

STUDENTS WITH DESIGNATED DISABILITIES

A. **Statement of Philosophy: Inclusion of Students with Designated Disability**

Student with Designated Disabilities are these student who are either 1) Intellectually Disabled, 2) Deaf and Hard of Hearing, 3) Visually Impaired, 4) Chronically Health Impaired, 5) Orthopaedically Disabled, or 6) Multiple Disabled.

(Please see Appendix for the Saskatchewan Department of Education definitions and criteria for each area of disability)

1. **Basic Philosophy**

To provide a quality of life experience that is typically provided for all students in our school system. This is achieved through access to the environments and opportunities that are generally available to all students. A range of placement and program options are considered to meet the diverse need of students with disabilities. Particular emphasis is placed on maintaining students regardless of disabling conditions, in the student's neighbourhood/school, with age appropriate peers. It is this experience that is most typical for school aged students in our culture.

2. **Rationale for Integration**

a) Social and Moral Preparation

If students are to learn the social and moral behaviour that is typical of their age group, they have to actively experience that behaviour in social contexts that are real and typical. These experiences must take place over a long period of time.

b) Language Development and Cognitive Development

i) Language is best developed in situations that are spontaneous and natural, and in which the learner has an opportunity to be an active participant. Appropriate modelling within social contexts is a critical element. This situation is best provided in an integrated setting.

ii) Cognitive development is closely associated with language development. Moreover, cognitive development is best fostered within situations and contexts that are stimulating, challenging and natural.

c) Academic Development

Functional academics are learned equally as well within integrated settings as they are in segregated settings, if proper support is provided. It is well documented that most of what students learn through direct teaching is consolidated through social interaction with their peers.

d) School Division Practice of Parent Involvement

It has been a long standing practice of the Saskatoon Catholic School Division that the parents be involved in the placement of their child.

e) Basic Human Needs and Values

Inclusion also provides for the needs and values of all people as “persons”. All people share the same universal needs for love and belonging, fun, freedom, and power over one’s own life. All people value the opportunity to:

- i) grow and develop
- ii) build self respect
- iii) feel a sense of belonging
- iv) be a part of a community
- v) have relationships and mutual support
- vi) make decisions and choices
- vii) take risks and make mistakes
- viii) see themselves and be seen by others as unique and valued.

f) Benefits to Non-Disabled Students

Being educated along with students with disabilities can provide valuable social, emotional and personal perspectives for non-disabled students. The presence of disabled students also can provide excellent training for non-handicapped students as future leaders, future parents, and future teachers.

g) Best Practices As Suggested By Research

1. Chronological age placement
2. Social Integration
3. Functional Curricula
4. Systematic Instruction
5. Community-Based Training
6. Parental Involvement
7. Integrated Service Delivery
8. Transition Planning
9. Systematic Program Evaluation

3. What Are We Trying to Achieve?

a) Community

The Catholic Schools as an extension of the Christian community of the parishes, in which all children belong.

b) Acceptance of Differences

The development in all our students of an awareness, an acceptance and appreciation of individual differences.

c) Equality of Benefit

Some students may require additional support services to actually benefit from the educational opportunities available.

B. ORGANIZING THE INCLUSIVE PROGRAM

1. Program Development

In a Designated Disabled Students Personal Program Plan, the developmental areas emphasized are:

- Academic
- Cognitive
- Personal Management
- Communication
- Social Skills
- Leisure
- Work
- Religious Faith

For students with a Visual Impairment, the areas of Visual Efficiency and Orientation and Mobility, these are considered the “key domains” of development:

- Functional objectives are written in each category, constituting the Personal Program Plan. Objectives are written for only those developmental areas that are necessary.
- Objectives are based on functional needs leading to independence in a variety of present and future environments. It is important not only to seek improvement in weaker areas, but also to be given opportunity to demonstrate areas of strength.
- These objectives form the basis for all decisions made for the students regarding his/her education.
- The general learning and performance characteristics for each type of disability are considered.
- For students with intellectual disabilities, time spent in classroom is one part of a much larger picture. Unlike the typical students, academics may not necessarily be the major focus in the classroom. It is important, though, that the student is doing something meaningfully related to the classroom instruction. We must also consider that the evaluation will not be focussed on academic process or product, but on the individual goals of the Personal Program Plan.

2. The Instructional Environments

- i) Inclusive instruction in the regular classroom
- ii) Instructional opportunities outside of the classroom, in formal and natural contexts
- iii) The student’s general community
- iv) Tutorial Instruction: one to one or small group instruction outside of the classroom

3. The interrelationship between the developmental areas and the instructional environments. The objective is to seek a variety of instructional environments to accommodate the best combination of natural context and direct and indirect teaching opportunities.

C. INCLUSIVE INSTRUCTION IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM

The major considerations are:

1. Individualized Instructional Objectives and the principle of multi-level participation.

This implies that the reason for participation in regular classroom instruction may not be for the same reasons as the typical students. These actual reasons come from the Personal Program Plan.

- a) Maximum Participation
 - some participation will be similar for all students, (eg. behaviour), but, the meaningfulness can also be attained through
- b) Partial Participation
 - The student does a part of the regular assignment
- c) Parallel Participation
 - The student uses the same materials but for a difference reason (eg. social skills, work habits, fine motor)
- d) Proximal Participation
 - All students are doing a like task but at a different conceptual level
 - writing: creative vs letter formation
 - research: pictorial vs. written, short oral vs. long written

2. Adaptive Instructional Strategies

Often to make the participation meaningful, the activity has to be changed, or adapted.

- e) Considerations for Modification
 - i) Instructional content - compared to the student's background learning
 - ii) The teacher's instructional strategies
 - iii) The instructional setting
 - iv) The student's behaviours (eg. attention span)
- f) Types of Adaptations
 - i) Materials
 - ii) Special Equipment
 - iii) Personal assistance (ie. Teacher Assistants or Interpreters for the Deaf)
 - iv) Adapting skill sequences
 - v) Adapting rules
 - vi) Advanced preparation
 - vii) Tests and evaluation (The student is evaluated based on the goals of the Personal Program Plan)

3. Heterogeneous Group Instruction

Using peers to assist students with disabilities can be a very effective practice. Processes such as peer tutoring and cooperative learning should be considered.

D. ROLES WITHIN INCLUSION

Success within the school based instructional team also depends on each team member fulfilling their respective roles.

Learning Assistance Teacher

- Development and writing of Personal Program Plan.
- Coordinate Teacher Assistants (TA's).
- Modifications to classroom program.
 - direct
 - monitor those made by TA
- Teacher support.
- Tutorial.
- Coordinate Work Education.
- Liaison.
- Communication with parents.

Classroom Teacher

- Acceptance of the student as an integrate and equal member of the classroom.
- Awareness of overall goals of the student, as stated in the student's Personal Program Plan.
- Dialogue with Teacher Assistant regarding course outline and activities for next lesson(s). Adequate notice results in modifications that are more effective.
- Developed modifications where reasonable.
- Assessment.
 - based on individual goals
 - structured by LAT
 - subjective
- Communication with parents.

Teacher Assistant

- Assist with modifications.
- Assist the student to function as a student.
- Monitor progress and provide feedback to LAT.
- Assist other students in the classroom when possible.

E. SPECIALIZED ITINERANT SERVICES

Student who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing and those who are Visually Impaired are also supported specialized itinerant teachers. The itinerant teachers assist the school based instructional team by providing expertise specific to the particular disability.

For students who are Visually Impaired, particular emphasis is placed on enhancing visual efficiency, classroom adaptations that will facilitate easier vision (eg. large print materials, enhanced lighting, magnification, glare reduction, etc.), technology, and orientation and mobility. In some situations, there is instruction in reading and writing with braille.

F. PROGRAMS FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS

Principles and Practices

The Saskatoon Catholic School Division is committed to the following principles and practices for the education of deaf and Hard of Hearing students:

- i) Programming based on individual strengths and needs.
- ii) Providing a variety of program options to deaf and hard of hearing students, which includes placement in neighbourhood schools.
- iii) Parental requests regarding nature of programming and placement are respected within the range of program options available in Saskatoon Catholic Schools.
- iv) Culture and language are critical to the overall development of students and will be respected within Catholic School Programs.
- v) Development of reading and writing literacy in English are essential.
- vi) Ongoing development of a sense of belonging in the hearing community and the deaf community is both positive and necessary.
- vii) Ongoing program monitoring and evaluation.
- viii) Ongoing collaboration with Special Education Branch, Saskatchewan Education.

Assessment/Instruction/Consultation/Staff Development/Equipment

1. Sign Language interpreters will be available in a class taken by a signing deaf student.
2. Itinerant resource support by a teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will be available to the student.
3. Appropriate equipment (FM systems, telewriters, closed caption T.V.'s, etc. will be in place in the home school).
4. Consultative support to the teachers and school will be available from Student Services.
5. Inservice on Deafness and curricular modification to meet the needs of deaf students will be available to the staff of schools with individually placed students.

Curriculum and Instruction

System-wide support program to language and culture of the Deaf community

Education in Saskatoon Catholic Schools is more than pure academic success. The importance of knowledge of an individual's language and culture is an accepted principle in our schools. This principle applies equally to the language of the deaf and to the culture of the Saskatoon Deaf community.

G. CONSULTING SERVICES

Program coordination and consulting is provided by either Joann Simon (phone: 668-7073) or Larry McGuire (668-7050).