



AGENDA

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Julie Kusiek
Board Chair

Jan Sawyer
Board Vice-Chair

Dawn Hancock
Marsha Nelson
Sherri O'Keefe
Saadiq Sumar

The Board of Trustees of Edmonton School Division
One Kingsway
Edmonton, Alberta

Board Meeting

CFE McCauley Chambers
Tuesday, June 10, 2025
2 p.m.

- A. Land Acknowledgement
- B. O Canada
- C. **Recognition of National Indigenous Peoples Day**
- D. Roll Call
- E. Approval of the Agenda
- F. Communications from the Board Chair
- G. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools
- H. Approval of the Minutes
 - 1. DRAFT – Special Board Minutes – May 23, 2025
 - 2. DRAFT – Board Minutes – May 27, 2025
- I. **Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives on Items on the Meeting Agenda**
(NOTE: Pre-registration with the Board Office [780-429-8443] is required by 12 p.m. on Monday, June 9, 2025, to speak under this item.)
- J. **Reports**
 - 3. Student Senate 2024-2025 Work Plan Summary (Information)
 - 4. Specialized Learning Supports - Summary of Supports, Services and Programming (RFI Response)
- K. **Other Committee, Board Representative and Trustee Reports**
- L. **Trustees and Board Requests for Information**
- M. **Notices of Motion**
- N. **Meeting Dates**
- O. **Adjournment**

MINUTE BOOK**Special Board Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of Edmonton School Division of Alberta held in the Centre for Education McCauley Chambers on Friday, May 23, 2025, at 9 a.m.

Present:**Trustees**

Dawn Hancock
Julie Kusiek

Marsha Nelson
Sherri O'Keefe

Jan Sawyer
Saadiq Sumar

Officials

Angela Anderson
Todd Burnstad
Grace Cooke
Andrea Cooper

Karen Mills
Kathy Muhlethaler
Kent Pharis
Nancy Petersen
Cliff Richard

Darrel Robertson
Carrie Rosa
Ron Thompson
Liz Yule

Board Chair: Julie Kusiek

Recording Secretary: Catherine Angeles

A. Land Acknowledgement

The Board Chair called the meeting to order and called upon Trustee Hancock to provide a land acknowledgement.

Trustee Hancock respectfully acknowledged that we are on Treaty 6 territory—the traditional meeting grounds and gathering place to the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Metis, Dene and Nakota Sioux, who have called this place home for generations. As we move from the freshness of spring into the warmth and promise of summer, she is reminded of how the land comes alive—how it blooms, breathes, and carries the stories of those who have cared for it long before us. The rivers, the sky above, and the earth beneath us hold the knowledge, resilience, and deep connection of Indigenous peoples. With gratitude and humility, she recognized the footsteps of the many First Nations, Metis and Inuit who walked this land before her. Reconciliation is not a moment but a journey, and personally, she is committed to walking that path by listening deeply, learning continuously, and sharing the perspectives and experiences of the First Peoples with those around her.

B. Roll Call: 9:04 a.m.

The Superintendent advised that all Trustees were present.

MINUTE BOOK**C. Approval of the Agenda****MOVED BY Trustee Nelson:**

**"That the agenda for the May 23, 2025, Special Board meeting be approved as presented."
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

D. Reports**1. 2025-2026 School Year Budget****MOVED BY Trustee O'Keefe:**

**"That the 2025-2026 budget for Edmonton Public Schools as presented in Attachment IX be approved."
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

There was a short break in the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

The meeting resumed at 10:50 a.m.

2. 2022-2026 Four-Year Education Plan: Year Four Update**MOVED BY Trustee Sumar:**

**"That the Edmonton Public Schools' 2022-26 Four-Year Education Plan: Year Four be approved."
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

E. Adjournment: 11:35 a.m.

The Board Chair adjourned the meeting.

Julie Kusiek, Board Chair

Karen Mills, Director Board and
Superintendent Relations

MINUTE BOOK**Board Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of Edmonton School Division of Alberta held in the Centre for Education McCauley Chambers on Tuesday, May 27, 2025, at 2 p.m.

Present:**Trustees**

Dawn Hancock
Julie Kusiek

Marsha Nelson
Sherri O'Keefe

Jan Sawyer
Saadiq Sumar

Officials

Angela Anderson
Todd Burnstad
Grace Cooke
Andrea Cooper

Karen Mills
Kathy Muhlethaler
Kent Pharis
Nancy Petersen
Cliff Richard

Darrel Robertson
Carrie Rosa
Ron Thompson
Liz Yule

Board Chair: Julie Kusiek

Recording Secretary: Catherine Angeles

A. Land Acknowledgement

The Board Chair called the meeting to order and called upon Trustee O'Keefe to provide a land acknowledgement.

Trustee O'Keefe said as the warmth of spring awakens the land around the waters at the family lake lot, she acknowledged that, as a family, they gather on Treaty 6 territory, a traditional meeting ground and home for many Indigenous peoples, including the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Métis, and Nakota Sioux. She continues her commitment to personal professional development, noting most recently as a Board they had a presentation on the Seven Sacred Teachings. Trustee O'Keefe gave thanks for the sacred teachings that have been passed down through generations, as vital and life-giving as the spring thaw. She now recognizes and understands the important work of the beaver, a key animal at the lake, shaping the waterways and contributing to the health of the ecosystem for countless generations. She acknowledged the deep connection the First Nations had and continue to have with this land and its waters. As we experience the beauty of this season, she also reflected on the sacred teachings of Respect – for the land, each other, and all living things – and Wisdom – to learn from the past, understand the present, and build a better future together.

B. O Canada

MINUTE BOOK**C. Roll Call: 2:04 p.m.**

The Superintendent advised that all Trustees were present.

D. Approval of the Agenda

MOVED BY Trustee Hancock:

**"That the agenda for the May 27, 2025, Board meeting be approved as presented."
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

E. Communications from the Board Chair

The Board Chair said that a common question they get as Trustees with Edmonton Public Schools is "How can the public effectively advocate for public education and investment in Edmonton Public Schools?" She said the Board has created a series that will dive into some of the most common advocacy questions they receive, provide accurate context and provide suggestions on how the public might consider making their input heard - both directly to their Trustee or to another elected representative with a role to play in the puzzle of great public education. Suggestions for future topics can be emailed to Trustees. Currently, two topics in this series have been released and she said to look for more on Trustee social media accounts and SchoolZone postings.

The Board Chair thanked Trustee Sumar for presenting an opportunity for Trustees to discuss the value of Jordan's Principle funding for Division students. She reported that their letter to the federal government for Jordan's Principle funding has been sent and will be posted to epsb.ca.

The Board Chair shared that she, Vice-Chair Sawyer and Trustee Hancock, attended the State of Our City event put on by the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce last week. Events like this are a valuable opportunity for Trustees to connect with the movers and shakers of Edmonton to promote the importance of public education. She shared a few things from the panelists that stood out:

- Edmonton is awesome and we shouldn't be too humble about saying so
- Visitors love coming to Edmonton
- Edmonton's business community is here to keep growing our city and supporting a great place to live
- There's been a lot of progress over the past decade
- Working together and "how can I help" are powerful frames of mind
- Glass of the Sask, tap water by EPCOR, is top notch
- Extra shoutout to Kalen Anderson with BILD for acknowledging the need for schools alongside all the other infrastructure that's needed to keep pace with a growing city
- Hunter adds a lot of fun to an event. Go Oilers Go!

The Board Chair said that Edmonton Public Schools will be welcoming 125,000 students through our doors next year. It takes a village to raise a child and a community of diverse organizations - from

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government, not-for-profit, industry, business, the arts, public education and more - to support student success towards becoming the doers and leaders that will build on a thriving Edmonton into the future.

The Board Chair said the recent Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Zone 2/3 event honoured first-year teacher nominees for the Edwin Parr Award. Chair Kusiek congratulated Edmonton Public School's recipient Breanna Tran-Ly and the entire Weinlos School staff. She thanked the ASBA Zone 2/3 organizing committee and ASBA President Marilyn Dennis for the Edwin Parr Awards and for continuing to draw attention to the importance of celebrating first-year teachers in public education.

The Board Chair thanked Katherine O'Neil and the team at the YWCA for hosting and moderating an exciting panel on Trusteeship. She said it was an honour to participate in this panel alongside Dr. Vivian Abboud from ASBA and Edmonton Catholic Schools Board Chair Sandra Palazzo. They focused on the important role of trustees in connecting with the local community, the governance role and a few tips for anyone thinking about running in the upcoming election.

The Board Chair said that celebrations and grads have already begun. She encouraged everyone to enjoy this special time reflecting on the friendships made, the challenges overcome and the learning achieved.

F. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools

The Superintendent thanked everyone who was in attendance today, including SCOPE principals Scott Markine and Dan Vandermeer, and those watching online.

The Superintendent shared that last week, the Division was excited to receive confirmation from Alberta Education that we would receive funding for the Skilled Trades and Technology Collegiate. The Skilled Trades and Technology Collegiate will help students establish more robust career pathways to existing and future Division trade and technology offerings. Starting in fall 2025, students in Grades 9 to 12 who are interested in the trades will have one more route to pursue their interests. The Skilled Trades and Technology Collegiate will offer specialized programming, hands-on, work-integrated learning experiences and provide students in Grades 9 to 12 with clear pathways into apprenticeships, post-secondary education and careers in the trades. Through the Collegiate the Division will be able to combine existing offerings, including [Campus EPSB](#) and [dual credit](#) courses, with new and expanded programming. This is an amazing model for our students who will still remain enrolled at the Division school they regularly attend. Students will have an opportunity to access programming at their home school, other Division high schools, industry locations and post-secondary institutions. More information about how students can get involved will be shared soon.

The Superintendent thanked everyone for filling out the Division Feedback Survey this year. There was a great response rate of 63,056 responses, which included students, staff and families. The Division deeply appreciates the feedback from everyone to help us continue to build an even better system.

The Superintendent said that recently he received a letter from the Terry Fox Foundation about what an outstanding year schools around the Division had. Schools from across the Division raised \$242,194.01. A few of our schools reached "top fundraising" status in Alberta, including:

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- Avalon
- Dr. Donald Massey
- Crestwood
- Laurier Heights
- Johnny Bright
- Earl Buxton
- Donnan, and
- Meadowlark

Superintendent Robertson congratulated everyone who participated and raised funds for cancer research.

The Superintendent shared that the Division remains focused and committed to students and their learning, helping them to be successful in their learning journey as we enter in June. There's always a lot going on at this time of year like final exams, Provincial Achievement Tests, Diploma Exams, concerts, field trips, etc., but the entire Edmonton Public Schools team is committed to keeping the main thing the main thing: that's the success of students.

G. Approval of the Minutes

1. Board Meeting – May 6, 2025

MOVED BY Trustee Nelson:

**"That the minutes of the Board meeting held May 6, 2025, be approved as presented."
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

H. Recognition

2. Michael A. Strembitsky Award of Excellence Presentations

The Board Chair announced the following students as recipients of the Michael A. Strembitsky Award of Excellence:

- Gold Medal – Brielle Huang, Lillian Osborne School
- Silver Medal – Kade Campbell, Ross Sheppard School
- Bronze Medal – Ameena Taher, Old Scona School

There was a short break in the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 2:46 p.m. The livestream and recording of the meeting did not resume at this point.

MINUTE BOOK**I. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives on Items on the Meeting Agenda**

The Board of Trustees heard from seven registered speakers for this item.

There was a short break in the meeting at 3:10 p.m.

The meeting, livestream and recording resumed at 3:18 p.m.

J. Reports**3. First, Second, Third and Final Reading of Board Policy DK.BP Division Technology**

MOVED BY Trustee Sumar:

“That the Board Policy DK.BP Technology be read for the first, second, third and final time and be approved.”

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

4. Advocacy for the Education of Undocumented Children

MOVED BY Board Chair Kusiek:

“1. That the Board of Trustees request that the Minister of Education and Childcare put forth amendments to the *Education Act* that authorize the enrolment of undocumented children in Alberta school jurisdictions, and amend the Funding Manual for School Authorities to provide full funding to support such enrolments.”

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

“2. That the Board of Trustees works alongside our partner organizations and other school boards to further promote this advocacy for Provincial authorization for enrolment and funding of undocumented students.”

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

5. Strategic Plan Update: Priority 1 Literacy and Numeracy

An update was provided on the progress towards Priority 1 of the 2022–26 Strategic Plan, *“Build on outstanding learning opportunities for all students”*, highlighting work and results for Goal 2 *“Focus on literacy and numeracy so students demonstrate growth and achieve learning outcomes”*.

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Items 6 and 7 were incorporated into an information omnibus.

6. Seclusion and Physical Restraint Update

Information was provided regarding the use of seclusion and physical restraint. Beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, reporting on seclusion rooms will be incorporated into the Annual Education Results Review (AERR).

7. Caucus Committee Reports

Information was provided regarding actions taken at the Caucus Committee meetings.

K. Other Committee, Board Representatives and Trustee Reports - None

L. Trustees and Board Requests for Information - None

M. Notices of Motion - None

N. Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, June 10, 2025, at 2 p.m.

O. Adjournment: 4:34 p.m.

The Board Chair adjourned the meeting.

Julie Kusiek, Board Chair

Karen Mills, Director Board and
Superintendent Relations

DATE: June 10, 2025

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Student Senate 2024-2025 Work Plan Summary

ORIGINATOR: Karen Mills, Director Board and Superintendent Relations

RESOURCE STAFF: Sean Jones, Nancy Petersen, Wanas Radwan

REFERENCE: [Student Senate 2024-2025 Work Plan](#)

ISSUE

The Student Senate is presenting a summary of their work in the 2024-2025 school year.

BACKGROUND

At the November 5, 2024 Board meeting, the Student Trustees presented the Student Senate 2024-2025 work plan. They shared that four working groups had been developed: a live career exploration event group, a live diversity event group, an academic support information group and a podcast group.

CURRENT SITUATION

Since November 5, the Student Senate has held seven meetings, with a focus on project work. At the February 11 Board meeting, Student Trustees provided an update on their work. On June 2, the Senators held their last meeting of the year to celebrate this year's work and welcome next year's Student Senators.

Each team successfully completed their project. Using a project planning guide to assist them, they set objectives, timelines, action plans, budgets and evaluation strategies. This planning paid off as evidenced by the following outcomes:

- a live career exploration event, entitled *What's Next?*, with speakers from a wide variety of fields and participants from across several Division high schools
- a live diversity event, entitled *Unity Through Diversity*, that brought together students from diverse backgrounds to discuss identity and belonging
- a [brochure](#) and [toolkit](#) with strategies to assist with time management, effective studying techniques and stress management
- [three podcasts](#) addressing balancing social and academic life, advice for incoming high school students and words of wisdom from a student success coach

KEY POINTS

- Student Senators created a 2024-2025 work plan.
- Student Senators formed four project groups.
- Each project team successfully completed their projects.

SJ:KM:NP:WR:km

DATE: June 10, 2025

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Specialized Learning Supports - Summary of Supports, Services and Programming (Response to Request for Information #026)

ORIGINATOR: Kathy Muhlethaler, Assistant Superintendent, Instructional and Strategic Division Supports

RESOURCE STAFF: Dave Bennell, Todd Burnstad, Madonna Proulx, Ariff Asaria

REFERENCE: April 1, 2025 Board meeting (Trustee Sawyer)
[Alberta Education: Inclusive Education](#)
[HA.BP Inclusive Education](#)
[HA.AR Students in Need of Specialized Supports and Services](#)

ISSUE

At the April 1, 2025 Board meeting, Administration was asked to provide a response to the following:

Can Administration please provide a summary report to the Board of Trustees that outlines the range of supports, services and programming for students requiring specialized learning supports. Please include information on financial support for these services both from the Provincial government and the Division budget. Please also include information on the range of choice for families relative to full integration or partial integration in a regular classroom setting, Division centres and the potential of an Autism Centre for Excellence.

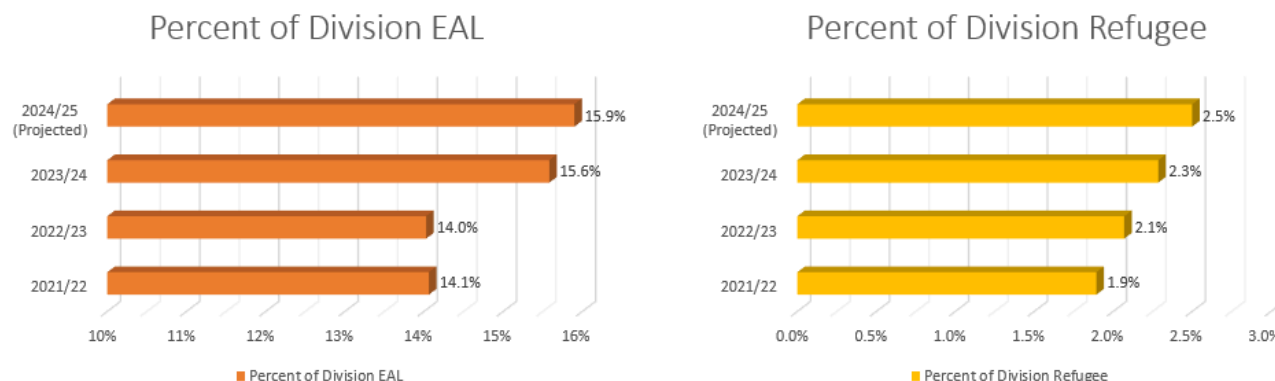
INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of the supports, services, and programming available through Edmonton Public Schools for students requiring specialized learning supports. It includes information on the spectrum of placement and program options for families, and provides context regarding potential future developments, including an Autism Centre for Excellence as well as information on the funding received from Alberta Education and how the Division allocates these resources.

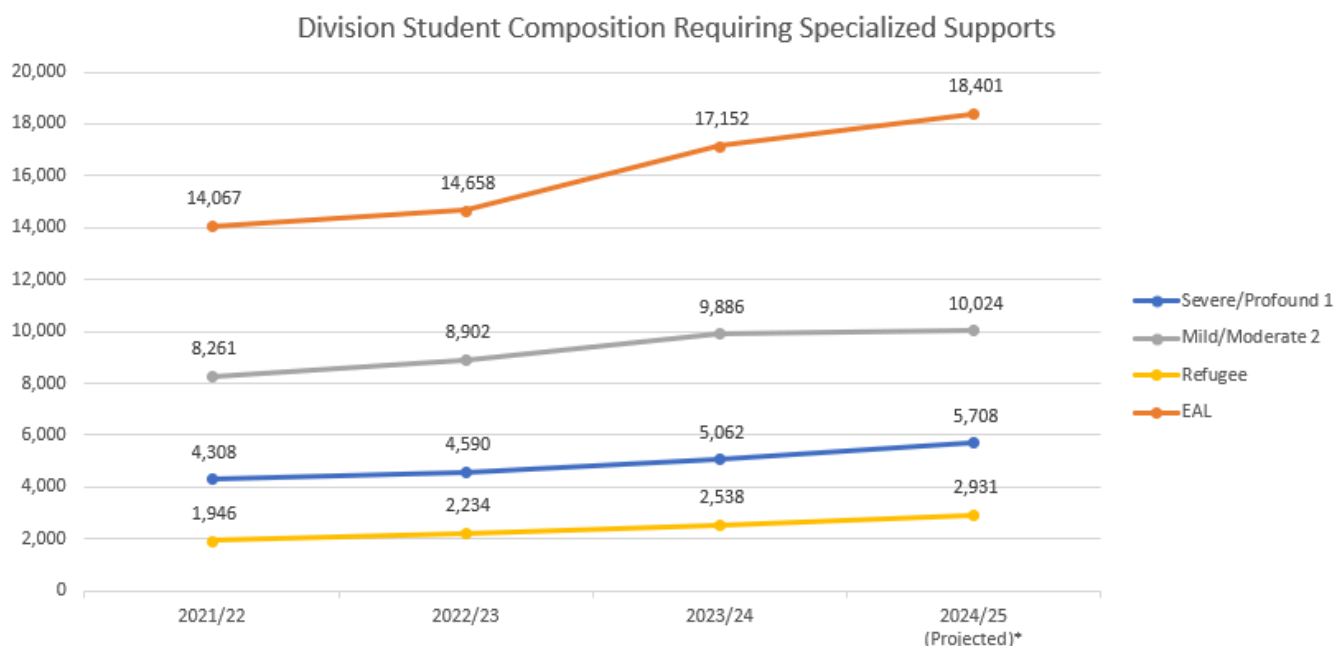
CURRENT SITUATIONEnrolment

As reported in our 2024–2025 Budget, the Division is experiencing significant enrolment growth and has grown by 18 per cent, or over 17,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) students over the last five years.

The composition of our students is also becoming increasingly diverse as we are seeing additional growth in both our English as an Additional Language (EAL) and our Refugee students relative to our entire student population.



The chart below shows the enrolment trend for all our students that require specialized supports.



Notes:

* 2024-2025 Projected enrolment counts are based on allocation levels that correspond to Mild/Moderate and Severe/Profound supports needed as determined by EPSB's Budget Department and not the Alberta Education codes.

Severe/Profound¹ - A child/student with a severe Alberta Education special education code has been diagnosed with a disability or disorder by a qualified professional. In addition to a diagnosis, there is clear evidence regarding how the disability/disorder impacts the child's/student's participation and learning in an educational environment. A student with a severe code requires extensive or constant support in the classroom. Alberta Education severe codes include: Intellectual Disability Severe (code 41), Severe Emotional/Behavioral Disability (code 42), Severe Multiple Disability (code 43), Severe

Physical/Medical Disability (code 44), Deafness (code 45), Blindness (code 46), and Severe Language Delay (ECS children only, code 47).

Mild/Moderate² - A child/student with a mild/moderate Alberta Education special education code has been diagnosed with a disability or disorder by a qualified professional. In addition to a diagnosis, there is clear evidence regarding how the disability/disorder impacts the child's/student's participation and learning in an educational environment. A student with a mild/moderate code frequently requires adult support in the classroom. Alberta Education mild/moderate codes include: Intellectual Disability Mild (code 51), Intellectual Disability Moderate (code 52), Emotional/Behavioral Disability (code 53), Learning Disability (code 54), Hearing Disability (code 55), Visual Disability (code 56), Communication Disability/Disorder (code 57), Physical/Medical Disability (code 58), Multiple Disability (code 59), and Gifted and Talented (code 80).

Range of Supports, Service and Programming for Students Requiring Specialized Learning Supports

Edmonton Public Schools has a long history of supporting parent choice through a range of programs and programming options including (but not limited to) regular, alternative and Division centre specialized programming.

The Division provides a continuum of universal, targeted, and specialized supports and services to meet the unique learning needs of students. All schools have access to specialized supports and services through the Specialized Learning Supports (SLS) school-linked teams. Every Division school is supported by a dedicated school-linked team of consultants. This means students have equitable access to services and supports, no matter which program they choose or where they attend school.

Nine school-linked teams are available to schools through SLS. Each school linked team includes consultants providing services in the areas of:

- Adapted Physical Education (2.4 FTE)
- Assistive Technology (3.0 FTE)
- Educational Audiology (3.4 FTE)
- Educational Behaviour (15.0 FTE)
- Braille Transcriber (1.0 FTE)
- Occupational Therapy (28.74 FTE)
- Physical Therapy (5.5 FTE)
- Psychology (22.9 FTE)
- Academic Programming (12.0 FTE)
- School Family Liaison (9.4 FTE)
- Social Work (13.7 FTE)
- Speech and Language Assistant (16.86 FTE)
- Speech Language Pathologist (49.7 FTE)
- Supervisor (9.0 FTE)
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing (2.6 FTE)
- Vision (3.0 FTE)

Autism Support Team

In addition to the nine existing school-linked teams, a dedicated Autism Support Team (AST) was established effective September 2024. This multidisciplinary team was created in response to the growing demand for the Division Centre Interactions program. To support this increased demand, the

AST has implemented a coaching model aimed at building the capacity and skills of beginning teachers, with a focus on enhancing the academic and social success of Autistic students. Additionally, professional development sessions have been developed and delivered to expand the knowledge base of educators involved in programming for Autistic students. The professional learning opportunities provided by the Autism Support Team are available to all staff across the Division. The AST is composed of:

- Supervisor (1.0 FTE)
- Educational Behaviour Consultants (4.0 FTE)
- Speech Language Pathologists (4.0 FTE)
- Speech and Language Assistant (1.0 FTE)
- Occupational Therapists (4.0 FTE)
- Academic Programming Consultants (2.0 FTE)
 - Support for adapted and modified programming including teaching of emergent literacy and numeracy.

SLS consultants provide various levels of targeted and specialized services including classroom consultation, coaching and formal assessment when required. SLS consultants also work to help build the capacity of teaching teams by offering various types of professional development across a range of learning needs and learner profiles. Examples of professional learning opportunities provided by SLS consultants include:

- responding to specific requests from schools and catchments
- [conducting staff professional learning sessions 2024-2025](#)

Inclusive Education

[Alberta Education](#) defines inclusive education as:

An attitude and approach that embraces diversity and learner differences and promotes equal opportunities for all learners in Alberta. Alberta's education system is built on a values-based approach to accepting responsibility for all children and students.

Every learner has unique needs. Some learners have profound and ongoing needs and others have short-term or situation-based needs. This calls for flexible and responsive learning environments that can adapt to the changing needs of learners.

For some learners, the most responsive and flexible learning environments may include:

- *instruction and support in a grade-level classrooms with same-aged peers*
- *individualized instruction in smaller group settings*
- *a specialized classroom or setting*
- *one-on-one instruction*
- *a combination of all the above*

Edmonton Public Schools believes in the value of parental choice and is committed to providing inclusive education to students through a range of [programming options](#) and opportunities such as regular, alternative, and Division centre specialized programs.

Program Choice

The Division provides choice for parents through a range of program options. Irrespective of the school or program chosen, students are part of an inclusive school community providing a sense of belonging and relevant learning opportunities enabling each student to achieve success.

Division schools may accommodate several programs such as a regular program, an alternative program and one or more Division centre specialized programs. Each program contributes to the richness and vibrancy of the inclusive school community.

For parents of children with specialized learning needs, the designated school is the guaranteed entry point for all students, and is the first placement option considered. Parents may also request to enrol in an alternative or Division centre specialized program. Specific to Division centre specialized programs, these operate in two ways:

1. A [Division centre program](#) class may be located in a community school that also accommodates regular and/or alternative programs. In these cases, there may be opportunities for students enrolled in Division centre programs to receive instruction in regular or alternative program classes for parts of the school day or for specific subjects to support student learning needs.
2. A Division centre program may also operate as a whole school specialized program. Examples of this include the Academy at King Edward, Alberta School for the Deaf, and L. Y. Cairns School as well as the Tevie Miller Heritage School program. Below is a brief description of each:
 - Academy at King Edward (AKE): The Academy at King Edward is a Division Strategies site that focuses on programming for students with learning disabilities. AKE School serves students from Grade 3 to Grade 9
 - Alberta School for the Deaf (ASD): ASD serves Deaf and Hard of Hearing students from Grade 1 to Grade 12.
 - L. Y. Cairns: Serves students from Grade 7 to Grade 12 with a wide range of mild to moderate specialized learning needs.
 - Tevie Miller Heritage School Program: The Tevie Miller Heritage School Program is for students in Kindergarten to Grade 6 with diagnosed communication delays.

Whole-school specialized programming creates a centre of excellence model where teachers are able to learn from one another, collaborate, build expertise and provide a range of opportunities and supports targeted to the specific learning needs of the students they serve. They may also provide a sense of community for families with children that have similar learning needs.

In addition to the whole-school specialized programming offered at Edmonton Public Schools, there are charter and private schools offering whole-school specialized programming. Examples include the Edmonton Academy serving students diagnosed with specific learning disabilities/disorders and Children's Autism Service (CASE) Jim Jiwani Autism Academy serving students diagnosed with Autism.

Autism Centre of Excellence:

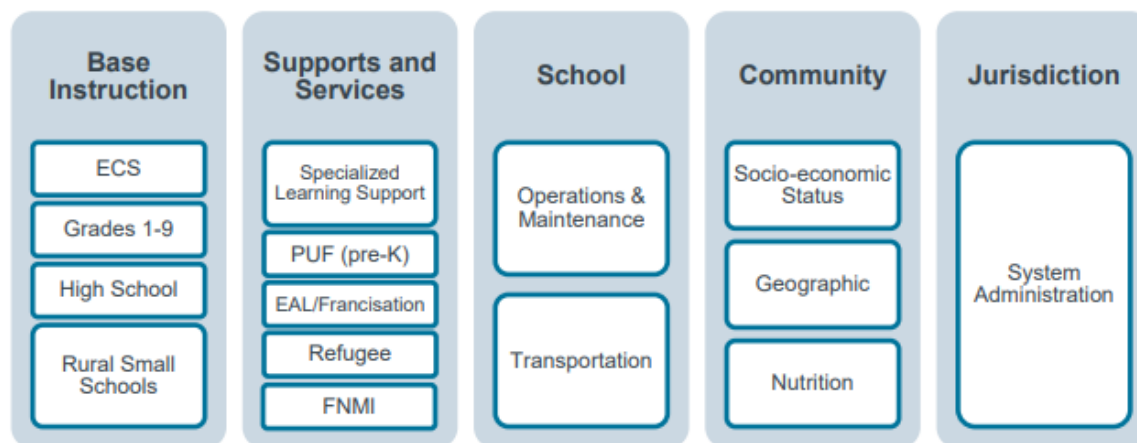
The proposed Autism Centre of Excellence (ACE) would be a whole-school specialized program for students diagnosed with Autism. Similar to the above whole-school specialized programming sites, there would be opportunities to build teacher expertise, share resources, collaborate and provide learning opportunities targeted to supporting the needs of the students they serve.

Specific grade levels have not yet been determined as the Autism Centre for Excellence is in the design phase. The Autism Centre for Excellence would result in an additional program choice available to parents of children diagnosed with Autism.

Financial Support: Provincial Funding and Division Allocations for Specialized Learning Supports

Provincial Funding

Alberta's funding model consists of 15 major grant allocations as outlined in the following diagram.



The Alberta Government provides funding for specialized learning supports primarily through the Specialized Learning Support (SLS) grant within the Supports and Services category. The SLS grant is designed to support school divisions in addressing the needs of students requiring:

- Specialized programming (e.g., cognitive, behavioural, physical, or sensory support)
- Professional services (e.g., speech-language pathologists, psychologists, occupational therapists)
- Inclusive education practices

This funding is not based on individual student coding, but rather on a formula that considers division enrolment, demographics, and historical data.

Total funding for the Supports and Services category makes up approximately 16 per cent of the total Division's Provincial Operating revenue, however, the Division spends approximately 18 per cent of our operating budget on expenses to support students with specialized needs.

Division Budget Allocations

The Division allocates substantial resources from its operational budget to ensure students with diverse learning needs receive appropriate services and supports as detailed above. In order to do this, the Division utilizes all the funding received from grants within the Supports and Services category as well as redirecting approximately \$30 million of funding received through other Provincial grants.

KEY POINTS

- Edmonton Public Schools offers a range of inclusive programs and programming opportunities for students with specialized learning needs. Parent choice is supported through the offering of regular, alternative, and Division centre programs.

- Division centre programs may be located within schools that also accommodate regular and/or alternative programming or may be a whole school specialized program.
- The Division provides a continuum of universal, targeted, and specialized supports and services to meet the unique learning needs of students. All schools have access to specialized supports and services through the Specialized Learning Supports (SLS) school-linked teams.
- The proposed Autism Centre for Excellence would be a model similar to other whole school specialized programs currently offered in Edmonton Public Schools and in other school authorities in the Edmonton area and would provide an additional choice for parents.
- Funding is received annually from the Province for the provision of specialized learning supports for students, however, several financial challenges remain:
 - Rising complexity: the Division's enrolment growth includes an increasing number of students requiring additional supports, which puts an increased strain on resources.
 - Funding gaps: Provincial SLS funding is not directly tied to student diagnosis or coding, which results in insufficient funding to meet the actual student needs.
 - Workforce pressures: recruitment and retaining specialized professionals (e.g., therapists, psychologists) remains difficult due to high demand and competition.

APPENDICESAPPENDIX I [Staff Professional Learning Sessions 2024–2025](#)

DB:kd

Staff Professional Learning Sessions 2024-2025	
An Introduction to Progress Reports for Students Receiving Adapted or Modified Programing	This session will look at the purpose of progress reports for students in an interactions classroom. Topics will include, adapted vs modified programing, how progress reports are structured, and initial data sources you can use to determine a student's GLP.
Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) in Action: SHOW your students Language using Language Acquisition through Motor Planning (LAMP) Words for Life	This session will focus on how to SHOW (or model) language for students using LAMP Words for Life. We'll keep your hands busy practicing messages that SHOW your students how to connect socially, make small talk, share opinions, describe, and advocate.
Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) in Action: SHOW your students Language using TouchChat WordPower 60 Basic	This session will focus on how to SHOW (or model) language for students using TouchChat WordPower 60 Basic. We'll keep your hands busy practicing messages that SHOW your students how to connect socially, make small talk, share opinions, describe, and advocate.
Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) in Action: Small talk, share Opinions, Describe, and Advocate (SODA) TouchChat and LAMP	This session will focus on how to SHOW (or model) language for students using both LAMP Words for Life and TouchChat WordPower 60 Basic on an iPad. We'll keep your hands busy practicing messages that SHOW your students how to connect socially, make small talk, share opinions, describe, and advocate.
Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Live: ChatEditor as a Universal Support in the Classroom	Participants will: Understand what Chat Editor is and how to access it on their classroom computers. Learn how to create and move between the LAMP Words For Life and WordPower vocabularies on Chat Editor. Explore ways to use Chat Editor to provide visual support for language development for all students in your classroom. Practice editing vocabularies and creating learning materials using Chat Editor.
Autism 101: Developing Eyes for Autism	If you've heard the saying "If you've seen one student with ASD, you've seen one student with ASD", then you know that you may often wonder to yourself "What is ASD and how do I support my students?" This session will provide a brief overview of what ASD is and isn't, challenges students with ASD might have in the classroom, and what ASD might look like. This interactive session will allow for open conversation and Q&A to discuss those students that stay with you at the end of the day.
Co-Regulation: The Dance of Shared Emotions	This session explores the concept of co-regulation; a powerful tool for supporting the regulation and learning of our Autistic learners. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of co-regulation, the impact of their "own state" on the state of the student, and learn practical strategies for supporting students in times of distress.

Staff Professional Learning Sessions 2024-2025	
Complex Behaviour Training - Module A	This workshop focuses on Positive Behaviour Support as seen through the Pyramid of Intervention. We need an integrated system including school-wide, classroom management and individual student support. This provides school staff with effective strategies to facilitate academic achievement and healthy social development of students in a safe, supportive learning environment. Suggestions and strategies presented are based on current research and best practices.
Complex Behaviour Training - Module B - Trauma and Regulation Impact on Behaviours	This workshop will focus on trauma-informed practices and the importance of regulation. Participants will develop a greater understanding of the purpose and context of specific behaviours with different populations of students. The use of alternative spaces as targeted intervention strategies including calming spaces and sensory motor rooms will also be presented. Recommended for staff working with students who have experienced trauma and have difficulties regulating. Best taken as a series A, B, and then C.
Complex Behaviour Training - Module C - Specialized Behaviour Supports	Data collection, de-escalation and the continuum of time-out procedures will be presented. Writing effective Individual Behaviour Support Plans will also be covered. Recommended for staff working with students who present with challenging behaviour.
Comprehensive Literacy for Students with Complex Needs: Conventional	This full day session will provide an overview of the components of Conventional Literacy including reading comprehension and vocabulary instruction, self-directed reading, word study, and writing to support literacy development for students with significant disabilities.
Comprehensive Literacy for Students with Complex Needs: Emergent	This session will look at the components of Emergent Literacy including shared reading, predictable chart writing, alphabet and phonological awareness, emergent writing, independent reading, and symbol-based communication to support literacy development for students with significant disabilities. Participants will be engaged in a variety of activities.
Differentiation, What it is and Practical Implementation Ideas	Join us to talk about the ways to differentiate and some practical examples of assignments/projects that focus on reading, writing and oral language development.
Embedding Literacy in Complex Classrooms	Structuring your day to embed Literacy for students with significant disabilities and complex communication needs. This session will dive into practical examples and teaching ideas focused on comprehensive literacy skills.
Embedding Numeracy	This professional learning session will provide an opportunity to explore foundational numeracy concepts, collaborate with colleagues, discover practical resources, and provide dedicated time to plan a comprehensive lesson. In this session, participants will strengthen their teaching toolkit and gain valuable strategies to support student success in numeracy. A chromebook/laptop will be required. Access to Learn Alberta is also recommended.

Staff Professional Learning Sessions 2024-2025	
Emergent Writing Strategies & Tools for Students With Complex Bodies	Recognizing the diverse needs of learners, particularly those who may face challenges with physically accessing traditional writing tools, this in-person session aims to empower educators with innovative strategies to foster early literacy skills. This session is designed to equip educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively support emergent writing for students who require alternative access. We will focus on identifying and implementing appropriate assistive technology tools for both Predictable Chart Writing and Independent Writing routines.
Enhancing Communication Through Aided Language Stimulation/Language Modeling	<p>Participants will engage in demonstrations using a range of AAC tools, both high-tech (e.g., TouchChat, Chat Editor) and low-tech (e.g., communication flipbooks, core boards). The session will include interactive, hands-on learning experiences designed to be both enjoyable and informative.</p> <p>This professional development is particularly valuable for those supporting students (K-12) who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have complex communication needs • are English language learners • experience difficulties with speech clarity • are non speaking communicators
Executive Function and Autistic Learners: Strategies for Success	Explore the concept of executive function and its impact on autistic learners. Gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and strengths associated with executive function in autism, and learn practical strategies to support these learners in academic and social settings.
Exploring Stories Through Read Alouds and Shared Reading	This session is designed to develop teacher and educational assistants knowledge in reading for learners with significant disabilities and complex communication needs. Come learn how to implement Read Alouds, Shared Reading along with AAC ideas for student success.
Gestalt Language Processing: Understanding and Supporting Echolalia	In this session, we will explore the connection between autistic communication and echolalia, focusing on the concept of Gestalt Language Processing (GLP) as a natural way of learning language. This session will also provide practical strategies for supporting Gestalt Language Processors through play, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), and literacy instruction.
Getting in the Groove with Routines and Visuals	This session will discuss the importance of using routines and visuals to facilitate learning and regulation for students with significant disabilities and complex communication needs. Come learn the "what, why and how" of implementing these strategies for student success.
High Impact Literacy Practices for Supporting Struggling Learners	Are you looking for ways to support students who have been identified with special needs? Do you wonder how to implement strategies from specialized reports into the classroom context? Join us to collaborate and plan next steps in instruction. There is no silver bullet, but we can work together to find a path forward using a diagnostic teaching approach.

Staff Professional Learning Sessions 2024-2025	
How We Design and Organize Spaces Matters: Setting Up the School Environment for Success	The session will discuss the importance of predictable, sequential and sensory sensitive environments to optimize the participation, learning and safety of Autistic students.
Individual Program Plans (IPP's) in an Interactions Classroom	This session will look at all sections of an IPP with a focus on goals, instructional strategies, baseline data, and reviews.
It Depends! Choices in Independent Projects for Gifted Students	This session will provide practical ideas on how to help students choose topics and what their projects might look like. Just because a child is gifted doesn't mean they stay on task and there may be issues with too much freedom. And what is the teacher's role in all of this? Explore a variety of project templates and sample formats to help ensure your students have the materials and guidelines to satisfy their curiosity and demonstrate their learning. Whether you are looking for "in the box" or "out of the box", we will have ideas for you to get started. These projects may serve and "swerve" to inspire and may be adapted for a variety of age groups, interests, learning styles, and areas of strength.
Make and Take Session: Creating art for self-expression and regulation	Let's explore ways to design opportunities for our students to experience art as a tool for self-expression and regulation. We'll consider materials that are available in and out of the classroom and ways to set up the environment to promote access to art materials. Make and Take stations will include digital art, big movement art, process/sensory art, and use of loose parts to light the imagination.
Make and Take Session: It's a Numbers Game! Come create literacy and numeracy games.	Join this interactive, hands-on workshop where you'll create engaging numeracy and literacy games to bring back to your classroom! Spark creativity, enhance learning, and leave with ready-to-use activities your students will love.
Make and Take Session: Let's Practice Language Acquisition and Motor Planning (LAMP) & TouchChat	Bring your device. This interactive session will provide participants with practical strategies for effectively communicating with children who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices. We will explore the TouchChat and LAMP apps. Learn techniques and take home cheat sheets, to support your students to engage in fun, interactive play and classroom activities that foster communication and social-emotional growth. Did we mention? Bring your device!
Make and Take Session: Mastering Multi Grade Lesson Planning for the Complex Classroom	Collaborate with an Academic Programming Consultant and an Education & Behavior Consultant to create multi-grade lesson plans. Bring your technology and get ready for an interactive, hands-on experience!
Make and Take Session: Sensory Ways to Play and Learn	Join us for a hands-on workshop creating sensory activities—from tidy to delightfully messy! Discover how to use sensory tools to introduce or adapt academic learning. We'll also explore a variety of readily available classroom sensory resources.

Staff Professional Learning Sessions 2024-2025	
Make and Take Session: Unplug & Reconnect, A Mindfulness Workshop for Educators	This workshop provides a gentle introduction to mindfulness practices. Through breathing exercises and calming techniques, guided imagery and mindful movement; participants will learn to cultivate present moment awareness and reduce stress. No prior experience is necessary. Leave feeling more relaxed, centered, and equipped with tools to incorporate mindfulness into daily life. Come dressed in comfortable clothes.
Make and Take Session: Visuals for all!	Bring your scissors and get ready to create! All visuals (TouchChat and LAMP) will be provided for you to cut, assemble, and take home—perfect for lanyards, coreboards, or flipbooks. Hands-on, practical, and ready to use in your classroom!
Moving Toward Conventional Literacy Instruction for Students with Complex Needs	Students with significant disabilities and complex communication needs who have had adequate emergent literacy learning opportunities will likely benefit from a shift toward conventional literacy instruction. This session will highlight the components of Comprehensive Conventional Literacy instruction, including practical examples and teaching tips, and discuss how to program for both emergent and conventional literacy instruction.
Multimodal and Engaging Teaching Practices - Setting up the environment to promote interaction and enhance learning	We will explore ways to meet diverse learning and developmental needs, by designing classrooms that offer multiple ways for all students to access information. We will discuss Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and the value of using multiple modes of representation to engage students and give them ways to express their learning. We will touch on curricular outcomes and there will be an opportunity to put ideas into practice by creating a plan that can be implemented in your classroom immediately.
Neurodiversity & Shifting Practice: Regulation	The concept of neurodiversity helps us to understand how people experience the world in different ways. Participants will learn about: (a) neurodiversity-affirming care and the importance of shifting practice toward this model in support of diverse classrooms; (b) ableism and its impact in our educational environments.
Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NCI) conversations applied to Interactions	This session is an opportunity for NCI certified staff to engage in collaborative conversation and real time practice to refine their de-escalation, disengagement, and holding skills when supporting autistic students.
Nurturing Autonomy: Alternatives to Physical Prompting	This presentation will delve into the importance of developing self-advocacy skills in autistic children. We will discuss the negative impact of physical prompting techniques and explore alternative strategies that promote autonomy and independence. By focusing on communication, choice-making, and regulation, we can empower autistic children to become effective self-advocates.

Staff Professional Learning Sessions 2024-2025	
Read & Write for Google with Co:Writer Merger (Part 1)	Together we will learn about the features in Google Read & Write that support reading, writing and revision for ALL students in your classroom. We will also showcase the updated toolbar and new embedded features from Co:Writer, a powerful word prediction writing and spelling tool.
Read&Write for Google Chrome	Read&Write for Google Chrome (RW4GC) is a universal literacy tool available to all students and staff in Edmonton Public Schools. RW4GC offers a number of assistive technology supports for reading, writing, and organization that make resources accessible to students. Features include speech to text, text to speech, word prediction, image and talking dictionaries, and vocabulary development. During this workshop, you will have the opportunity to learn about each of the tools, how they work in Google Drive, with PDF's and on the web.
Relationship Building and Including Student's Interests in Programming	This session will discuss the importance of building trusting relationships with students to promote engagement in the classroom. Discover ways to increase classroom participation by including student's interests across different curriculum areas.
Roots of Regulation in Autistic Learners	Roots of regulation addresses the physical stressors of autistic learners in the classroom including sleep, feeding, toileting, and sensory processing. Various stressor types and strategies to support regulation in the classroom will be explored.
Sensory Exploration	In this session we will review the senses and discuss what we can do to help our students who are over or understimulated in each sense. We will then make some different, child-friendly sensory activities you can bring back to your students and make with them in your classroom. **Please note the session is NOT scent free.
Social Narratives for Learning Environments - Learning Through Stories	This session will discuss the importance of social narratives to bring awareness to positive neuro affirming practices in sharing stories to help students identify a situation, teach a skill or help students to interact with their school setting and people.
Story Champs	Introduction to Story Champs, an interactive oral language program which is used to strengthen academic language skills in students from diverse backgrounds.
Supporting Inclusion for Students from an Interactions Class	This session is designed to discuss the benefits of inclusion for Autistic students as well as provide participants with helpful tips and tools to support inclusion.
Supporting Students with ADHD in the classroom	<p>We will provide information related to the presentation of ADHD, particularly within the school setting. As well, we will discuss strategies for school staff to support students with ADHD in the classrooms.</p> <p>What is ADHD? What are the comorbidities of ADHD? What is executive function? How to support students with ADHD in the classroom.</p>

Staff Professional Learning Sessions 2024-2025	
Supporting Students with Complex Feeding Needs	This session will briefly review some of the body systems involved in eating and popular myths, and then provide strategies for school staff, especially EAs, who are supporting students who struggle with and/or need assistance with feeding and eating.
Supporting Students with Complex Needs: Comprehensive Numeracy	Using a flowchart modeled after the Comprehensive Literacy framework, this session will focus on supporting both emergent and conventional numeracy skills and routines to support all learners. While this session will provide routines to support all learners, the focus will be on emergent numeracy components.
Supporting Students with Complex Needs: Extending the Numeracy Conversation	These sessions are a follow-up to Supporting Students with Complex Needs: Comprehensive Numeracy PL opportunities. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in collaborative conversations to extend and enhance comprehensive numeracy instruction in their classroom.
Supporting Students with Complex Needs: First Author	First Author, developed in partnership with an interdisciplinary team of specialists including Dr. Janet Sturm, is a comprehensive curriculum for students with complex needs that guides educators to teach beginning writing skills, helping all students learn to write as a form of expressive communication. For this Community of Practice (CoP), the First Author resource will be implemented in several Interactions, Opportunity, ISP, and CLS classrooms.
Supporting Students with Complex Needs: Getting Started with Readtopia	Readtopia is a comprehensive instructional program developed for older students with moderate to severe disabilities. Readtopia employs evidence-based approaches to teach English Language Arts and reading as part of integrated curriculum units rooted in meaningful Social Studies and Science topics. Drs. Karen Erickson and Caroline Musselwhite are contributors to Readtopia and have ensured the resources follow the Emergent Literacy framework.
Supporting Students with Complex Needs: Getting Started with ReadtopiaGO	ReadtopiaGO is a comprehensive instructional program developed for upper elementary, middle and high school students with moderate to severe disabilities.
Supporting Students with Complex Needs: IPPs - Planning and Communicating Student Growth	We have to write them, but how can we make them useful tools? This session will cover the IPP process and how to use IPPs to effectively communicate to parents about how students are doing and use them as a working document within your teams!
Supporting Students with Complex Needs: Readtopia and ReadtopiaGO - Moving Forward with Assessments	This session will focus on how to use the available assessment materials to further engage student learning.
Supporting Students with Complex Needs: Writing for Authentic Reasons	How can we make writing more meaningful for our students? In this session, we will explore ways that students can use writing to make authentic connections to their friends, family, school, and community. In addition, this session will explore how students can use writing as a tool for self-discovery and awareness.

Staff Professional Learning Sessions 2024-2025	
Supporting Students with Complex Physical needs: medical information, wheelchair/walker management, lifts, transfers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining and understanding - disability - mobility equipment and fit - positioning - safety • Proper lift and transfer techniques for a student and adult • Intro to activities of daily living skills
Supporting Twice Exceptional - 2E Students	This presentation will provide information about students with 2E and strategies to support them using a strength-based lens. Resources will be provided to identify 2E students with various disabilities, to develop IPPs, and to design appropriate programming and supports.
Supporting Writers with Significant Disabilities and Complex Communication Needs	This session is designed to develop teacher and educational assistants knowledge and skills in writing instruction with a focus on emergent learners with significant disabilities and complex communication needs. This writing session is focused on instructional processes and preparing students with complex communication needs for writing.
The Development of Executive Functioning - How to Support Children as their Brains Keep Changing	Executive function (EF) are a set of cognitive skills that develop up to early adulthood, and include a person's ability to self-regulate, plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully. Participants will learn about the development of executive functioning from childhood to adulthood, how EF can influence students' behavior and learning, and possible supports to help students' changing brains.
Topics in braille	Discussion of topics in braille and tactile graphics for visually impaired students.
Understanding and supporting students with selective mutism	Discuss the features of selective mutism and other common characteristics of children with the disorder. Explore how selective mutism differs from other factors that might impact a child's ability to speak comfortably in the school setting. Provide suggestions for supporting students with selective mutism in the school setting.