

Memorandum

To: Assistant Directors of Programs

From: Dr. Marian Fushell
Assistant Deputy Minister
Primary, Elementary & Secondary Education

Date: June 24, 2010

Subject: **Inclusion**

In recent weeks, there have been a number of concerns raised by parents and stakeholders external to education about the province's move towards more inclusive practices in our schools. By way of clarification, I note the following:

Phased Approach to Implementation Since Spring, 2009, 65 schools have participated in the Inclusive Schools Initiative. This initiative has a 5-year implementation plan to provide all schools with professional learning on inclusive practices, differentiated instruction and co-teaching models. The five year implementation plan is deliberate as implementation of this practice is gradual and with the best interest of children through transitioning over time. It will take a number of years for some schools to implement and the importance of building confidence in staff, students and parents is paramount. This is clearly a process and does not mean full inclusion but inclusion when it is in the best educational interest of children. It is acknowledged that schools that have been involved in the Inclusive Schools Initiative may be further along in their movement toward inclusive practices than those who have not yet received the training. However, all schools are encouraged to continue to move toward more inclusive practices. This process requires long-term action planning on the part of schools.

Pullout Setting The movement towards more inclusive practices does not eliminate the need for programming and intervention to be delivered in an alternate setting. For students who have received supports in a pullout situation for a number of years, there may be a transition period required as their programming continues to develop. For other students, significant pullout for programming and intervention will continue. In inclusive education, student support may occur in different environments – it may be a shared effort between the classroom/subject teacher and special education teacher, it may be in a pullout setting, and it may also be a decrease in pullout settings for some students. As the model evolves, so will the roles of classroom/subject and special education teachers.

Level of Student Support Support for students with exceptionalities has not decreased. There were no cuts to the allocation of special education teachers for the upcoming school year and the number of student assistant hours has increased.

Change for September, 2010 A review of the Pathway 4 offerings indicated: (1) there is a large number of Pathway 4 programs/courses; (2) most are delivered in a pullout situation and (3) many can be appropriately delivered in the regular classroom. It was also determined that students frequently need to catch up on material missed during the pullout situation. In response to this review, the department in collaboration with the school districts has prepared guidelines regarding the development and delivery of Pathway 4. These will be implemented beginning September 2010.

As schools become more and more inclusive, it is critical that practices continue to remain child-centered and focused on the provision of the best learning opportunities for all. I ask that you reassure parents and staffs that even though the delivery models may look different, students will not be denied access to required services.