

DATE: January 20, 2015

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Inclusive Education in Alberta Schools
(Response to Request for Information #074)

ORIGINATOR: Mary Michailides, Assistant Superintendent, Supports for Schools

RESOURCE STAFF: Kyla Cleator, Laurie Clifford, Brenda Giourmetakis, Brenda Gummer, Anita Homan, Leona Morrison, Heather Raymond, Maureen Roszell, Sharon Wood

REFERENCE: December 2, 2014 Board Meeting (Trustee Hoffman)
September 16, 2014 Board Meeting (Trustee Hoffman)
[Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Inclusive Education in Alberta Schools](#)
June 14, 2011 Board Meeting (Special Needs Task Force Recommendations)
[HA.BP - Inclusive Education](#)
[HA.AR - Students in Need of Specialized Supports and Services](#)

ISSUE

The following information was requested:

- Which of the 38 remaining Blue Ribbon Panel on Inclusive Education in Alberta Schools recommendations would the Board and Administration like to see implemented throughout the District?
- What is the estimated cost associated with district-wide implementation?

BACKGROUND

On September 10, 2014, the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) released the Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Inclusive Education in Alberta Schools. The panel has 38 recommendations arranged around seven themes for the Government of Alberta, Alberta Education, ATA, post-secondary institutes, and school jurisdictions.

An information report was provided at the December 2, 2014 board meeting giving an update on the status of the District's work in creating an inclusive learning environment which has been guided by the Trustee Special Needs Task Force: Recommendation Report approved June 14, 2011.

CURRENT SITUATION

All 38 recommendations in the Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel have merit. In exploring with resource staff which recommendations would the Board and Administration like to see implemented through the District, implementing recommendations 7, 23 and 28 would enhance and complement the District's work towards creating one inclusive environment for all. The recommendations to be considered are in no particular order. Additional financial resources will be necessary to implement these recommendations. Estimated costs do not factor in staff time to complete surveys, explore and implement new practices, etc.

Recommendation 7: Provide a safe, professional environment where teachers and administrators can express their experiences as inclusion is implemented.

- Conduct a school staff survey to gather information about staff attitudes, satisfaction with the District’s present resources (human and material) and what staff determines as the most important needs to create one inclusive learning environment for all students.
 - Estimated Cost: \$10,000.
- To enhance survey data conduct focus groups with school staff (principals, teachers, and educational assistants) to deepen the understanding of staff’s needs to enhance capacity to support the diverse range of students as learners.
 - Estimated Cost: \$20,000.
- Establish a steering committee to use data collected from surveys and focus groups to develop a district-wide action plan for implementation and monitoring.
 - Estimated Cost: \$30,000 per year.
- Support schools to use the [Indicators of Inclusive Schools: Continuing the Conversation](#) created by Alberta Education to determine where each school currently stands in creating one inclusive environment for all students, provide a venue for staff to explore their experiences with inclusive education and to develop an action plan for nurturing an inclusive culture in each school.
 - Estimated Cost: no additional cost – support would be provided through the school assigned Inclusive Education Coach (under recommendation 23).

Recommendation 23: Ensure that there is adequate funding to effectively support students who require behaviour support; English-language learners; students who are gifted and talented; students who live in poverty; students who are new to Canada; students from refugee backgrounds; and students who are suffering from trauma.

- Construct a District Asset Map to identify school and community assets and resources to support the development of one inclusive learning environment for all students. The purpose is to emphasize what the District and community have and to harness the assets and resources to meet school and catchment area needs and to strengthen the District as a whole. Mapping the district assets and resources in a visual and interactive manner will support the knowledge distribution for all staff to access.
 - Estimated Cost: \$50,000.
- Effective instructional leaders can make a significant difference in building teacher capacity, creating inclusive learning environments, and inspiring teacher and student success. Building a school-wide approach to meeting the needs of all students requires a collaborative effort and builds on a shared understanding and targeted and responsive professional learning. The creation of an Inclusive Education coach position at each school would support this outcome. An equitable formula would need to be developed to determine level of support per school based on the percentage of students in need of specialized supports and services attending each school.
 - Estimated Cost: \$20,000,000.

Recommendation 28: Provide ongoing professional development during the school day to allow teachers to learn and share strategies to support inclusive practices.

- Staff need multiple and personalized opportunities for focused discussions, modeling and information sharing. One means to accomplish this is to provide release time to support collaboration among and between teachers and educational assistants. Providing one half-day per month per staff to collaborate and explore professional learning would assist with giving staff opportunity to learn and share strategies to support inclusive practices.
 - Estimated Cost: \$10,000,000.

The estimated total cost associated with district-wide implementation is \$30,100,000.

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES

N/A

HR/dll