

# INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ACTION PLAN



CONSULTATION DRAFT

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Prince Edward Island aspires to be a leader in creating an inclusive learning environment. In addition to aligning with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, inclusivity promotes well-being.

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Currently, our public education system has many resources dedicated to supporting the educational needs of learners. However, class composition and classroom needs have changed. This change is echoed across national and international jurisdictions. As a result, it is an appropriate time to reflect upon and consider the resources required to support diverse learning needs within our schools and classrooms, how we can adapt and enhance our education system to meet those needs, and the resources required to meet our goal of an inclusive and responsive education system.

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## *Our goal*

An education system that is set up to support the success of all learners.

## *Our objectives*

All students thrive in a safe and caring learning environment.

A continuum of supports meets the needs of diverse learners and helps them to achieve their fullest potential for academic success and independence.

School staff have access to supports, professional development, and resources to help them meet the needs of all learners.

# BACKGROUND

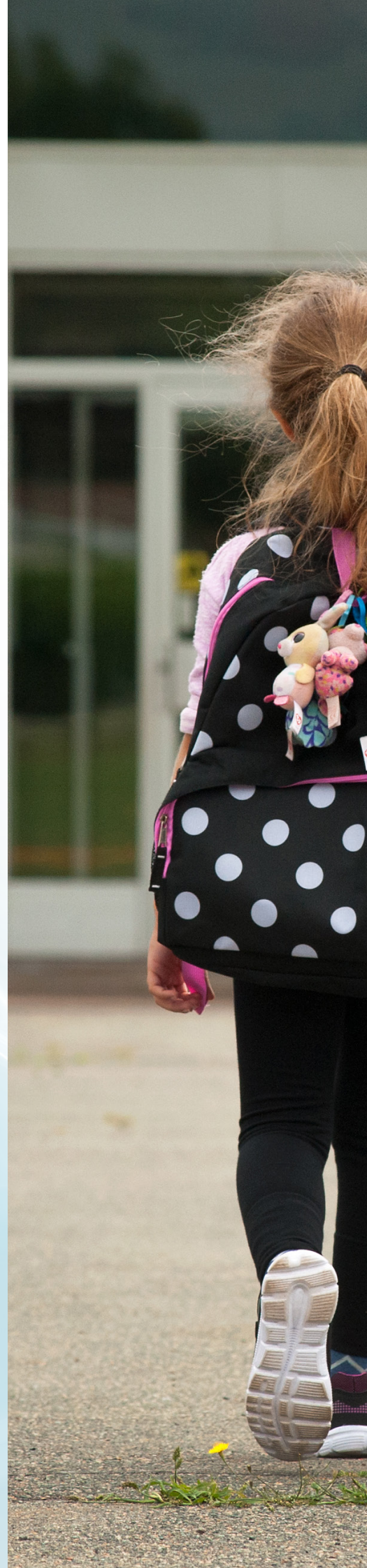
Supports for inclusive education have evolved over time. Currently, the Student Services divisions at both La Commission scolaire de langue française (CSLF) and the Public Schools Branch (PSB) employ more than 100 staff who are responsible for specialized support and programming to students across Prince Edward Island, including:

- **Blind Visually Impaired (BVI) services through the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA)**
- **Autism Services**
- **Counselling Services**
- **Deaf Hard Hearing - HEAR Services**
- **Inclusive Education Services**
- **French Immersion Inclusive Education Consultant**
- **Occupational Therapy Services**
- **Physiotherapy Services**
- **School Psychology Services**
- **Speech-Language Pathology Services**

There are also a number of PSB Alternative Education sites across the province.

At the school level, students receive specialized support from various professionals including School Counsellors, Resource Teachers, Behaviour Resource, Educational Assistants, Youth Service Workers, Workplace Attendants, Student Attendants, and School Mental Health Support Workers. Student Well-Being Teams are accessible to all PEI public schools and provide advice, consultation, and direct service to children and youth who are struggling with mental, social, and/or physical health issues.

In 2022, a consultant was engaged to conduct a review of the current inclusive education continuum. After engaging with front-line staff and administrators, students, parents, those who provide specialized services, and other stakeholders, it is clear there is a deep level of commitment to the principles of inclusion, however there are challenges presented in achieving that ideal.





## ACTION PLAN TO ENHANCE INCLUSION

Addressing the challenges presented will require buy-in and efforts across the education system. Our approach will be to rely on evidence and best practices, engage broadly, and report on progress regularly.

## PILLAR #1:

# SUPPORTING STRONG STARTS



Significant investments have been made in a high-quality early childhood education system in Prince Edward Island, including universal, half-day pre-kindergarten for Island children. To complement the continuum of education investments across the entire system and to ensure our youngest students are positioned for a strong start in kindergarten, we propose to:

- Establish a Kindergarten-Readiness working group with representation from the Department of Education and Early Years, CSLF & PSB, and public health officials to evaluate the current landscape of supports for children and families, allow for better information sharing, and collaborate on new initiatives.
- Working with partners, pilot enhanced opportunities for young Islanders and their families, including learning opportunities for parents



on how they can support their three- and four-year olds to be ready for their first day of kindergarten.

- Provide additional professional development for educators and support staff around play-based and outdoor learning.

PEI's growing population doesn't just mean new children and youth are entering our schools, it means different supports have been necessary to help those students integrate into classrooms and gain the skills and confidence they need to be successful. To meet these needs, we propose to:

- Expand and build on the success of the School Transition EAL/FAL Pilot Program (STEPP) to help students with very limited language skills transition into these schools.
- Expand program offerings to meet language acquisition needs.



- Our schools and classrooms are incredibly diverse places. To meet our objectives of providing a safe and caring learning environment for all students, we propose to:
- Continue with efforts to better reflect our society and different perspectives in our curriculum and school environments.
- Ensure school staff are equipped with tools and supports to address instances of discrimination and racism, and use progressive and appropriate discipline when necessary.

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## PILLAR #2:

# ENSURING SEAMLESS, STUDENT-CENTRED, TIERED SUPPORTS



All students have individual needs. In many cases, our skilled educators are able to adapt to meet those needs in their classrooms. In other cases, additional interventions or supports may be needed. In order to be responsive and meet individual needs, we propose to:

- Adapt all curriculum to ensure it meets the standards of Universal Design for Learning and expand upon professional development opportunities for educators about how they can best meet the needs of different types of learners in their schools and classrooms.
- Adopt a consistent model of tiered supports across the education system, including classroom-based supports and school-level interventions up to complex case coordination and alternative education options.
- Establish a working group to review existing alternative education options and propose enhancements.
- Pilot additional classroom- and school-level supports to help provide academic and behavioural supports to students.
- Work with other government departments and agencies to establish a mechanism to coordinate complex cases with the goal of leveraging expertise and effectively wrapping supports around students with higher levels of need.

“All students have individual needs. Our skilled educators are able to adapt to meet those needs in their classrooms, but additional interventions or supports may sometimes be required. To be responsive, we propose adapting all curriculum to Universal Design for Learning standards and adopting a consistent model of tiered supports across the education system.”

## PILLAR #3:

# UPDATING POLICIES AND PROCESSES FOR SUCCESS



- Ensure all legislation, regulations, and policies support inclusive education practices, including the development of an updated Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Education.
- *Working with union representatives:*
  - Develop a more responsive staffing model to allow CSLF & PSB to better adapt to population changes and different needs as they emerge.



- Review policies related to violence prevention and ensure appropriate training and supports are in place for staff and expectations are clearly communicated with students, families and caregivers, as well as the wider school community.
- Examine the current role of Educational Assistants in our school system to reflect the current demands of the job, professional development opportunities, and opportunities for specializations within the field.



- Continue to explore ways the current Special Needs Assessment Process (SNAP) can be improved and streamlined, including assessments for students entering from pre-kindergarten.
- Explore how we can better utilize and leverage technology to improve planning and evaluation.

“ Ensuring that all legislation, regulations, and policies actively support inclusive education practices is crucial. By doing so, we create an environment where every student, regardless of their background, abilities, or needs, can thrive. This commitment extends beyond mere compliance—it reflects our dedication to fostering a diverse, equitable, and accessible educational system.



## PILLAR #4:

# SUPPORTING CONVERSATIONS & ENGAGEMENT



Being inclusive and wrapping supports around students involves everyone: families and caregivers, all school staff and administrators, trustees, PEI Home and School Federation, La Federation des Parents, different government departments, and community groups. To support having positive conversations and engagement, we propose to:

- Engage community partners and the public in dialogue about our Inclusive Education Action Plan and provide opportunities for learning and input.
- Create tools to help parents and caregivers understand the different types of supports in place to help students, tips on how to support students at home, and who they can talk to when they have questions or concerns.
- Conduct an annual survey with school staff to support the design of effective professional development and supports as well as evaluate the effectiveness of current services and resources.
- Provide regular updates on action items in this plan to stakeholders and the public.

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# GOVERNANCE AND EVALUATION



In order to be accountable and ensure progress is made we must create both a governance structure to support our inclusion efforts and an evaluation framework by which we can judge progress and success. To this end, we propose to:

- Establish an inclusion steering committee that includes representation from the Department of Education and Early Years, CSLF and PSB that



will establish and guide working groups, create plans to support action items, and ensure positive progress is being made.

- Create an evaluation plan that includes metrics by which we can assess progress and success.
- Provide three updates annually to the Minister of Education and Early Years on progress being made and identify next steps.



- Create an engagement plan that identifies key stakeholders and communications tools to share updates with the public.



In order to be accountable and ensure progress, we must create a governance structure to support our inclusion efforts and an evaluation framework to judge success. This involves establishing an inclusion steering committee, creating an evaluation plan with metrics, providing regular updates to the Minister, and engaging key stakeholders.

As our education system adapts to changing class compositions and classroom needs, we commit to providing the necessary resources to meet diverse learning needs.

*Our goal is an education system that is both inclusive and responsive, fostering the success of every student.*





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