the standards for AEP as minimum requirements to set direction and guide practice to advance the work. Principals are responsible for the AEP of all students in their schools and for staff under their supervision. This responsibility extends to understanding the cycle of data and assessment practices that guide instruction. Principals also assess, monitor, and report to the school community.

Assessment and resulting data collection improve student outcomes and teacher efficacy, strengthen inclusive practices, and ensure a clear, cohesive, consistent understanding of appropriate instruction, assessment, and reporting for all students. The data gathered at provincial, divisional, school, and student levels will help inform decisions about ongoing resourcing and support and provide clear, consistent information for parents.

The Advisory Council has identified two areas of focus in the area of assessment:

- classroom-based assessment
- purposeful provincial data collection

### Classroom-Based Assessment

#### ► Current Situation

Many classroom teachers are well versed in formative and summative assessment practices that drive instruction. They understand that meaningful assessment can take many forms and should not be limited to traditional test taking. They value

the triangulation of data, which includes observations and conversations as well as products. Assessment practices are used as a tool to determine current level of performance so goals for learning may be established.

► **Recommendations for Action**

14. Through the Provincial Data Performance Strategy, develop a shared understanding of data literacy and build principals' and classroom teachers' capacity for classroom-based assessment through professional learning.
  - Ensure assessments are culturally appropriate for all students.

## Purposeful Provincial Data Collection

► **Current Situation**

While there are examples of assessment data being collected and analyzed to inform decisions, this is not being done consistently across the province. Manitoba does not yet offer a provincial reporting system that enables teachers to report on student-specific outcomes outside of the provincial curriculum.

► **Recommendations for Action**

15. Develop and implement an inclusive, digital provincial report card for all students that includes measures of progress on student-specific outcomes in learning domains outside of the provincial curriculum.

## 6.0 Clinical Services to Support Student-Specific Needs and Planning

Clinical services support in-school teams in discovering students' strengths, needs, and interests as part of the student-specific planning process. Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning provides school clinician certification to audiologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, reading clinicians, school psychologists, social workers, and speech-language pathologists.

Clinical services may consult with in-school support teams and classroom teachers to support their assessment and instruction and may be engaged in a more formal student-specific manner. The school clinician is also a support to the in-school team and may provide input on programming for all the students in a school.

The Advisory Council explored three areas of focus with respect to school clinicians supporting student-specific planning:

- working in the classroom setting

- further assessment
- timely and equitable access to services

## Working in the Classroom Setting

### ► Current Situation

Many clinicians have begun to shift their time to work alongside teachers and students in the classroom. They play an important role in providing consultation (including pre-referral process to determine if a referral should be made), direct service to students, and collaboration with classroom teachers within the classroom setting.

Holistic clinical service focused on children and youth is working well and is instrumental in responding to crises and providing in-classroom supports and building capacity with teachers that facilitate having students remain with their peers.

The Advisory Council notes that access to clinical services is inconsistent across the province. There are long wait times for services that include assessments and support. There are also situations where school divisions have been unable to hire or retain clinical services.

### ► Recommendations for Action

16. Develop materials and professional learning to access in a timely way while waiting for services.
17. Conduct a review of perceived barriers to accessing timely clinical assessments.
18. Conduct research and review best practices for an inclusive service delivery model and the role of the school clinician to inform a service delivery model.

## Further Assessment

### ► Current Situation

When further, specialized assessment is required to support instruction and student-specific planning, school divisions have access to clinical disciplines. Clinicians administer assessments in a timely manner that supports early and ongoing intervention and planning. Unfortunately, access to clinical supports for specialized assessments remains inconsistent across the province.

### ► Recommendations for Action

19. Ensure specialized assessments are accessible and culturally appropriate for all students.

## Timely and Equitable Access to Services

### ► Current Situation

Feedback received by the Advisory Council indicates that school clinicians are stretched. While there is a desire in the field to build classroom teachers' capacity to support students with diverse learning needs and abilities, the ongoing demand for specialized assessments hinders the classroom-based work.

Anecdotal evidence points to long waitlists for access to school clinicians, leading to unacceptable delays not only in specialized assessments but also in appropriate interventions to support students in achieving their full potential. Recruitment and retention issues, particularly in rural, remote, and northern communities, also hinder equity of access to school clinicians across the province.

The Advisory Council believes these matters require further investigation through data collection and analysis to determine the scope of these challenges.

### ► Recommendations for Action

20. Collect and analyze data to quantify and qualify the current situation concerning perceived wait times and equity of access across regions for school clinicians. Use the results of the analysis to implement a strategy to improve the current situation.
21. Develop and implement a strategic plan to recruit and retain clinical supports, particularly in rural, remote, and northern communities.
22. Review certificate requirements and disciplines for clinicians and explore the role of mental health practitioners in schools.

## 7.0 Working Together: Moving Forward on the Path to Inclusion

The Advisory Council believes engagement must be an expectation for schools. Engagement helps foster positive relationships with parents, families, and communities and is tied to students' success. Similarly, the involvement of the community is necessary to promote and support inclusion, equity, and diversity.

The school and the community must work together to identify needs, existing capacity, resources, strengths, and solutions to respond to student-specific school, family, and community issues. It can provide a means of ensuring that students and families see their identity (e.g., their cultural and gender identity) reflected in the environment around them and that their basic needs are met. This means looking at systemic issues like racism, mental health, food insecurity, and poverty. It also means working with community programs and services in a seamless and integrated manner to support student-specific needs.

As stated in *Standards for Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba*, "Collaboration among home, school and community is imperative" for building inclusive schools (4). "Provide a learning environment that is accessible to all students as a place to learn, grow, fully participate in their school community, and enjoy all the benefits of citizenship" (4).

The Advisory Council has identified two areas of focus with respect to collaboration among home, school, and community on the path to inclusion:

- family and community engagement and support
- implementation plan for the Advisory Council's recommendations

## Family and Community Engagement and Support

### ► Current Situation

The department has established the Community Schools Program to support the capacity of schools as hubs within communities to strategically gather and deploy school-community services and resources in ways that attain better outcomes for students, families, and surrounding neighbourhoods.

Partnerships with family and community are vital to fostering inclusion for all, promoting equity and respecting diversity. The need for purposeful engagement and support has become abundantly clear in the Advisory Council's consideration of successes and opportunities for improvement in each of the seven areas it addressed.

Meaningful involvement of parents and families, and indeed students themselves, is important to work towards inclusion for all students as well as to address student-specific needs. Parents have the most insight and knowledge about their own child. Collaborative partnerships among parents, teachers, and other professionals greatly increase the possibility of addressing barriers to learning that a child may be experiencing. Communication is key to developing and nurturing trust between families and schools.

### ► Recommendations for Action

23. Expand awareness of the community school philosophy throughout the province through collaboration with the Community Schools Program.

## Implementation Plan for the Advisory Council's Recommendations

### ► Current Situation

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning has an opportunity to maintain the current environment of collaboration and cooperation among provincial partner organizations and across the department to ensure continuous improvement on the path to inclusion within Manitoba schools. Continued partnerships can support the provincial government in defining the policy goals and providing supportive conditions for school divisions and schools to ensure AEP within the classroom.

This report focuses on high-level recommendations that will require focused attention over a long period. Work remains to translate these recommendations into practical and actionable measures that will involve implementing changes to current practice, exploring solutions, designing and launching pilot projects, initiating further consultation where required, continuing policy and practice review, and implementing long-term changes. In some cases, further validation of the findings and recommendations may be required.

Successful implementation of these recommendations will require input and collaboration from all partners with diverse needs and perspectives, including students, parents, and families with lived experience.

The Advisory Council recognizes that the work ahead on the path to inclusion is long-term and that it will not be possible to act on all fronts at the same time.

### ► Recommendations for Action

24. Develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate practical and actionable measures to address each of the Advisory Council's recommendations.

# Conclusion

It is essential that the education system ensure reasonable accommodation of students' needs. All children have the right to an education. Inclusion is not a choice but rather an expectation. Partners in the education system must understand the expectation to follow the standards for AEP. There must be accountability to follow these standards.

Inclusive education requires the collaboration of all partners in the education system, including, but not limited to, students and their parents and families, educators, and the communities they serve. Leadership is required for sustained, positive change to happen. In particular, school principals have a key role to play in supporting the adoption and implementation of inclusive education in their schools.

The Advisory Council recommends that an implementation plan of practical and actionable measures addressing each focus area of the report be developed, implemented, monitored, and evaluated.

We must continue to work on our shared beliefs, mindsets, and practices to support consistent, effective, and widespread implementation of the Philosophy of Inclusion so that all K to 12 students are prepared to succeed, to reach their full potential, and to live The Good Life.

Manitoba's K to 12 education system has made progress over the last 60 years on the path to inclusion. We must continue to journey on that path.



# Appendix A: *Our Children's Success: Manitoba's Future—Report of the Commission on K to 12 Education, Recommendations 5, 33–38*

5. Provide appropriate and timely resources and supports based on classroom composition to maintain an effective learning environment.
33. Reaffirm the Philosophy of Inclusion as a fundamental principle of the education system in Manitoba and change the name of the *Special Education Certificate* granted by the department to *Inclusion Education Certificate* to emphasize this direction, also reaffirming that a truly inclusive system seeks to put students in the learning environment that is most appropriate to their needs.
34. Ensure that teacher preparation programs and ongoing professional learning reflect the provincial Philosophy of Inclusion and develop all teachers in practices to support students with diverse capabilities and learning needs.
35. Enhance collaboration among teachers, student services professionals, and parents to facilitate early and ongoing identification of learning needs and appropriate supports for children and youth with special needs, including the most effective use and deployment of educational assistants who are currently in the system.
36. Strengthen requirements for and training of educational assistants and of student services staff to address, to the greatest extent possible, the learning and behavioural needs of students and to provide overall classroom support for teachers.
37. Commit to reducing wait times for identifying and assessing students with special needs so that they receive early intervention and the necessary supports in all areas of the province.
38. Implement a standardized reporting mechanism, aligned with the provincial report card, to ensure that parents of students with special needs are well informed about their child's progress in both academic and non-academic domains and collect these data at a provincial level.

# Appendix B: Minister's Advisory Council on Inclusive Education – Terms of Reference

The Minister's Advisory Council on Inclusive Education will be time-limited and tasked with providing recommendations within the mandate that will support the transformation of Manitoba's education system and the revitalization of Manitoba's Philosophy of Inclusion.

## Mandate

Advisory in nature, addressing broad-based topics from a high-level perspective, the mandate is to consider recommendations and offer advice on topics such as the

- professional learning needs of educators to support students from the time they transition into the K–12 school system to the time they transition out
- enhanced classroom-level supports that are inclusive in nature (e.g., universal design, differentiated instruction, appropriate instructional supports)
- strategies to ensure timely assessment, ranging from classroom-based to school-based to specialized assessment
- enhanced classroom-based learning supports that consider the specific learning needs of all students and meet the standards for student-specific planning
- clinical services that support the learner's strengths, needs, and interests as part of the student-specific planning process

## Composition of the Council

- Advocacy organizations that are inclusive, representing a diversity of needs (e.g., coalitions)
- Organizations involved with students who are newcomers and are of Indigenous descent
- Organizations that include individuals with diverse needs and/or their family members
- Organizations that include educators and school clinicians

**Note:** Advisory Council members who represent their organization will provide an opportunity for more input from a larger number of stakeholders through the various organizations.

## Operating Procedures

- The Advisory Council will serve to advise the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning.
- Advisory Council members will serve a term ending in June 2022. The term may be extended.
- Advisory Council members will attend approximately six meetings during their term. The meeting schedule will be established at the first meeting.
- Each organization will be invited to recommend a representative of their organization to fulfill the mandate of the Advisory Council.
- Advisory Council members are responsible for sharing information with their organizations and soliciting input from members of their organizations, in accordance with the policies and practices of the organization they represent.
- Meetings will be virtual. Potential costs may include accessibility supports and release time for participants experiencing barriers to participation. If in-person meetings occur, parking, transportation, refreshments, and release time costs may be covered.
- The Advisory Council's work is founded on the ideals of collegiality and mutual respect, encouraging the expression of a diversity of views. Ideals of collegiality include both transparency and confidentiality (depending on the circumstances), as well as due diligence and relevance, respect for conflict of interest, and the assumption of positive intent.

## Structure

- Staff from Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning will facilitate the work of the Advisory Council, at the direction of the Chair.
- The Advisory Council will report to the Minister periodically, at the direction of the Chair.
- For clear and consistent messaging, participants will direct media inquiries to the office of the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning.

# Appendix C: Membership – Minister’s Advisory Council on Inclusive Education

<b>Minister’s Advisory Council on Inclusive Education Members</b>	
Allan Hawkins	Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning
Kendra Gowler	Student Services Administrators’ Association of Manitoba
Janet Forbes	Inclusion Winnipeg
David Kron	Children’s Coalition
John Leggat	St. Amant
Stephanie Skakun	Canadian Mental Health Association—Manitoba and Winnipeg
Kathleen Vyrauen	Newcomer Education Coalition
Myra Laramée	New Directions for Children, Youth, Adults and Families Inc.
Sandra Goff	Family Advocacy Network of Manitoba
Brenda Brazeau	Manitoba Association of Parent Councils
Lars Feilberg	Student Services Administrators’ Association of Manitoba
Rob Fisher	Council of School Leaders of The Manitoba Teachers’ Society
Jennifer Young	The Manitoba Teachers’ Society
Robert Charach	Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools
Verland Force	Manitoba Association of School Superintendents

# Appendix D: Summary of Recommendations

## 1.0 Inclusion as a Shared Value

1. Expand awareness and shared understanding of the standards for appropriate educational programming (AEP) in Manitoba (2022), through the development and implementation of a provincial education and communications strategy of the revised standards for AEP in Manitoba. Include cyclical review and refinement based on research, global societal trends, and stakeholder feedback.
  - Ensure inclusive practices are at the core of curriculum development.
  - Engage people with lived experience, particularly students and their families, to tell their stories of inclusion.
  - Engage educators who are inclusion champions and leaders, including school principals and classroom teachers, to share their inclusive education success stories with their peers.
  - The Advisory Council supports the current funding model review to support equity and the full implementation of the Philosophy of Inclusion in our schools.
2. Review and update language in existing legislation, including the Special Education Certificate, and all publications to reflect inclusive language such as inclusive education, diverse learners, and students with diverse learning needs and abilities.
  - Use person-first language in all forms of communication while being mindful of situations where identity-first language is preferred.

## 2.0 Professional Learning Needs of Educators to Develop Inclusive Mindsets and Practices

3. Develop and implement a plan for the department to engage with post-secondary institutions to review current guidelines and strengthen Bachelor of Education requirements through the lens of inclusion. This review may include jurisdictional scans relevant to locations/institutions where this is being done well.
4. Develop a provincial professional learning framework that clearly articulates the needs of educators, and that includes inclusive education and supports children with diverse learning needs and abilities. Invest in continuous professional learning for educators to support each other (within their own school, division, and across Manitoba) in improving inclusive pedagogical practices, including but not limited to
  - understanding curriculum
  - understanding access points to curriculum

- using strong formative assessment practices
- supporting school teams in appropriate planning to respond to student distress through education in trauma-informed practices, communication, and child development
- leveraging strengths to inform, address, and respond to needs

The provincial professional learning needs framework will also ensure ongoing individual professional learning opportunities specifically for new teachers in their first five years, and it will consistently

- focus on student learning and classroom practice that begins with Manitoba curricula, and consider all students in the initial planning stages
- implement the promising and proven practices for professional learning programs listed above that facilitate positive and sustained changes in inclusive education

### 3.0 Enhanced Classroom-Level Supports that are Inclusive in Nature

5. Support Manitoba schools to clearly identify and communicate core team roles and responsibilities for determining the support needs of the school, teachers, and learners.
6. Explore why students and parents feel they are not contributing members of the core team.
  - Provide instruction on how teachers work collaboratively and respectfully with students and parents.
7. Build the capacity of school principals and teachers through pre-service and in-service professional learning to understand and implement universal design (UD) principles. Engage in a jurisdictional scan to identify and promote classrooms and schools in Manitoba that have successfully implemented UD practices.
8. Ensure that all school divisions across Manitoba formalize and employ a framework for delivering service to guide their practice, instruction, and supports to all students in their care.
  - Provide a provincial process to strengthen a shared understanding and use of all profiles for data-informed decision making, including identifying and informing learning needs of students, educators, and allocating human and educational resources. Ensure all data collection, collation, and evaluation are inclusive so that they provide relevant information about the diversity of learners at provincial, school division, school, and classroom levels.
  - Support Manitoba schools in the development of a collaborative response to social and emotional learning needs that support the dignity and social development of students, including students with diverse learning needs and abilities.

## 4.0 Supports for Student-Specific Needs and Planning

9. Develop system capacity through the train-the-trainer professional learning model with divisional student services administrators, including
  - supporting the purpose, development, and implementation of student-specific planning, including planning for students who communicate distress through behaviour
  - ensuring specific training regarding the collaborative process
  - engaging in intentional review, highlighting, and understanding the continuum of supports
  - ensuring that the majority of the time and efforts of the case manager and, indeed, all student support personnel are focused on instruction and support of the student and of the educators within the classroom setting
10. Review and update the *Educational Assistants in Manitoba Schools* (Manitoba Education) document based on current research and best practice.
  - Determine best practices to build system cohesion through provincial policy and/or guiding principles to inform management and performance evaluation of educational assistants.
  - Explore the viability of leading and supporting standard educational assistant training. Work with post-secondary institutions that offer EA training to ensure courses are reflective of inclusive practice.
11. Review and renew interdepartmental transition protocols that support children, youth, and families, including an interdepartmental cyclical process to review all transition protocols to ensure universal accessibility.
  - Ensure all stakeholders and partners are involved in transition review and planning, including students, families, schools, and designated service providers.
12. Explore the barriers faced by families in accessing programming to support children prior to entering school.
13. Conduct a review and inventory of the use of segregated, alternative school environments within existing school divisions and with independently operated segregated schools to identify possible successes that could be transferred to the public school setting.

## 5.0 Assessment for Early and Ongoing Identification and Supports

14. Through the Provincial Data Performance Strategy, develop a shared understanding of data literacy and build principals' and classroom teachers' capacity for classroom-based assessment through professional learning.
  - Ensure assessments are culturally appropriate for all students.

15. Develop and implement an inclusive, digital provincial report card for all students that includes measures of progress on student-specific outcomes in learning domains outside of the provincial curriculum.

## **6.0 Clinical Services to Support Student-Specific Needs and Planning**

16. Develop materials and professional learning to access in a timely way while waiting for services.
17. Conduct a review of perceived barriers to accessing timely clinical assessments.
18. Conduct research and review best practice inclusive service delivery model and the role of the school clinician to inform a service delivery model.
19. Ensure specialized assessments are accessible and culturally appropriate for all students.
20. Collect and analyze data to quantify and qualify the current situation concerning perceived wait times and equity of access across regions for school clinicians. Use the results of the analysis to implement a strategy to improve the current situation.
21. Develop and implement a strategic plan to recruit and retain clinical supports, particularly in rural, remote, and northern communities.
22. Review certificate requirements and disciplines for clinicians and explore the role of mental health practitioners in schools.

## **7.0 Working Together: Moving Forward on the Path to Inclusion**

23. Expand awareness of the Community School Philosophy throughout the province through collaboration with the Community Schools Program.
24. Develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate practical and actionable measures to address each of the Advisory Council's recommendations.



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