

To: Board of Education

From: Randy Huth, Director of Student Services

Subject: Recommendations for the Student Services Internal Review Report

Recommendations

The Student Services Internal Review was completed in November 2010, and over the last month I have had time to examine and analyze the report. Upon acceptance of the Student Services Internal Review Report, the following recommendations are proposed:

- The twenty recommendations in the Internal Review Report will be organized under the following three big ideas:
 - 1) Differentiated Instruction-Staff Development,
 - 2) Educators' Qualifications,
 - 3) Communication.(Please see attached document)
- The Board of Education will be provided with monthly updates on progress of the recommendations in the report.

Pending the Board of Education's acceptance of the Student Services Internal Review, an implementation plan will be developed to meet the recommendations of the report. The implementation plan will include a significant change in the case management of students with special needs in the district.

Along with the implementation plan, an ongoing parent and educator support group will be established to support parents of students with special needs.

The Student Services Internal Review Report

The Student Services Internal Report included an extensive series of subjective information gathering meetings and surveys facilitated by district staff with students, parents, educators and outside agencies. It is important to note that the subjective view of the report would not meet the criteria of a Ministry of Education Audit. The Internal Review team also did not incorporate the following objective data sources/reports:

- How Are We Doing?
- School Completion
- District Achievement Contract

The information collected, studied and analyzed by the Internal Review team acknowledged positive practices in the current model of support for students with special needs as well as providing recommendations to improve the current support model of Student Services.

Ministry of Education's Policy on Inclusion

The implementation plan has to continue to support the provincial policy on inclusion. The Ministry of Education emphasizes that students with special needs should be educated in neighborhood school classrooms with their age and grade peers. Inclusion embraces not only integration of students with special needs, but also the understanding of individual differences and diverse learning styles characteristics of all classrooms. The Ministry of Education defines inclusion in the following policy statement:

“British Columbia promotes an inclusive education system in which students with special needs are fully participating members of a community of learners. Inclusion describes the principle that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their educational programs. The practice of inclusion is not necessarily synonymous with full integration in regular classrooms, and goes beyond placement to include meaningful participation and the promotion of interactions with others (Ministry of Education. Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, 2010).”

Throughout the review process, parents and educators in the schools and the community strongly supported the policy of inclusion of all students in Mission Public Schools.

Board of Education Goals 2009-2011

As well as supporting inclusion, the implementation plan must support the Board of Education's Graduate Profile (see attached document) and the Board of Education's Strategic Directions of 2009-2011:

Strategic Direction 1: Ensuring Success for Every Child

Strategic Direction 2: Sustaining Quality Education

Strategic Direction 3: Strengthening Community Connections

Summary

Along with supporting the Ministry of Education's policy on inclusion and the Board of Education goals, the implementation plan will support the Ministry of Education's Vision for the 21st Century on personalized learning. The plan will not only support students with special needs but will recognize and respond to the uniqueness of every single learner. Teachers will become facilitators of learning and focus on student outcomes rather than system outcomes. Finally, we want to ensure that the implementation plan supports an education system that believes all students are unique, are valued and can learn.