



**BACKGROUND**

***Inclusion of all students***

Moving to a more inclusive learning environment, with the belief that all students have the right to be an active participant in, and equal members of their school and classroom communities is a priority for Red Deer Public Schools.

*Can you remember a time in your schooling when you struggled to learn something?*

We have students who look like every other student, but they struggle to learn every day. We are accommodating and meeting the diverse learning needs of these students and doing a better job than we did when you were in school. We use assistive technology, learning strategies and sometimes extra staff members in classrooms. We have the same high expectations for these students as we have for all students, but we provide them with support to meet those expectations.

You also know that we have students in schools that may look and act differently than other students. We really strive to include them as part of the larger school community—for instance, your children may have had classes over the years with students from our Pathways Programs.

An inclusive education system is characterized by three key outcomes:

- Each student belongs, is supported, and is successful in his/her learning.
- Families are engaged and supported in helping their children be successful in their learning.
- Supports and services that help students in their learning are provided in a coordinated, collaborative and seamless manner.

Inclusive education focuses on effective teaching strategies that benefit all students. Strategies that meet the diverse needs of every student develop teacher capacity and enhance the learning of all students.

Inclusion benefits everyone. Students with diverse needs make up a classroom that is a reflection of the community at large and promotes empathy, caring, and awareness that regardless of abilities, we are all contributors to our community.

While we have built capacity and provided supports for student, at the heart of it, is a change in values and beliefs that supports inclusion of all students.

***How can ensure that our schools support the diverse learning needs of all students?***