



Exceptional News!

Student Support Services Division
Department of Education

Newsletter

October 2010

Pathways Review

The Pathways model of service delivery is under review to better align with a philosophy of inclusive education. *Pathway 4 Guidelines*, *Pervasive Needs Criteria*, and *Roles of Teachers in Inclusive Classrooms* were distributed to districts at the end of the last school year. The changes contained in these resulted in revisions to the Individual Education Plan, the Record of Accommodations, and the Record of Alternate Programs/Courses. The documents and forms are available at www.gov.nl.ca/edu/forms/studentssupport/pathways.html.

Representatives from all districts met with department officials to discuss and clarify the new documents. In collaboration with district representatives, a professional learning package was developed. The package is to be used by districts to inform all teachers of the changes to the administration of alternate programs/courses, pervasive needs, and implications for teachers' roles.

There are ongoing committees with members from various divisions of the Department of Education, districts and schools which will further explore the service delivery model. They include a K-3 Reading and Writing Initiative Committee and the Pathways Review Committee. These committees plan to report in the spring of 2011 and further revisions to the service delivery model may result.

Inclusion Summer Institute

As a component of the Inclusive Education, Family and Disability Supports Community Inclusion project, the Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living in partnership with the Inclusive Education Initiative, the Canadian Association for Community Living, the Department of Education and the Newfoundland and Labrador Teacher's Association held a summer institute in St. John's from August 1-3, 2010. This institute, entitled *An Atlantic Conference on Inclusive Education Practice: Effective Leadership for Schools and Communities*, brought together 218 administrators, teachers,

presenters from across Canada and parents in a collaborative learning environment. Strategies and skills to promote inclusive education in Newfoundland and Labrador were presented and discussed in detail. It quickly became clear that all in attendance were accepting of an inclusive school environment and very eager to learn strategies to enable a more inclusive school culture. Some very positive things were heard about the schools where principals are dedicated to inclusive education and that the teachers and students are more successful and engaged in the philosophy when the principal is supportive. Evaluation for the event showed that the Department of Education inclusion initiative has been successful in engaging schools to make significant gains in supporting their teachers, and enabling them with strategies and ways to be inclusive. Another common response was that some teachers feel overwhelmed and need more training in how to strategically make their classrooms more inclusive. Teachers feel that they need more support alongside them in the classroom for students with pervasive developmental needs. The majority of educators believe strongly in inclusive education and they now want to know "how" to do it.

Focusing on Effective Strategies to make Inclusive Education work in Schools Summer Institute Proceedings Report



E-Transmission



We are endeavouring to move *Exceptional News* into e-transmission. This issue will be distributed electronically to principals with the request that it be forwarded to all school staff. For this edition only, we will also provide paper copies to schools until we are certain that electronic distribution is working effectively. If you choose to print a copy of this newsletter, remember to use legal sized paper (8 ½ x 14). Look for future editions electronically or by checking the Department of Education website at www.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/studentssupportservices/publications/newsletter.html The next edition should be available in January 2011.



Referral Tracking System (RTS)

Make RTS work for you by staying current and organized. Keep data up to date by entering referral data immediately after the special services team has made appropriate referrals. Assessment data should be entered as soon as completed.

RTS numbers assigned last year to students whose assessments were not completed are carried forward to this year and comprise part of your **Waitlist** for assessments. The number ***does not*** get changed. Only new referrals made since June 30th, 2009 will be assigned an RTS number with 10 in the year position.

New Reporting Periods

There will be three deadlines for entering data this year – **December 20th, March 30th and Year-end**. At that time the following reports should be generated for your records:

- a) Referrals per Assessor
- b) Referrals per Position
- c) Referrals per School

These reports will provide a snapshot of where your team is with referrals, waitlists and assessments. These will provide district staff with regional and district perspectives. Complete and up-to-date data should help all assessors manage their caseloads more effectively.

If they have entered assessment details for a student (including hearing & vision) all users **MUST** enter a summary of hours (**Final Report** section) in order to update the RTS number to **“complete.”**

Positions can be deleted (unchecked) on the referral form if the team deems that a specific position is no longer required to assess a student.

Questions and Answers

A new Q & A document is available for users at the referral tracking website - www.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/studentssupportservices/rts/index.html

Locked Accounts - New Feature!!

Users can unlock their accounts at any time using the **Forgot Password** button – old passwords can be reused. Accounts are locked for 20 minutes only.

New User Registration

All new users must register for RTS. Click the button **Click here to Register**. Principals must approve all users using the **Principals Admin** section of RTS.

Principals Role in RTS

Using the **Principal Admin** button, a principal may:

- 1) Approve new users
- 2) Remove users
- 3) Transfer RTS numbers
- 4) Accept transfer of RTS numbers

Changed Positions?

If you changed positions from last year and are still an active RTS user, email RTSADMIN@gov.nl.ca to have your position changed.

Changed Schools?

If you changed schools from last year but are still within the same district, simply login to RTS and click the **Request School** button. The principal of the new school will receive an automated email and must approve your access.

The previous school principal needs to Remove your access from that school.

Moved to a New District?

If you have moved to a new district and still require access to RTS, you must register again using your new email account from your new district. Go to the RTS website – <https://eduservices.gov.nl.ca/referrals> and click the button Click here to Register.

Notify RTSADMIN@gov.nl.ca to disable your old account.

Control Sheets

Points to Remember:

- New control sheets for 2010 are available in the Reports section of RTS.
- Provide a mini control sheet to feeder schools when transferring RTS numbers.
- Append transfers to current control sheets.
- Keep track of RTS numbers transferred out of your school either on the control sheet or on a separate form (keep attached to current control sheet).

Differentiated Instruction Strategies

Manipulative Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers are great for visual learners to make notes and connections as well as recognize sequences, similarities and differences. One variation which extends these advantages for kinaesthetic and tactile learners is to provide hands-on versions. One example might be to use a Venn diagram on a smart board so that students can sort words or facts by moving them into categories. Pocket charts are available in double and triple Venn configurations so that students can sort and move even without technology. Another possibility is to borrow hula hoops from the gym and arrange them up on the floor to create the outline for the diagram and then use pre-written index cards to organize or allow students to use sticky notes and a pen or pencil to make the labels needed.



Text Marking

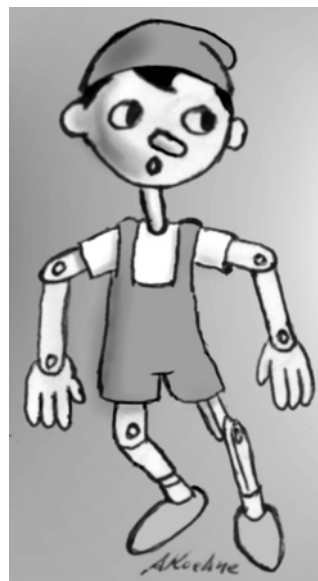
Have each student take five sticky notes. Explain to the students that anytime they read or hear a part that reminds them of something that has happened to them, put a sticky note near it on the page with an arrow pointing to the relevant section. When the reading is completed, ask them to pick ONE place where they put a sticky note and turn to their neighbour to share why that part of the story reminded them of their own experience.

This works well with other criteria as well. Students may be asked to indicate the parts of the text which raise questions, a part that is very interesting, or a part they feel is very important. As students become more proficient with this type of text marking, the teacher can introduce signs to use. These might include:

- ! "This is interesting."
- ? "I am confused." or,
- * "I already know this."

This strategy helps students focus and think while they are reading.

Three Facts and a Fib



Each student gets an index card. On this card, he or she is to write four statements about the content the class has studied. Three are to be true, and one should be false. Students then move around the room for about five minutes sharing statements with each other and trying to find the fib on each classmate's card. Any time someone cannot guess which statement is false, he or she signs the back of the index card of the student who fooled him or her. When students return to their places, have them count the number of signatures on the back of their cards to find the one who was able to fool the most students. This is effective as a review technique or may be applicable to assess existing knowledge of a topic before

beginning instruction. It is also a great way to break the ice and let people get to know each other if they do it with statements about their likes and dislikes or personal experiences.

Safe & Caring Schools

Safe & Caring Schools Web Page

The Safe & Caring Schools (S&CS) web page has added new information for educators.

- a description of school-wide Positive Behaviour Supports (PBS) which explains what PBS is and how to implement it. It also includes links to supporting documents. For schools that are interested in beginning PBS, or evaluating their practice, this should be a useful document.
- the S&CS Policy which outlines both district and school responsibilities for S&CS and PBS implementation
- several documents from the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, and the Joint Consortium for School Health which may be useful for:
 - developing a schools substance abuse prevention strategy
 - responding to the needs of high risk youth
 - partnering with families and/or the community concerning issues of substance use
 - teaching curriculum objectives concerning substance use and abuse

This information is available at:

www.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/safeandcaring/teachers/index.html

Please stay tuned for future postings. If you require additional information on these or other topics, contact bernieottenheimer@gov.nl.ca



Anti-Violence Awareness Week

February 20th – 27th will be Anti-Violence Awareness Week in provincial schools. Keep your eyes open for further details.

Non-Violent Crisis Intervention

Each district now has personnel to provide *Non-violent Crisis Intervention* training in how to effectively manage a crisis situation. Training for school-based teams should be updated every two years.

Key information such as skill development on setting limits, active listening, verbal intervention strategies, team work and postvention can be made available to all staff members. These skills can be fundamental for all teachers involved in de-escalating or preventing a potential crisis.

Personal Safety Techniques and *Non-Violent Physical Crisis Intervention* should be practiced by Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) trained school-based teams, on a regular basis. Practice, rehearsals, and drills are essential components in the *Non-Violent Crisis Intervention* training process. Quality practice sessions improve understanding of concepts, strengthen skills, and increase staff confidence. Jeff Schill, the associate director of staffing for CPI, suggests that a well-organized, 10-minute practice session can be more valuable than a disorganized, poorly facilitated hour-long session.



Here is some practical information to help you make the most of your practice time.

- **Be Organized (Practice)**

Set objectives for each practice session. What do you want to accomplish? Practice plans should be written with considerable thought and each session should focus on a particular set of skills.

- **Increase Intensity**

As skills are mastered, they must be applied in situations designed to be as realistic as possible. Staff members need to be put in situations that challenge them and their abilities. Do this by increasing intensity in training sessions and by creating physical, mental, and emotional challenges similar to those experienced during real-life crisis intervention.

- **Use Repetition**

It is critical for each staff member to perform a skill slowly and correctly, and to engage in a series of repetitions to cement the skill. Repetition teaches people to do something without much thought. The skill then becomes a learned reflex.

- **Evaluate**

Before your first practice session, have the CPI trained staff members evaluate their own

needs and abilities. This will assist the group in making sure that practice sessions are appropriate to their needs.

- **Keep a Practice Log**

After each session, insert your practice plan into a binder. This documentation will assist the staff in tracking areas of difficulty. This record also communicates your organization's commitment to training as an ongoing process and can be used as a powerful tool to document continuous quality improvement.

The Instructor's Forum, CPI, September, 2010

Alternate Format Materials

A revised application and new order forms listing the resources available at each grade level will make the application process for alternate format materials more user-friendly. The new application contains a section whereby schools can request an interlibrary loans search for materials not currently held in the department's library. The URL for the new application is:

www.gov.nl.ca/edu/forms/studentssupport/applications.html

Please be aware that you may only choose one format per resource per student – you must choose either online or offline resources. You can indicate whether PDF, Word, KURZWEIL or digital audio files are the best fit for the student. If you have any questions, please consult the document – **Choosing the Best Format for Your Students** – located at the URL listed above.

To add more resources for a student whose application has already been received, please send an email to jewelcousens@gov.nl.ca outlining the student's name, school, the new materials and the format(s) needed.

Resources that were previously only available on cassette have been converted to digital audio (MP3) format. In addition, the following 18 new resources are now available:

Kindergarten - One Gray Mouse and Discovering Links: Near and Far

Grade 1 - Discovering Links: People and Places

Grade 5 - Math Makes Sense 5

Grade 6 - Math Makes Sense 6

Grade 7 - Math Makes Sense 7

Grade 8 - Math Makes Sense 8

Grade 9 - Discovering Science 9

- Human Sexuality

- Math Makes Sense 9

Grades 10 – 12

- Business Enterprise 1100: Exploring Business for the 21st Century

- Chemistry 2202/3202: Chemistry from McGraw-Hill-Ryerson
- Consumer Studies 1202: Exploring Business for the 21st Century
- Enterprise 3205: Building a Dream: A Comprehensive Guide to Starting a Business
- Environmental Science 3205: Towards a Sustainable Future
- Ethics & Philosophy 2201: Philosophy, Questions & Theories
- Ethics & Social Justice 2106: Ethics & Social Justice Selected Readings
- Newfoundland and Labrador Studies 2205: Newfoundland and Labrador Selected Topics
- Nutrition 2102/3102: Food for Today



Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

The Autism Summer Institute 2010 was a huge success! On August 9th and 10th, 200 educators attended a two-day training session sponsored by the Department of Education. Liz Mitchell, from the Geneva Centre for Autism, was engaging and entertaining as she focused on transitions and structured teaching. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. We look forward to welcoming Liz back to Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor and Deer Lake later this fall to provide two-day training sessions for student assistants.

Autism resource kits are now in every school in Newfoundland and Labrador. Look for a navy knapsack filled with resources to assist with programming for students with autism.

Contact List for Autism Itinerants

Four of our five school districts now have an individual responsible for the area of autism. Their contact information is below:

Labrador:

Sacha Fraser

sachafraser@lsb.ca

Western:

Christine Manuel

christine.manuel@wnlsd.ca

Nova Central:

Sharon Stokes

sharonstokes@ncsd.ca

Eastern:

David Penney
davidgpenney@esdnl.ca

Jody Beckett O'Leary
jodybeckettoley@esdnl.ca



Speech-Language Pathologists (S-LP) Implementing a New Phonological Awareness Program

In order for children to learn to read, they need to develop many skills. A prerequisite skill that is very important to the development of good reading ability is phonological awareness. Phonological awareness refers to a child's awareness of the sounds in spoken language and their ability to make sense of those sounds.

As we move forward with more inclusionary practices, S-LPs will be implementing a phonological awareness program in a limited number of Kindergarten classrooms around the province. This program will expose children to specific phonological awareness tasks in small groups. The 30-40 minute sessions will be facilitated by the school's S-LP and the Kindergarten teacher. These will take place on a weekly basis for eight weeks. The original program came from Alberta Health Services and we have adapted it for our purposes. If you would like more information about this program, please contact your school's S-LP.

News Flash!

Some revisions have been made to Pathways forms to reflect the Pathway 4 Guidelines (May 2010). The new forms are available at www.gov.nl.ca/edu/forms/student-support/pathways.html. Please download the newest versions of IEP, Record of Accommodations, and Record of Alternate Program/Course.

Assistive Technology

A provincial assistive technology (AT) committee has been formed with representatives from the department and district level. The committee has worked on the creation of new assistive technology forms, district AT resource kits, E-live learning sessions and on-site professional learning.

Last spring, two E-live sessions occurred on software commonly used by students with exceptionalities. Because of the positive response from teachers, on-going E-live learning sessions will be offered during the winter. Districts will be notified of the details.

Each district now has an assistive technology kit which contains various low and high technology options for students with exceptionalities. The kits will be used in close-out sessions and components may be available to borrow for trials with students. School administrators may contact their student support service staff at the district level for details.



Two forms are now required when applying for assistive technology:

- 1) an updated version of the application
- 2) a trial use summary form

The trial use summary allows the program planning team to record trials of assistive technology and must accompany the AT application.

The forms can be found at:

www.gov.nl.ca/edu/forms/student-support/applications.html.



Feedback

Please share your thoughts regarding this newsletter including any suggestions for future articles. Our hope is to facilitate better communication with student support services teams throughout the province. Contact us at:

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annapowell@gov.nl.ca

Sharon Whalen
sewhalen@gov.nl.ca



Faculty of Education
Special Education Courses
Winter Semester 2011

Interested in finishing your Bachelor of Special Education?

Offered by distance:

Education 3040, 3630, 3640

Offered evenings at the St. John's campus:

Education 3650, 3660, 3941, 4515, 4530, 4540

Questions? Please contact the Office of Undergraduate Student Services, Faculty of Education.

Email: muneduc@mun.ca www.mun.ca/educ