Striving Toward a Vision of Inclusion

START RIGHT PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

JULY 6, 2022

Start Right Program for Beginning School Leaders

Treaty 7 Land Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I am on Treaty 7 territory, the traditional territories and oral practices of the Blackfoot Nations, which includes the Siksika, the Piikani, the Kainai. I also acknowledge the TsuuT'ina and the Stoney Nakoda First Nations, and the traditional homeland of the Métis and all the peoples who make their home in the Treaty 7 regions of southern Alberta.

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions

- Defining Inclusion

- Creating a Vision of Inclusion

- Research

- Scenarios to Develop Mindsets

- Creating Plans for Inclusion

Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard

Leadership Quality Standard

Teaching Quality Standard

Quality superintendent leadership occurs when the superintendent's ongoing analysis of the context,

and the superintendent's decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply,

result in quality school leadership, quality teaching and optimum learning for all students in the school authority.

Quality leadership occurs when the leader's ongoing analysis of the context,

and decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply,

result in quality teaching and optimum learning for all school students.

result in optimum learning for all students.

and the teacher's decisions about which pedagogical knowledge and abilities to apply,

Quality teaching occurs when the teacher's ongoing analysis of the context,

Supporting Implementation of the
Professional Practice Standards
CASS 2018

CASS — College of Alberta School Superintendents

SLQS

- ✓ **Building Effective Relationships**
- ✓ **Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning**
- ✓ **Visionary Leadership**
- ✓ **Leading Learning**
- ✓ **Ensuring First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education for All Students**
- ✓ **School Authority Operations and Resources**
- ✓ **Supporting Effective Governance**

LQS

- ✓ Fostering Effective Relationships
- ✓ Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning
- ✓ Embodying Visionary Leadership
- ✓ Leading a Learning Community
- ✓ Providing Instructional Leadership
- ✓ Supporting the Application of Foundational Knowledge about FNMI
- ✓ Developing Leadership Capacity
- ✓ Managing School Operations and Resources
- ✓ Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context

TQS

- ✓ Fostering Effective Relationships
- ✓ Engaging in Career-Long Learning
- ✓ Demonstrating a Professional Body of Knowledge
- ✓ Establishing Inclusive Learning Environments
- ✓ Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit
- ✓ Adhering to Legal Frameworks and Policies

CASS — College of Alberta School Superintendents

LQS

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CASS College of Alberta School Superintendents

Introductions

- Name

- School jurisdiction

- Role

- Something the group does not know about you yet

HELLO
My name is

What does inclusion mean to you?

Brainstorm words that describe **inclusion** in education

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How Does Alberta Education Define Inclusion?

Inclusion is a **way of thinking and acting** that demonstrates universal **acceptance** and promotes a sense of **belonging** for **all** learners.

https://www.alberta.ca/inclusive-education.aspx

Alberta

Further from Alberta Education

- In Alberta, inclusive education is a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance of, and belonging for, all students.

- It is a **value-based** approach to accepting responsibility for all students. It also means that all students will have **equitable opportunity to be included** in the typical learning environment or program of choice.

- The creation of a truly inclusive education system in the province requires a **shared responsibility** of all educational stakeholders.

What Does Inclusion Include?

If we consider these aspects of the definition….

- In Alberta, inclusive education is a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance of, and belonging for, all students.

- It is a value-based approach to accepting responsibility for all students. It also means that all students will have equitable opportunity to be included in the typical learning environment or program of choice.

Then…

What Does Inclusion *Include*?

What areas (or topics) would fall under the umbrella of inclusive education?

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Areas Within Inclusion

- Which topics did you also think to include?

- Which did you not consider?

- Are there any that surprise you?

- Do any provide with you a new consideration as a leader?

Research - Lyons et al., 2016

- There is significant research on inclusive education, both generally and for various topics

- In their study examining four successful inclusive elementary schools, Lyon et al. (2016) suggest that leadership must provide:
  - Clear vision
  - Expectation that **all** students are valued
  - Comprehensive supports provided
  - Collaboration
  - Resources required to support inclusion
  - Flexible and high-quality instruction
  - Supportive leadership
  - Professional learning opportunities (including time provided for such engagement)

- It would be the role of the school and system leaders to ensure that these conditions are present when undertaking the establishment of inclusive settings

Research - Somma, 2020

◦ Leaders need to model and support **favourable staff attitudes**

◦ Soma's (2020) study interviewed former special education teachers in segregated classrooms who moved to inclusive environments

  ◦ They experienced greater degrees of success

  ◦ In part due to pre-existing favourable attitudes toward such students

  ◦ But also understood the students' difficulties with social isolation in segregated environments

◦ Leaders must help staff learn and **increase their efficacy** regarding inclusive practices and help them gain compassion for these diverse learners

Legislated Mandates

- Alberta Education Act

- Alberta Learning's **Standards for Special Education** (2004)

- Human Rights Acts (federal and provincial)

- *Moore v. British Columbia* (case law in education)

Quality Standards

SLQS

LQS

TQS

Alberta Education's *Teaching Quality Standards* (2020)

- Establishing Inclusive Learning Environments - Competency 4. "A teacher establishes, promotes and sustains inclusive learning environments where **diversity is embraced** and **every student** is welcomed, cared for, respected and safe." (p. 6)

Alberta Education's *Leadership Quality Standards* (2020) and Alberta Education's *Superintendent Leadership Quality Standards* (2020)

- Embodying Visionary Leadership
- Providing Instructional Leadership/Leading Learning (for <u>all</u> students)

Inclusion and the LQS

- Have a look at your LQS copy and highlight the various competencies that relate to inclusive education.

  - Which stand out?
  - Are some more critical than others?

Visionary Leadership

- This is a critical area within the LQS that can lead to inclusion

- Leaders must have a **vision for inclusion** and be able to clearly articulate it to their stakeholders

- The positive vision is the first step toward change

Developing a Vision
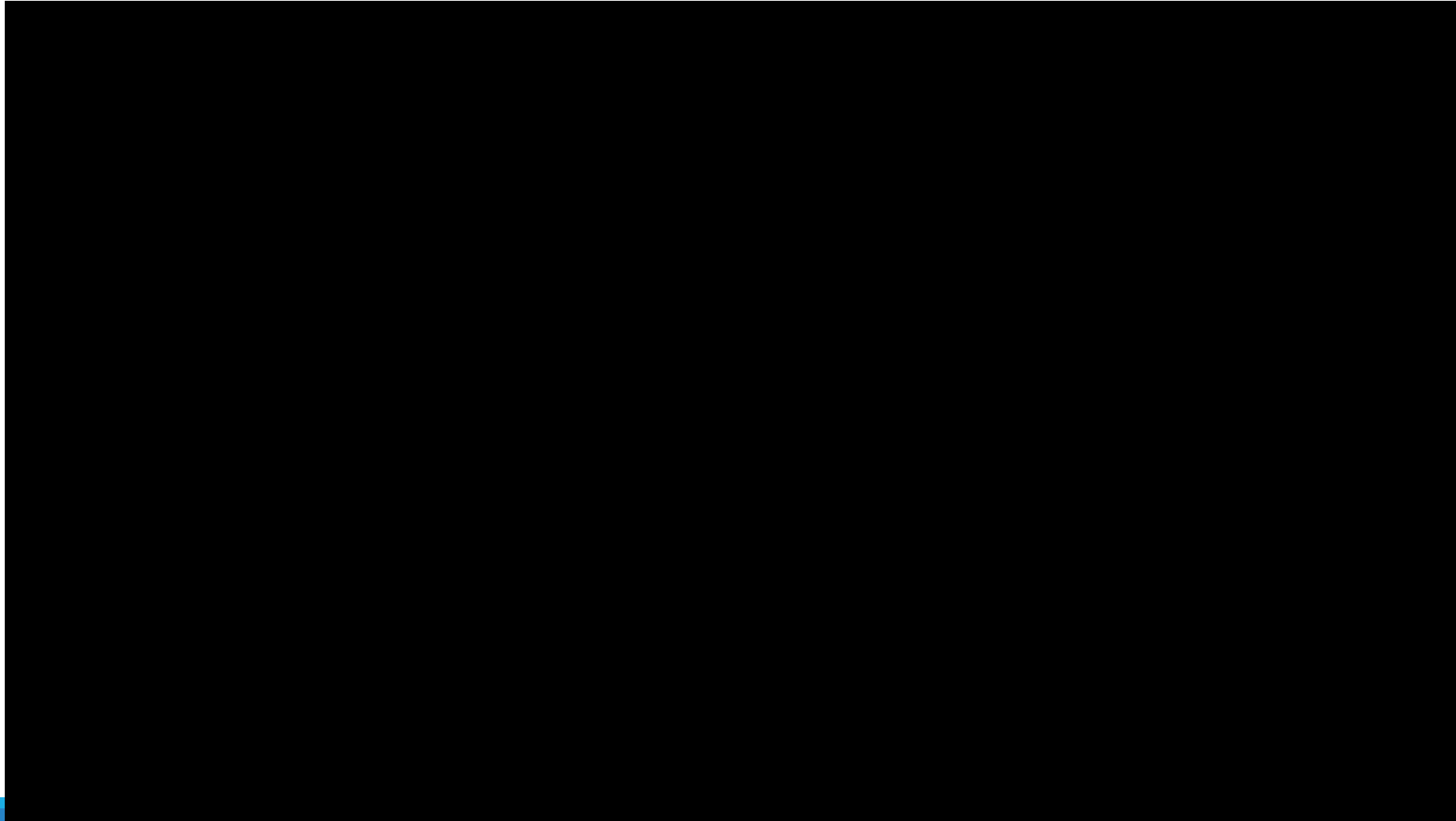
As a School-Based Leader…

- What is your WHY for inclusion?

- HOW will you create inclusion in your school community?

- WHAT is inclusion in your building?

1. State your vision (WHY – HOW – WHAT)

2. As a leader, state what you stand for

3. What will you <u>not</u> stand for?

4. How will you demonstrate your commitment to this vision in your school community? How will people know this?
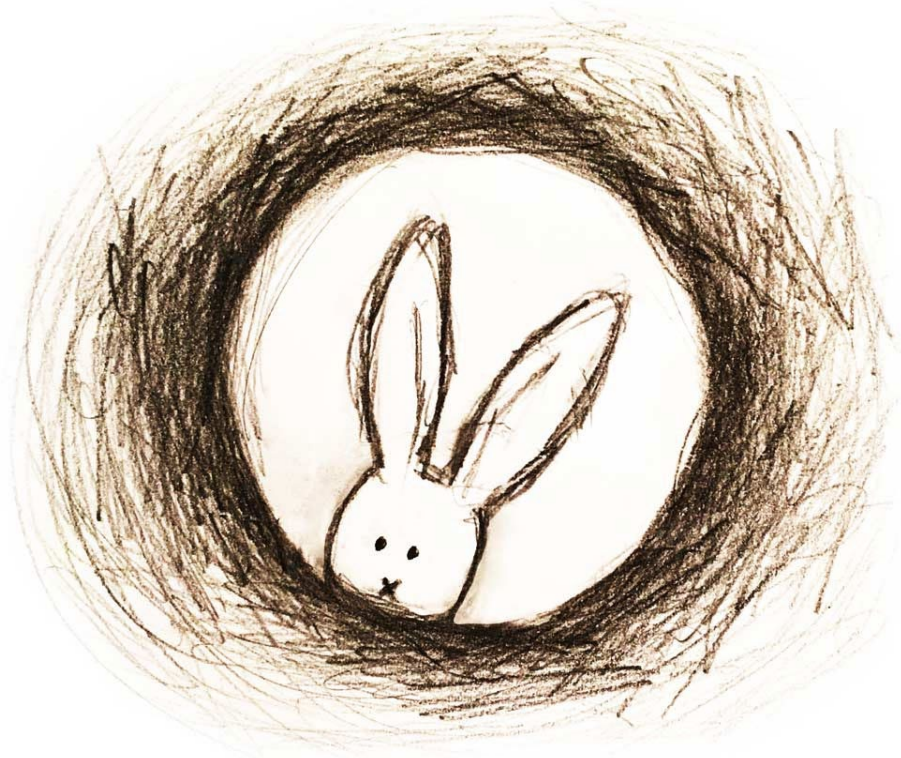
Context is Everything

- Inclusion requires diversity

- Resources, mandates and cultures are different across the province

- Each school will support inclusion differently

- Each student requires individualized approaches

While we accept that there are differences…

  ◦ Let us embrace the commonalities!

There is Never Enough

But we have to do something!

Stay Out of the Weeds by Naming the Weeds

- What are some of the most pressing issues in inclusive education?
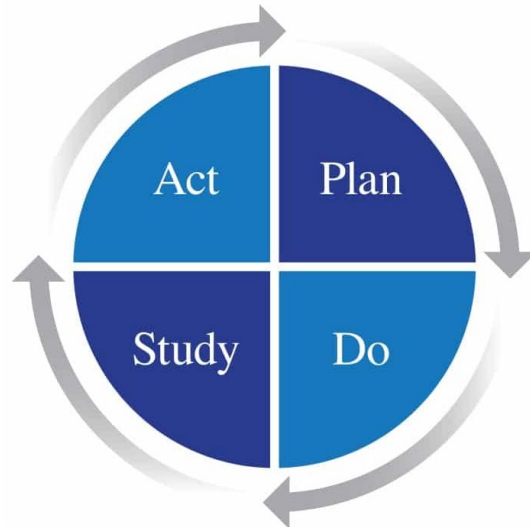
How much of these are within your control?

Creating the Change

- It is critical to move your school toward a proactive and positive vision of inclusion

- This will require intentionality, planning, strategic resourcing, and tremendous support

- However, the shift must be carefully constructed with focus, centered on student success

Models for Change Planning

Change Path Model (Deszca et al., 2020)

- Combines process and prescription

- Involves four steps

Awakening	Mobilization	Acceleration	Institutionalization
Why change?	Activating the gap analysis	Getting from here to there	Using data to help make the change stick
The leader must articulate the reason for change and their initial vision to stakeholders in clear and compelling ways	Demonstrating the difference between the current and future desired state will result in further acceptance and refinement of the vision	Specific actions are undertaken to advance implementation of the desired changes and vision	Measuring change to confirm achievement of vision, and indicate the need for ongoing refinements

Readying our Mindsets - Scenario time!

As a new principal to a school, Ms. Jones is learning much about her new school. In her early conversations with several teachers, they shared concern regarding student complexity in the class and their perceptions of limited support from previous administration in providing solutions to these challenges. In reviewing information from student records and notes left by the previous administrator, it seemed as though the overall student composition did not differ greatly from the other schools that she had worked at. This was confirmed when a system specialist reviewed the school's profile. Yet, when Ms. Jones observed teaching and learning in each classroom, it did appear that the teachers were struggling with student diversity, specifically those demonstrating behavioral challenges.

Readying our Mindsets

When Ms. Jones approached some teachers about their processes in bringing forward or discussing student need among colleagues, they suggested that this practice was sporadic and only completed when a student might be presented for a code. Further discussion with teachers involving universal strategies for all students or school-based supports that could be utilized also seemed to be foreign territory. The resource teacher also shared that regular problem-solving collaborative meetings had occurred many years prior but had ceased to occur with many changes in administration and teacher personnel over time.

Readying our Mindsets

The staff room conversations had become increasingly negative and teachers expressed concern over workload, fatigue, and lack of support for classroom issues. Students were frequently sent down to the office for misbehavior and often returned after Ms. Jones spend some time assisting with their regulation. This left little time for Ms. Jones to work on instructional leadership or other aspects of leading teaching and learning.

This current process was not working for students, teachers, or administration. Ms. Jones knew that she needed to create change that would align with her vision for inclusion.

Leading the Change

- Ms. Jones needs to create change in her school.

- You will be stepping into Ms Jones' shoes to move her staff toward a **vision of inclusion** that will result in a significant change from their current state.

Make a Plan for the Change

Awakening	Mobilization	Acceleration	Institutionalization
Why change?	Activating the gap analysis	Getting from here to there	Using data to help make the change stick
- What is the powerful vision for change? - How does this differ from the future state? - How will this be communicated? - What stakeholders must you involve? - How can you clearly and effectively "awaken" these stakeholders?	- How can you make the need for change compelling? - How can you ensure that this vision and gap is known across all stakeholders? - How can you involve stakeholders to further acceptance and refinement of the vision? - Who can you leverage to assist with the plan?	- What are your concrete, actionable steps required to implement this plan? - How do you empower others to lead this work? - What professional learning is required? - What structures must be put into place? - How can you build momentum? - What small wins can you celebrate along the way?	- What evidence will you gather to measure change to confirm achievement of vision? - How will you make sure any new changes (processes, structures, mindsets) stick? - How will you know if refinements or modifications to the initial plan are needed?

Break

Present Scenario Responses

Topics of Focus – Vision, POP and Plan

- Make a new plan based on our previous **Menti** topics

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Groups to Map out Plan

- Select an issue within this topic

- Decide upon a **specific problem** you wish to change

- Create a change plan through the **change path model**

Change Path Model (Deszca et al., 2020)

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Involves four steps

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Sharing of Plans

What are your next steps?

- As you consider your school, table share of next steps for considering inclusion in your building

To Conclude

- Inclusion includes many topics and circumstances

- Making a vision for inclusion is an upstream investment

- While it is easy to be reactive, try to become a proactive leader

- And…

With Gratitude…