

DATE: October 8, 2019

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Seclusion Rooms - Request for Information #052

ORIGINATOR: Leona Morrison, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE STAFF: Brenda Gummer and Nancy Petersen

REFERENCE: [Standards for Seclusion and Physical Restraint in Alberta Schools](#)
[Standards for Time-Out in Alberta Schools](#)
[Administrative Regulation HAH.AR District Seclusion Rooms](#)

ISSUE

A request for information (RFI) was served at the September 10, 2019, Board meeting by Trustee Dunn.

1. Does the District distinguish between seclusion rooms and time-out rooms?
2. Why are seclusion rooms and/or dedicated time-out rooms needed in our schools?
3. What does the research say about the effectiveness of seclusion rooms at keeping students and staff safe compared to other strategies?
4. How many seclusion rooms exist in the District? How does this compare to the number of seclusion rooms in the three other Metro Districts?
5. How many times are seclusion rooms and time-out rooms used in a year?
6. What are the requirements for parental notification and consent in the use of seclusion rooms and/or dedicated time-out rooms?
7. What training and professional development do staff receive in the use of seclusion rooms, physical restraint and in the practice of time-out?
8. How is the District working to prevent the use of seclusion rooms and/or dedicated time-out rooms? What are the other alternatives to using these rooms?
9. What are the steps to decommission these rooms?

BACKGROUND

In the fall of 2018 a provincial dialogue began across Alberta around the use of seclusion rooms in schools. This dialogue provided the District an opportunity to take a critical look at its own oversight and use of these spaces. What resulted was the District taking the following steps to support safe and consistent practice related to the use of seclusion rooms District wide:

- The development of an administrative regulation to set clear expectations around use of these spaces.
- The development of mandatory District training standards for staff working in programs/schools with these spaces.
- The conducting of an infrastructure audit of existing District seclusion room spaces.

- The development of District infrastructure standards to ensure consistent and safe building specifications are in place for all spaces used for this purpose.
- The revision of the District's Individual Behaviour Support Plan (IBSP) template to increase clarity for families around the potential use of a seclusion room as a crisis response to unsafe behaviour and to support expectations outlined in Administrative Regulation HAH.AR District Seclusion Rooms.
- The development of a PowerSchool seclusion room tracking tool to support District level data around the use of seclusion rooms (previously documentation around the use of a seclusion room was retained at the school level to support programming for individual students).

On February 28, 2019, the Minister of Education signed *Ministerial Order #006/2019 - Seclusion Room Standards*, to come into force on September 1, 2019, which would have prohibited the presence or use of seclusion rooms in schools; under the order there was a provision to apply for a provincial exemption.

On August 29, 2019, the Minister of Education repealed *Ministerial Order #006* and put into place *Ministerial Order #039/2019 Seclusion and Physical Restraint in Schools and Time-out in Schools Standards* and a set of interim standards: [Standards for Seclusion and Physical Restraint in Alberta Schools and Standards for Time-Out in Alberta Schools](#). *Ministerial Order #039* and the interim standards took effect September 1, 2019, and will be in place until October 31, 2019, when new standards will be finalized with input from key provincial stakeholders, including Edmonton Public Schools.

CURRENT SITUATION

As of September 2019, there are over 105,000 students registered in the District. As a provider of public education, we are proud to serve all students and their families. We have programs, facilities and professional staff to support students with a diverse range of abilities, needs and complexities. The majority of our students will follow a fairly traditional path on their K to 12 learning journey and require minimal services or interventions beyond the expertise and support of their classroom teachers.

The District also serves students who require a range of specialized supports and services in order to participate successfully in school. These include children and youth with disabilities, autism, significant mental health diagnose or conduct disorders. Of these students, many are supported by an Individual Program Plan and/or an IBSP developed in collaboration with their families. Plans include a continuum of strategies intended to support the unique needs of each student, and promote growth so that all students can learn and thrive in their school community. It is for a small percentage of our 105,000 plus students that their IBSP includes the potential use of a seclusion room as a crisis response to unsafe behaviour.

The Board has established a number of District Centre Programs focused on the unique learning, social and/or emotional needs of students. The availability of District Centres provides families with the opportunity to choose what they feel is the best educational option for their child. Whether it is inclusion in their designated community school or a specialized program at a District Centre, programming designed to meet unique, individual student needs is provided.

Specialized District Centre programs include but are not limited to:

- Aspen
- Behavior and Learning Assistance
- Behavior and Learning Assistance/Opportunity
- Community Living Skills

- Community Living Skills/Behavior and Learning Assistance
- Interactions
- Mental Health Classroom

District Centre programs support students through the provision of smaller class sizes, staff with specialized training and, in some programs, unique infrastructure features, such as sensory room spaces or seclusion rooms. Principals work with their school community to determine if a seclusion room is required based on the needs of students served in the school and the nature of the supports and interventions necessary to enable safety.

To support clarity and a shared understanding around expectations related to the use of seclusion rooms in the District, Administrative Regulation HAH.AR - District Seclusion Rooms was released on September 3, 2019. To support the implementation of the administrative regulation, District training has been scheduled to reflect the training standards in the administrative regulation and District Infrastructure is ensuring all infrastructure standards are met for operational seclusion rooms. Additionally, resources are available for principals to support their leadership in the implementation of expectations outlined in the administrative regulation.

The development and implementation of an administrative regulation specific to seclusion rooms was intended to create clarity and inform expectations around the safe use of these spaces. This work included intentional efforts to clearly define what a seclusion is, when it is to be used, how use of this space must be documented and where these spaces exist in the District. The following should be noted:

- In spring 2019, the District conducted an audit to identify how many District schools had a seclusion room. The results of the audit indicated that 129 schools had one or more seclusion rooms; with a total of 179 individual spaces considered to be seclusion rooms being noted.
- Since spring of 2019, schools have worked with their school community around the needs of the students they serve and aligned the use of their space with the clear definition of a seclusion room established in the administrative regulation. As of September 2019, District data indicates that:
 - 42 seclusion rooms have been decommissioned, bringing the number of seclusion rooms to 137.
 - Additionally, several schools have submitted a request to have their seclusion room(s) decommissioned and are currently on a waitlist for this work to be completed. (The process to deactivate an operational seclusion room is to remove the door; once the door has been removed the space no longer meets infrastructure standards for an operational seclusion room.)
- In terms of when these spaces are being used, the District has had the opportunity to review the first few weeks of data documenting the use of seclusion rooms across the District. This data has indicated that as of September 27 there were 716 uses of these spaces across the District:
 - 468 (or 65.4 per cent) of uses were students self-selecting to go to the seclusion room as a way of managing their own well-being.
 - 248 (or 34.6 per cent) of uses were a crisis response to unsafe behaviour; these uses reflect 88 individual students or approximately .084 per cent of the District's total student population.

Administration has prepared a response to RFI #052 and it is included as Attachment I to this report.

KEY POINTS

- August 29, 2019, a ministerial order related to seclusion rooms in schools was released along with interim provincial standards.
- September 3, 2019, the Superintendent signed off on Administrative Regulation HAH.AR District Seclusion Rooms to articulate responsibilities and expectations related to these spaces in the District.
- At the September 10, 2019, Board meeting RFI #052 was brought forward.
- The District is participating at the provincial table to help inform the development of final provincial standards to come into place for November 2019.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I: RFI #052: Seclusion Rooms in the District

LM:tf

Request for Information - #052**1. Does the District distinguish between seclusion rooms and time-out rooms?**

Like the province, we distinguish between the action of time-out and a seclusion room as a crisis management response to unsafe behaviour. Time-out is considered to be an intervention strategy that is part of a continuum of positive behaviour supports.

Within the District, we are intentional about focusing our attention on dedicated, regulated spaces (seclusion rooms) that meet safety requirements if they are to be used as a crisis response to unsafe behaviour. These rooms are typically located in specialized classroom settings, and the District's responsibilities and expectations around use of seclusion rooms are set out in Administrative Regulation [HAH.AR District Seclusion Rooms](#).

The primary purpose of a seclusion room is to provide a dedicated area within select schools to provide a safe, supervised space for students who are in crisis and pose an immediate threat to themselves and/or others.

Schools may also use a seclusion room in other ways as long as it is part of a planned approach in collaboration with parents/guardians. For example, students might self-select the designated seclusion room in their classroom as a learning accommodation or as a safe space to compose themselves when they recognize within themselves that they are upset, anxious or stressed. These other uses of the seclusion room must be planned for and documented in the student's Individual Behaviour Support Plan (IBSP).

To best serve specific students with complex emotional behaviour needs, we have developed a two-step process that requires particular spaces to be present in certain schools where there is an anticipated need. If individual students who either access programming in an inclusive classroom or within a congregated setting have a documented history that demonstrates they may need access to a seclusion room, individual circumstances related to the use of the seclusion room are outlined in the student's IBSP. If parents/guardians do not support the use of seclusion rooms, an alternative crisis management plan is developed between the family and school staff. It is expected that this plan be feasible to implement and prioritizes safety.

2. Why are seclusion rooms and/or dedicated time-out rooms needed in our schools?

"One to seven per cent of students have behaviour difficulties severe enough that they cannot meet behavioural expectations without intensive, individualized interventions" (Alberta Education, [Supporting Positive Behaviour in Alberta Schools: An Intensive Individualized Approach](#), pg. 1). With 105,000 plus students in our District, this translates to between 1,050 -7,350 students that would require intensive, individualized programming to support significant, complex behaviours. Data as of September 30, 2019, indicates that we have 1,104 students with special education code 42 (severe social/emotional behaviour). This equates to approximately 1 per cent of students served by the District.

The Board has established a number of District Centre programs focused on supporting the unique learning, and social/emotional needs of students with complex behaviours. The availability of District Centre programs provide families with the opportunity to choose what they feel is the best educational option for their child. Whether it is inclusion in their designated community school or a specialized program at a District Centre, programming is designed to meet unique, individual student needs. Most seclusion rooms are located in

schools that house the following specialized programming options for families of students with identified special education needs.

These specialized programs are accessed through parent choice and are where we intentionally congregate students for programming purposes. Congregated District Centre programs that have access to seclusion rooms include:

- Aspen
- Behaviour and Learning Assistance
- Behaviour and Learning Assistance/Opportunity
- Community Living Skills
- Community Living Skills/Behaviour and Learning Assistance
- Interactions
- Mental Health Classroom

Schools make decisions on a continuous basis as to whether seclusion rooms will remain active for use, decommissioned or repurposed for some other use altogether. Individual student need is at the center of these decisions.

Aspen Program

Students eligible to access specialized programming in the Aspen Program have been diagnosed by a psychiatrist, registered psychologist or developmental pediatrician as having a severe behaviour disorder and require extensive support. Those who access the program through assessment typically have diagnoses such as: conduct disorder, schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, obsessive/compulsive disorders, severe chronic clinical depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, trauma and stressor related disorders, feeding and or eating disorders and may display self-stimulation or self-injurious behaviour. In the most extreme and pervasive instances, severe oppositional defiant disorder may be included under this program.

Through application to District Support Services, and in consultation with families and the principal, students with severe complex diagnoses (e.g. an individual student may have as many as eight diagnoses) are also eligible to attend Aspen Program. Students who access Aspen Program through application are those who present with extremely delayed learning profiles, complex behaviours, severe impairments in social interactions and frequently display aggressive and/or self-abusive behaviours. These students may also present with sexually acting out behaviours or have experienced extreme trauma that has impacted brain development. These students require **constant** supervision (at a minimum of one to one or up to three to one) by trained personnel to attend to their surroundings and to ensure the safety of themselves and others. Extensive personal care such as eating, dressing, toileting and mobility is also part of programming.

All students attending the Aspen program are supported through an individualized approach, and require an Individualized Program Plan (IPP) and/or an IBSP to outline specific strategies for academic support and behavioural interventions that will meet the developmental learning needs of each student.

Behaviour and Learning Assistance (BLA)

Students eligible to access specialized programming in Behaviour and Learning Assistance classrooms have been diagnosed by a psychiatrist, registered psychologist or developmental pediatrician with a severe emotional behaviour disorder such as: severe oppositional disorder, conduct disorder, schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, obsessive/compulsive disorders, severe chronic clinical depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, trauma and stressor related disorders, feeding and or eating disorders and may display self-stimulation or self-injurious behaviours.

All students accessing programming in BLA programs are identified with a special education code, require an IPP and an IBSP to outline specific strategies for academic support and behavioural interventions that will meet the developmental learning needs of each student.

Students in BLA classrooms typically display chronic, extreme and pervasive behaviours that require close and constant adult supervision, high levels of structure and other intensive support services in order to function in an educational setting. Their behaviour significantly interferes with both the learning and safety of the student and others. For example, the student could be dangerously aggressive and destructive (to self and/or others), violent and/or extremely compulsive, highly sexualized, delusional or paranoid.

We know that behaviour and academic success go hand in hand. All students in BLA classrooms require accommodations and specialized supports for learning, including monitoring of behaviour, and direct instruction in anger management, self-regulation and pro-social skills. Students in BLA classrooms challenge curriculum at grade level or have an adapted program tailored to meet their individual learning needs.

Behaviour and Learning Assistance/Opportunity (BLA/OPP)

Students eligible to access specialized programming in Behaviour and Learning Assistance/Opportunity classrooms have the same learner profile as a student who is eligible to access a BLA program, with the addition of a diagnosis of mild cognitive disability. All students accessing programming in BLA/OPP programs are identified with special education codes, require an IPP and an IBSP to outline specific strategies for academic support and behavioural interventions specific to the developmental learning needs of each student. BLA/OPP students have mild to moderate delays in cognitive development and other developmental areas. They require the same level of support and supervision as BLA students and additionally need extensive adaptations to the pace and content of the graded curriculum and to instructional materials, assignments and examination procedures.

Community Learning Skills (CLS)

Community Learning Skills programming supports students who have a diagnosis of a Moderate Cognitive/Intellectual Disability and experience moderate delays in most or all developmental areas. They are identified with a special education code, require an IPP and, if they also display aggressive behaviours, an IBSP to outline specific strategies for academic support and behavioural interventions specific to the developmental learning needs of each student.

Depending on their unique needs, these students may have physical, sensory, medical or behavioural disabilities. Students accessing programming in a CLS program require a modified program that provides basic literacy and numeracy as well as a strong life skills emphasis. They require accommodations for individual or small group instruction.

Community Learning Skills/Behaviour Learning Assistance (CLS/BLA)

Community Learning Skills/Behaviour and Learning Assistance programming support students with moderate cognitive disabilities, significant developmental delays and behavioural difficulties. Students have chronic, severe anti-social behaviours and a clinical diagnosis.

All students accessing programming in CLS/BLA programs are identified with special education codes, require an IPP and an IBSP to outline specific strategies for academic support and behavioural interventions specific to the developmental learning needs of each student. CLS/BLA students have moderate delays in cognitive development and other developmental areas. They require extensive adaptations to the pace and content of

the graded curriculum and to instructional materials, assignments and examination procedures.

CLS/BLA programming provides clear expectations and regular routines in a structured classroom environment. This type of program also offers close, consistent supervision, targeted instruction for emergent literacy and numeracy skills, ongoing instruction in anger management and behaviour in social settings, life skills and enhanced learning through regular field trips.

Interactions

Interactions programming supports students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). ASD impacts how people understand what they see, hear and sense. This lifelong developmental disability can result in difficulties in communication, social relationships, behaviour and/or learning. Although some students with ASD achieve at grade level, many have uneven or delayed achievement.

Students with ASD who present with severe impairments in social interactions and communication, as well as complex or challenging behaviours, and who require modification to the learning environment and require **extensive** supervision are eligible to access Interaction programs. Programming includes adaptations and adjustments to instruction, assignments, pace and content of curriculum, enhanced instruction/intervention/support for communication, direct social skills training, monitoring and supervision of behaviour to prevent injury to self and/or others and extensive personal care such as eating, dressing, toileting and mobility.

Students in an Interactions program are identified with a special education code, require an IPP and, if they also display aggressive behaviours, an IBSP to outline specific strategies for academic support and behavioural interventions based on the developmental learning needs of each student.

Mental Health

Students who access programming in the Mental Health classroom do so through a collaborative placement process. Requests for placement can be made by a school principal, CASA staff, psychiatrist, psychologist or tertiary care unit staff only. Students who attend this program have been diagnosed with a neuro-psychiatric or psychiatric disability such as Tourette's, severe anxiety, personality disorder, etc. and have a demonstrated lack of school success in a typical setting, regardless of high levels of support.

Students accessing programming in the Mental Health Classroom most likely will have transitioned from a hospital setting, have access to external medical support, require an IPP and often an IBSP to outline specific strategies for academic support and behavioural interventions based on the developmental learning needs of each student.

Students in the Mental Health Classroom typically display chronic, extreme and pervasive behaviours which require close and constant adult supervision, high levels of structure and other intensive support services in order to function in an educational setting.

All students in the Mental Health Classroom require accommodations and specialized supports for learning, including monitoring for behaviour and direct instruction in self-regulation and pro-social skills. All students challenge curriculum at grade level or have an adapted program tailored to meet their individual learning needs.

3. What does the research say about the effectiveness of seclusion rooms at keeping students and staff safe compared to other strategies?

Research recognizes that proactive interventions are the most impactful means of supporting students with challenging behaviours. District staff implement preventive and positive behaviour supports in the hopes of avoiding the use of more intensive, individualized crisis responses, like physical restraint or seclusion. Seclusion and/or physical restraint are not substitutes for comprehensive, proactive and positive behaviour supports; rather, both are measures of last resort in crisis situations. Physical restraint and/or seclusion are not used to shape or change behaviour, but rather to protect the student, other students or staff from physical harm.

The ability to prevent and/or positively manage disruptive, challenging or aggressive behaviour is essential for staff who work directly with individuals that present with explosive and/or violent behaviours. All staff working directly with students who have severe emotional behavioural needs complete [Non-Violent Crisis Intervention \(NVCI\)](#) training, which includes conflict de-escalation training and techniques. We are intentional in training school staff to avoid and defuse crisis and conflict situations whenever possible.

Specific to what research says, a few highlights, along with references, are captured below:

“Educators must manage challenging behaviours by selecting effective interventions. But because even the best plans may not prevent all behavioural crises, staff members should have high levels of expertise and experience in making quick decisions regarding the least intrusive response required to maintain safety and to follow safety precautions during any response” (Scheuermann, et al, p. 11).

“In limited situations in which the requisite IEP [IBSP] process determines that time-out or seclusion is appropriate and necessary, with due consideration to the less restrictive options within this continuum, special education leaders need to provide effective training for the educators and administrators” (Bon and Zirkel, pg. 8).

“Seclusion should only be used when the following three conditions are met:

- The student’s actions pose a clear, present, and imminent physical danger to him/her or to others;
- Less restrictive measures have not effectively de-escalated the risk of injury, and
- The seclusion should only last as long as necessary to resolve the actual risk of danger or harm.” (Hanover Research, pg. 17).

*Scheuermann, B., Peterson, R., J.B., & Billingsley, G. (2016). [Professional practice and ethical issues related to physical restraint and seclusion in schools](#). *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 27(2), 86 - 95)*

*Bon, S. C., and Zirkel, P. A. (2014). [The time-out and seclusion continuum: A systemic analysis of the case law](#). *Journal of Special Education Leadership* 27(1).*

Iowa City Community Schools (2017). [Best Practices in student time-out and seclusion](#). Iowa: Hanover Research.

For additional research related to students with complex needs see Appendix I or refer to the bibliography of [Provincial Standards for Seclusion and Physical Restraint](#).

4. How many seclusion rooms exist in the District?

In spring of 2019, as we were working through a process to draft our administrative regulation, 129 schools were identified as having dedicated spaces that had been built for the purpose of supporting students with unsafe behaviour. Some schools have more than one seclusion room, bringing the total number of purpose built spaces to 179.

Over time schools have decommissioned and/or repurposed 42 of these dedicated spaces as student needs have changed. Examples of what these spaces have been repurposing for include; storage rooms, office/intervention spaces (e.g., Inclusive Learning one on one assessment or Speech Language Pathologist intervention) or reading nooks. In addition, more of these spaces have been converted to calming spaces, in which doors have been removed and sensory tools (e.g., stationary bikes, rocking chairs) and soft seating have been provided for students to access when they need a break.

With the inception of Administrative Regulation HAH.AR District Seclusion Rooms, principals are currently working closely with their school communities to determine if a seclusion room is required. Decisions are based on the needs of students served in the school and the nature of supports and interventions necessary to support programming success and ensure student safety.

As of the date of this report, the number of operational seclusion rooms is 137, with requests in the queue to decommission more spaces. As we move into the next few months, it is anticipated that the number of operational seclusion rooms will continue to decrease.

The number of operational seclusion rooms will vary over time, as schools work with District Infrastructure to establish, decommission or repurpose designated spaces based on student need.

4a. How does this compare to the number of seclusion rooms in the three other Metro Districts?

We are not aware of specific numbers for the other metro boards, so we are not be able to make this comparison.

In addition, if we were to make a relevant comparison in the future, one would need to understand:

- The number of students with complex emotional/behavioural needs served by each District.
- The number of congregated sites and where these sites are located within each District (i.e., are they set up similar to Aspen as a single location designed specifically to serve students with complex needs or are they hosted as specialized classrooms in multiple schools across the District?).

5. How many times are seclusion rooms and time-out rooms used in a year?

Up until the inception of our Administrative Regulation HAH.AR District Seclusion Rooms on September 3, 2019, tracking the use of seclusion and/or time-out rooms would only have occurred at a school level to support programming decisions. As part of our work to support District staff with the implementation of the Alberta Education's interim standards and our Administrative Regulation HAH.AR District Seclusion Rooms, a Seclusion Room Tracking tool has been created in PowerSchool that will not only collect information to support programming, but it will also allow for central oversight regarding the use of seclusion rooms and support us with provincial reporting expectations outlined in [Ministerial Order #39/2019](#).

If a seclusion room is used for any purpose it is expected to be tracked. Our seclusion room tracking tool allows staff to differentiate and track when the room is self-selected by a student or when it is used for the purpose of managing a crisis situation. As of September 27, 2019, data indicates that seclusion rooms have been reported as being used 716 times in 28 of our schools; 468 uses were student self-selected and 248 uses were to manage crisis for 88 students or 0.084 per cent of our student population.

6. What are the requirements for parental notification and consent in the use of seclusion rooms and/or dedicated time-out rooms?

An IBSP must be developed for any student who displays behaviour of such intensity, frequency or duration that it may be harmful to themselves or others. The purpose of an IBSP is to prevent challenging behaviours as well as teach and provide appropriate replacement behaviours and skills that will benefit a student with a behavioural challenge. An IBSP remains in place until a lower level of support will once again meet the student's needs.

The principal, in conjunction with the family, ensures that an IBSP is developed through a collaborative process involving significant people in the student's life. Everyone has information and insight to contribute to the discussion regarding teaching and intervention strategies. It is critical that parents/guardians are part of the planning process and support the proactive, planned strategies and crisis management and communication plans housed within the IBSP. IBSPs are designed to implement strategies consistently across environments and with all of the key people in the student's life.

One size does not fit all. IBSPs are based on individual needs and are developed using a strength-based approach focusing on teaching new skills and using proactive strategies, as well as defining what to do when challenging behaviours are displayed. Clarity is important. An IBSP must be easy to understand and communicate to others. Data is important to identify the function of behaviour, underlying causes, triggers (antecedents) and proactive strategies that are working.

IBSPs need to be reviewed at regular intervals throughout the school year. All individuals, including supply staff, must be made aware of the plan and their responsibilities for implementing and being accountable for the plan.

For schools where a seclusion room exists, parents/guardians of students with an IBSP are made aware that:

- A seclusion room is available for use.
- Classroom staff and school administration have specialized training regarding behavioural interventions, including the use of physical restraint and seclusion rooms.
- The seclusion room and/or physical restraint are only used as part of a crisis management strategy if a child/student poses imminent risk of harm to staff, other students or themselves.
- A communication plan is in place should the seclusion room be used as a response to crisis.
- If parents/guardians do not support the use of a seclusion room, an alternative crisis management plan is developed between the family and school staff.

If a seclusion room is used to support a student where an IBSP does not include the use of the seclusion room, or where an IBSP does not exist, the use must only be as a crisis response to unsafe behaviour. Family must be notified of the use of the seclusion room and, immediately following this use, the school must develop or revise, in collaboration with the family, the student's IBSP that includes the seclusion room as a potential

strategy to support the student or determine an alternative crisis management plan should behaviours reach crisis level.

7. What training and professional development do staff receive in the use of seclusion rooms, physical restraint and in the practice of time-out?

As a District, we provide NVCI training for our teachers, educational assistants, administrators and consultants. A training history of District staff is maintained centrally. Staff are notified when their NVCI certification requires updating (every two years). Training focuses on prevention strategies and de-escalation techniques. Targeted training for specific groups of students; two examples include: those who have experienced trauma and those who live with autism are available for staff. At this time, 4,414 District staff hold current NVCI certification.

Additional District training has been developed as per Administrative Regulation HAH.AR District Seclusion Rooms, that addresses universal, targeted and specialized supports and strategies that are applicable in all classroom settings. Training overview:

Module A (universal) addresses the importance of relationships, conflict resolution and problem-solving skills as well as social competency training.

Module B (targeted), participants develop a greater understanding of the purpose and context of specific behaviours with different populations of students. Participants delve into trauma-informed practices, regulation and how to effectively use calming spaces and sensory motor rooms. (Module B is a pre-requisite to Module C.)

Module C (specialized) focuses on the implementation of intensive and individualized supports, such as the continuum of time-out. It also addresses physical restraint and seclusion rooms as crisis responses to unsafe behaviours.

Under the new District training standards, when a school has a seclusion room, staff supervising that space, as well as the principal and their designate, must have NVCI and modules B and C. The District is working towards meeting these new standards, to support District staff having timely access to the new training modules, they have been built into the District Professional Learning Days calendar, with a focus on modules B and C.

8. How is the District working to prevent the use of seclusion rooms and/or dedicated time-out rooms? What are the other alternatives to using these rooms?

The District firmly values that supporting a student with complex behaviour is a shared responsibility between District staff and families. Through intentional training, proactive planning, an IBSP is developed, in collaboration with parents/guardians; this plan includes a continuum of supports and strategies that are considered, applied, adapted and monitored for success.

Schools with seclusion rooms have staff trained according to District training standards. This training focuses on the neuro science behind complex behaviours and the proactive, preventative steps we can take when working with students. Additionally, schools work closely with members of their Inclusive Learning team to support students with complex needs. These multidisciplinary teams may include, but are not limited to: Speech Language Pathologists; Occupational Therapists; Early Years teacher consultants; Psychologists; Physical Therapists; School family liaisons; and Educational, Speech Language, and Occupational Therapy Assistants.

Programming reflects a range of developmentally and age-appropriate supports and interventions and is always intended to teach and support students toward positive and safe behaviour. Least restrictive interventions, within a continuum of positive behaviour supports, occur prior to the use of a crisis response to unsafe behaviour.

The circumstances around the use of a seclusion room as a crisis response to unsafe behaviour are documented. This documentation is reviewed by the staff working with the student to help them program for the child and make adjustments in the classroom intended to decrease incidents of crisis response to unsafe behaviour.

Schools work with parents/guardians around the development of the IBSP. If a seclusion room is not an option as a crisis response to unsafe behaviour, school staff and parents/guardians will work together to explore alternate solutions to crisis behaviour that maintain safety. A couple examples of possible solutions are:

- Parental presence in the school to help during a crisis.
- Calling emergency services as a response to a crisis.

9. What are the steps to decommission these rooms?

School principals work with staff and parents/guardians to consider the needs of the student population served within the school community and determine whether the school requires an operational seclusion room.

If the school determines that their seclusion room is no longer necessary, the principal notifies District Infrastructure, who then supports the school in decommissioning. Inclusive Learning consultants can assist schools in developing alternative spaces that provide sensory motor activities designed to support students to regulate and/or calm.

APPENDIX I*

Alberta Education (2008). [*Supporting positive behaviour in Alberta schools*](#) (Books 1, 2 & 3). Edmonton, Alberta: Alberta Education, Teaching and Learning Resources Branch.

Alberta Education (2002). [*The learning team*](#). Edmonton, Alberta: Alberta Education, Teaching and Learning Resources Branch.

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Corralejo, S., Jensen, S., Greathouse, A. & Ward, L. (2018). Parameters of time-out: Research update and comparison to programs, books and online recommendations. [*Behaviour Therapy*](#), 49, 1, 99-112.

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Mayer, R, Sulzer-Azaroff, B. & Wallace M. (2013). [*Behaviour analysis for lasting change*](#), 3rd Edition, New York: Sloan Publishing

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Yell, M.L. (1994). [*Time-out and students with behavior disorders: A legal analysis*](#). *Education and Treatment of Children*, 17, 293-301.

*This listing is not a comprehensive review of the topic, but represents items relevant to the context of school communities.