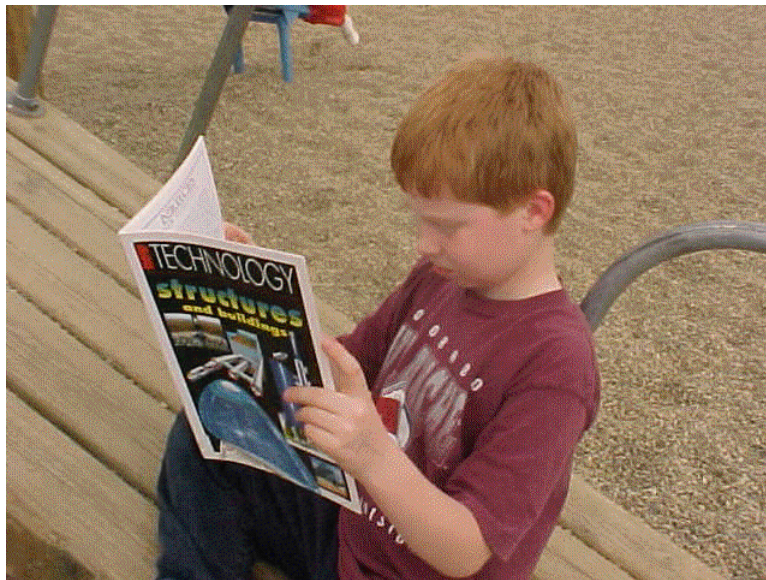


Alternative Education Handbook



Medicine Hat School District No. 76

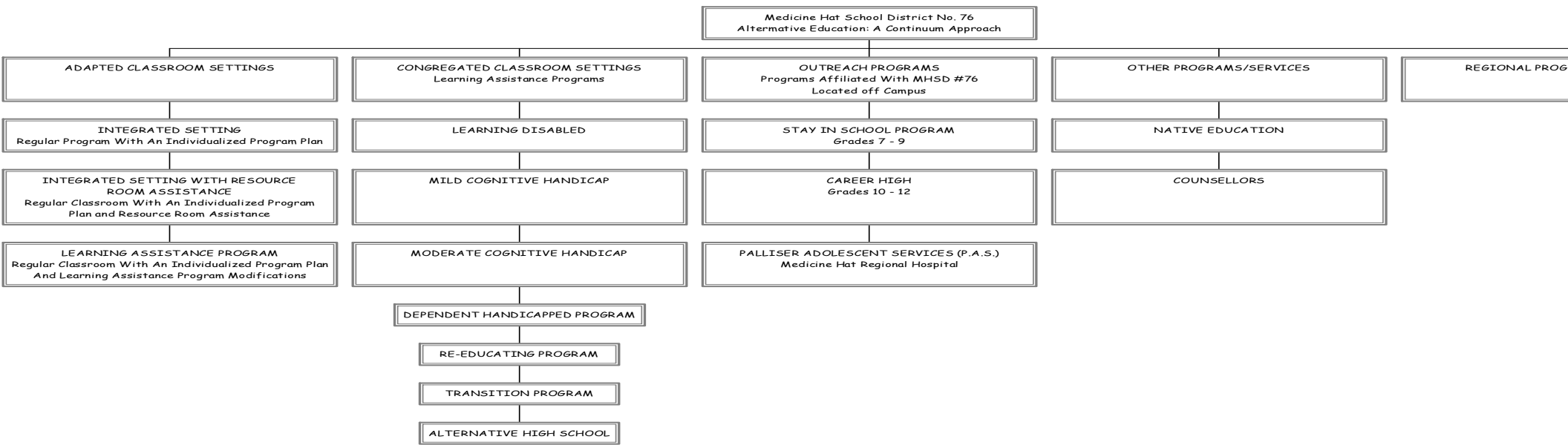
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FOREWORD

The Alternative Education Handbook provides a Medicine Hat School District No. 76 perspective on programs and services for students with special needs and students for whom alternative programs might be beneficial. It is a district handbook incorporating Alberta Learning guidelines as set out in the Programming For Students With Special Needs Series, published by Alberta Education, Special Education Branch. Although the handbook is a document **designed for the school-based teaching population**, parents of students with special and alternative education needs will also find this document informative.

This handbook will be reviewed periodically, to ensure this information remains current.



PHILOSOPHY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

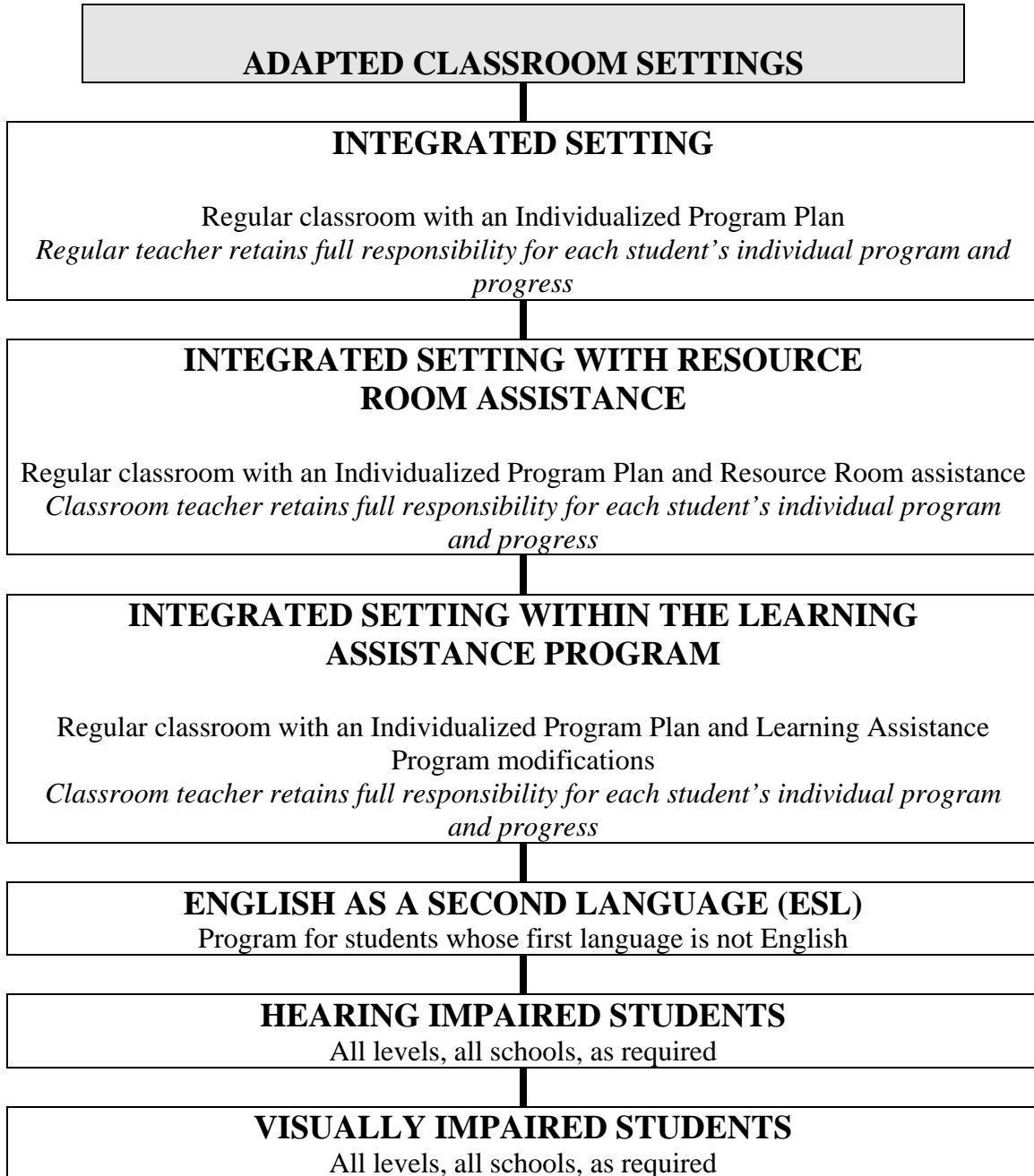
These Statements of Belief articulate the vision of Medicine Hat School District No. 76 for special education.

1. We believe that a **continuum of programs and services** should continue to be the District approach to the delivery of special education.
2. We believe that **adequate support** is required for all special education students.
3. We believe that all staff requires a **comprehensive, ongoing program of professional development** in the area of special education.
4. We believe that children with special needs must be **identified at an early age** to maximize their opportunities for growth.
5. We believe that **timely and effective assessment** and psychological services must be available for the identification and support of special needs students.
6. We believe in the **involvement of parents** in the identification, placement and education of special needs students.
7. We believe in making **clear linkages with community services** to provide a seamless system for the delivery of services where overlapping is reduced and gaps are filled.
8. We believe that every school requires a counselor or an identified individual to be the **on-site liaison person** between and among students, teachers, parents, and community agencies in matters of special education.
9. We believe that special needs students and their parents are entitled to **smooth transitions** from program to program, school to school, and entrance to and exit from the public education system.
10. We believe that the District must address the developing needs of students with **learning disabilities**.
11. We believe that it is the obligation of the Government of Alberta to provide **adequate funding** to allow for the kinds of programs and services that are essential for an effective special education system.

Although these beliefs speak directly to the area of special education, in principle they extend to alternative education programs as well.

Continuum Approach

Medicine Hat School District No. 76 utilizes a continuum of services approach to alternative education. This approach enables administrators and staff, parents and students, to consider possible placements and to choose an optimal placement according to the student's individual needs.



GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

**MEDICINE HAT HIGH SCHOOL
LEARNING STRATEGIES PROGRAM**

Learning assistance teacher provides support to identified students.

EARLY LITERACY PROGRAM

Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 Students with weak literacy skills.

CONGREGATED - LEARNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

A preschool program for students with severe language delays or multiple handicaps.

LEARNING DISABILITY

Classroom setting with an Individualized Program Plan
Pupil-Teacher ratio 14:1 with teacher only

Accommodates students with average ability but a significant academic lag.

MILD COGNITIVE DISABILITY

Classroom setting with an Individualized Program Plan
Pupil-Teacher ratio 14:1 , TA assigned at 15 students

Accommodates students with IQs between 50-75.

MODERATE COGNITIVE DISABILITY

Academic & Life Skills Program

Classroom setting with an Individualized Program Plan
Pupil-Teacher ratio can go up to 6:1, TA available according to numbers

Accommodates students with IQs between 30-50.

DEPENDENT HANDICAPPED PROGRAM

Congregated classroom setting with an Individualized Program Plan

Accommodates students aged six to eighteen with severe and/or multiple disabilities.

TRANSITIONS PROGRAM

Pupil-Teacher ratio of 15:1 for vocational courses, 20:1 for core subjects

A five-year alternate junior and senior high school program for students who have a history of academic difficulty.

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

STAY IN SCHOOL PROGRAM

Grades 7-9

Provides individualized academic instruction and personal life management skills for youths having difficulty in a regular school setting.

Lower Pupil-teacher ratio, academic and non-academic components

CAREER HIGH

Grades 10-12

Three program components are offered: academics, life management skills, career research and employment preparation.

Nine-week mini semesters and individualized, self-paced working environment with flexible hours.

ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL

Grades 10-12

Provides individualized academic instruction to youth who require or choose an alternate setting.

Mini semester and full semester options. Flexible hours. Full-range of Medicine Hat High School and I.L.P (virtual school) course options.

TEEN MOTHER PROGRAM

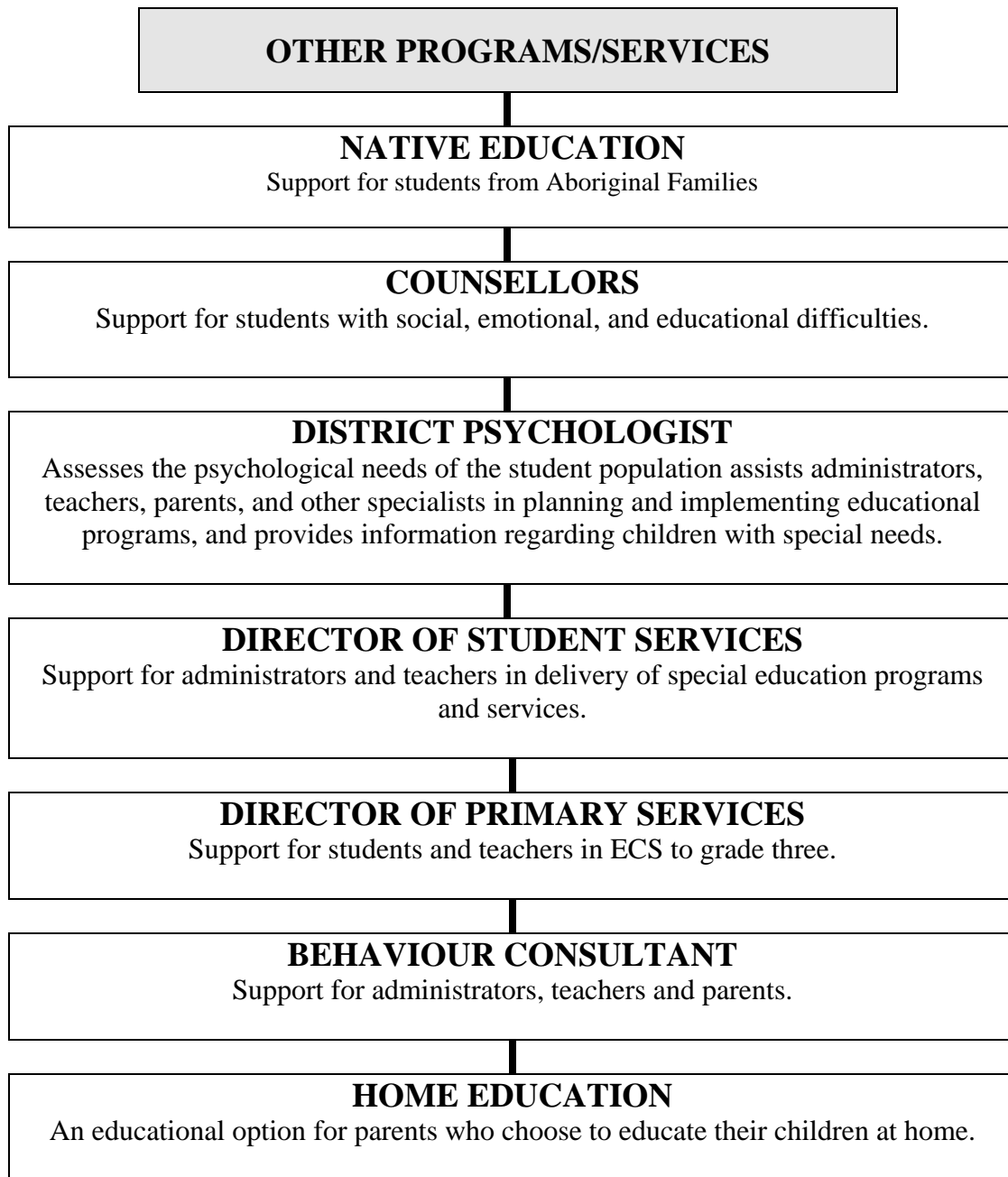
Grades 9-12

Provides academic instruction and daily life skills to teen mothers.

REEDUCATING ABOUT LIVING (REAL)

Grades 7-12

Provides individualized academic instruction and behavioral/life skills to students who have difficulty coping in the classroom setting



REGIONAL PROGRAMS/SERVICES

PALLISER ADOLESCENT SERVICES (P.A.S.)

A collection of coordinated Mental Health Services for adolescents and their families experiencing mental or emotional health difficulties. The services are available to those who reside in the Palliser Health region and who **do not require hospitalization**.

SOUTHEASTERN ALBERTA STUDENT HEALTH PARTNERSHIP (SASHP)

Ten organizations (education, health, mental health, children's authority) with a collaborative service plan to provide services for students with identified special health needs.

ALBERTA EDUCATION: FUNDING AND CODING

(1997 Guide to Education, Special Education Branch, Alberta Education)

Special Education Funding:

Alberta Learning provides funding to school boards, approved Early Childhood Services (ECS) operators and designated private schools to ensure appropriate programs and services are provided to students with special needs. Local school boards make decisions regarding the allocation of funds and are held accountable for the provision and allocation of funds to schools.

Basic Educational Grant:

Each student receives a basic educational grant. From this grant a small amount is designated for students with mild or moderate disabilities. These funds are pooled at the district level and allocated to schools according to the needs of the student population.

Coded Grants:

Students with “50” codes do not receive any additional grant beyond the amount designated for special needs education from the basic educational grant. Students with “40” codes receive additional grants beyond the basic educational grant.

Special Education Coding:

Note: From “Guide to Education of Students with Special Needs, 1997,” Special Education Branch, Alberta Education.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION		
CODE	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Code 30	Mild/Moderate Disabilities	Program unit funding students
Code 47	Severe Communication Disability	The child with a severe communication disability has severe difficulty communicating with peers and adults because of a severe disability in expressive and/or receptive language. This may include little, if any, expressive or receptive communication skills; less than or equal to the first percentile.
CODE 40 CATEGORIES – SEVERE DISABLING CONDITIONS		
CODE	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Code 41	Severe Cognitive Disability	<p>The student with a severe mental disability has severe delays in all or most areas of development. A student in this category frequently has other disabilities including physical, sensory, medical and behavioral. This student requires constant assistance and/or supervision in all areas of functioning including daily living skills, and may require assistive technology.</p> <p>Any student who is designated as having a severe mental disability should have an intelligence quotient (IQ) in the range of approximately 30 ± 5 or less as measured on an individual intelligence test and have an adaptive behaviour score equivalent to the severe to profound level in an adaptive behaviour scale.</p> <p>NOTE: for an ECS child this may mean little if any functional adaptive behaviour and/or an inability to initiate meaningful play.</p>
Code 42	Severe Emotional, Behavioral Disability	The student with a severe emotional/behavioral disability displays chronic, extreme and pervasive behaviours which require close and constant adult supervision, and other intensive support services in a highly structured environment in order to function in an educational

Code 42	Continued....	<p>setting. The behaviours significantly interfere with both the learning and safety of the student and other students.</p> <p>Students with the following characteristics usually qualify in this category:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ dangerously aggressive, destructive, violent and impulsive behaviours, including severe conduct disorders ▪ autism or other severe pervasive developmental disorders ▪ self-stimulation, self-abuse, perseveration, echolalia and/or aphasic behaviour ▪ psychosis including schizophrenia, manic depression or obsessive compulsive disorders <p>A clinical diagnosis by a chartered psychologist or psychiatrist is required, in addition to extensive documentation of the nature, frequency and severity of the disorder by school authorities. The effects of the disability on the student’s functioning in an educational setting should be described. An ongoing treatment plan should be available and efforts should be made to ensure that the student has access to appropriate mental health and therapeutic services.</p> <p>A clinical diagnosis of a behaviour disability is required but not sufficient to qualify under this category. Some diagnoses are not of sufficient severity to qualify including: attention–deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), attention deficit disorder (ADD), fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), fetal alcohol effect (FAE) and oppositional defiant disorder (except for the most extreme and pervasive instances).</p>
Code 43	Severe Multiple Disability	<p>The student who has a combination of two or more non-associated, major (moderate to severe) disabling conditions which result in functioning as low or lower than that associated with a severe primary disability, and who requires special programs, resources and/or therapeutic services.</p> <p>A student with a severe mental disability and another associated disability is not designated under this category, but is designated under severe mental disability.</p>
Code 44	Severe Physical or Medical Disability	<p>The student with a physical or medical disability is one whose physical, medical or neurological disability is so severe that he or she requires extensive personal assistance and modifications to the learning environment in order to benefit from schooling. A student with a severe mental disability and physical or medical disability is not designated under this category, but is designated under severe</p>

Code 44	Continued....	<p>mental disability.</p> <p>A medical diagnosis of a physical, medical or neurological disability is required but not necessarily sufficient to qualify under this category. Some physical or medical disabilities have little or no impact upon the student's ability to function in the school environment.</p>
Code 45	Deafness	<p>The student with a severe to profound hearing loss is one whose hearing loss interferes with the use of oral language as the primary form of communication. A student who is designated as having a severe to profound hearing disability has an average hearing loss of at least 71 decibels or more unaided and in the better ear over the normal range of speech. The normal range of speech is 500 Hz, 1000 Hz, 2000Hz or 1000 Hz, 2000 Hz, 4000Hz.</p>
Code 46	Blindness	<p>The student with a severe disability is one whose corrected vision is so limited that it is inadequate for most or all instructional situations, and information must be presented through other means. For designation under this category, students would be eligible for registration with the CNIB.</p> <p>Visual acuity is 20/200 (6/60 metric) or less in the better eye with correction, or a field of vision limited to an angle of 20 degrees or less in both eyes.</p>
CODE	DISABLING CONDITION	DESCRIPTION OF DISABLING CONDITION
Code 51	Mild Mental Disability	<p>The student with a mild mental disability is usually delayed in most academic subjects and social behaviours as compared to his or her same-age peers.</p> <p>Any student designated as having a mild mental disability should have an intelligence quotient (IQ) in the range of 50 to 75 ± 5 as measured on an individual intelligence test, have an adaptive behaviour score equivalent to the mildly delayed level on an adaptive behaviour scale and exhibit developmental delays in social behaviours.</p>
Code 52	Moderate Mental Disability	<p>The student with a moderate mental disability requires significant modification to basic curriculum, but is able to profit from instruction in living/vocational skills and may acquire functional literacy and numeracy skills.</p>
	Continued....	

Code 52		Any student who is designated as having a moderate mental disability should have an intelligence quotient (IQ) in the range of approximately 30 to 50 ± 5 as measured on an individual intelligence test and have an adaptive behaviour scale score equivalent to the moderately delayed level on an adaptive behaviour scale.
Code 53	Emotional/ Behavioural Disability	<p>The student with a mild to moderate emotional/behavioural disability exhibits chronic and pervasive behaviours that are so maladaptive that they interfere with the learning and safety of the student and other students.</p> <p>Typically, behaviour disabilities are characterized by a number of observable maladaptive behaviours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ an inability to establish or maintain satisfactory relationships with peers or adults ▪ a general mood of unhappiness or depression ▪ inappropriate behaviour or feelings under ordinary conditions ▪ continued difficulty in coping with the learning situation in spite of remedial intervention ▪ physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems ▪ difficulties in accepting the realities of personal responsibility and accountability ▪ physical violence toward other persons and/or physical destructiveness toward the environment
Code 54	Learning Disability Continued....	<p>The student with a learning disability usually has average or above average intelligence but has specific learning disabilities which interfere with normal academic learning.</p> <p>Learning disabilities¹ is a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders due to identifiable or inferred central nervous system dysfunction. Such disorders may be manifested by delays in early development and/or difficulties in any of the following areas: attention, memory, reasoning, co-ordination, communication, reading, writing, spelling, calculation, social competence and emotional maturation.</p> <p>Learning disabilities are intrinsic to the individual, and may affect learning and behaviour in any individual, including those with potentially average, or above average intelligence.</p> <p>Learning disabilities are not due primarily to visual, hearing or</p>

¹ This is the official definition adopted by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) on October 18, 1981.

Code 54		<p>motor handicaps; to mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental disadvantage; although they may occur concurrently with any of these.</p> <p>Learning disabilities may arise from genetic variations, biochemical factors, events in the pre- to postnatal period, or any other subsequent events resulting in neurological impairment.</p>
Code 55	Hearing Disability	<p>The student with mild to moderate hearing disability is one whose hearing condition affects speech and language development and interferes with the ability to learn. A student with mild (26 to 40 decibels) to moderate (41 to 70 decibels) hearing disability will have an average hearing loss of 26 to 70 decibels unaided in the better ear over the normal range of speech. The normal range of speech is 500 Hz, 1000 Hz, 2000 Hz or 1000 Hz, 2000 Hz, 4000 Hz.</p>
Code 56	Visual Disability	<p>The student with mild to moderate visual disability is one whose vision is so limited that it interferes with the student's ability to learn or the student requires modification of the learning environment to be able to learn. A student who is designated as having limited vision should have a visual acuity of less than 20/70 (6/21 metric) in the better eye after correction and/or a reduced field of vision.</p>
Code 57	Communication Disability (Speech Therapy)	<p>The student with a communication disability has significant difficulty communicating with peers and adults because of a disability in expressive and/or receptive language, and/or disabilities in speech including articulation, voice and fluency.</p>
Code 58	Physical or Medical Disability	<p>The student with a mild to moderate physical or medical disability is one whose physical, neurological or medical condition interferes with the ability to learn, or who requires modification of the learning environment to be able to learn. The existence of a physical disability or medical condition, in and of itself, is not sufficient for the student to be designated in this category; the condition must impact upon the student's schooling.</p>
Code 59	Multiple Disability	<p>The student with a multiple disability has two or more non-associated mild to moderate disabilities which have a significant impact upon his or her ability to learn. Some disabling conditions are closely associated so would not be designated under this category. For example, students with hearing disabilities frequently have communication disabilities, and students with mental disabilities almost always have both academic and communication disabilities.</p>

Code 80	Gifted and Talented	<p>The student who is gifted and talented is one who by virtue of outstanding ability is capable of exceptional performance. This is a student who requires differentiated provisions and/or programs beyond the regular school program to realize his or her contribution to self and society.</p> <p>A student capable of exceptional performance is one who demonstrates achievement and/or potential ability in one of several areas:</p> <p>GENERAL INTELLECTUAL ABILITY</p> <p>The student possessing general intellectual ability is consistently superior to the other students in the school, to the extent that the student needs and can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Usually, this is the student who has a large storehouse of information about a wide variety of topics. The ability to abstract, generalize and utilize high level thinking skills is common in this type of student.</p> <p>SPECIFIC ACADEMIC APTITUDE</p> <p>The student possessing a specific academic aptitude is the student who in a specific subject area, is consistently superior to the aptitudes of the other students in the school to the extent that the student needs and can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Generally, this is the student who has an inordinate strength in a specific area, such as mathematical reasoning.</p> <p>CREATIVE OR PRODUCTIVE THINKING</p> <p>The student who thinks creatively or productively is one who consistently engages in divergent thinking that results in unconventional responses to conventional tasks, to the extent that the student needs and can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Generally, this is the student who is unwilling to accept authoritarian pronouncements without critical examination.</p> <p>LEADERSHIP ABILITY</p>
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Code 80	Continued....	<p>The student possessing leadership ability is one who not only assumes leadership roles, but is also accepted by others as a leader, to the extent that the student needs and can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Generally, this is the student who can be counted upon to carry out responsibilities and adapts readily to new situations.</p> <p>VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS</p> <p>The student possessing visual and performing arts ability is one who consistently creates outstanding aesthetic productions in the graphic areas, sculpture, music, drama or dance, to the extent that the student needs and can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program.</p> <p>PSYCHOMOTOR ABILITY</p> <p>The student possessing psychomotor ability is one who consistently displays mechanical skills or athletic ability so superior to that of other students in the school that the student needs and can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Generally, this is the student with good control of body movement and excellent eye-hand co-ordination.</p>
Code 94	Learning Disability	<p>Locally Developed Criteria for Code 94</p> <p>Students determined to have learning disabilities sufficient to warrant code 94 designations must meet all of the following criteria.</p> <p>Academic Delay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one full year if student is in grades 2 or 3; • in general, no first year grade one students would qualify; exceptions would include grade one students who are repeating grade one and still demonstrating skills no higher than a beginning first grade level and students coming out of specialized preschool programs whose educational development still lags significantly behind their chronological peers; • two full years if students is in grades 4 – 6; • three full years if student is in grades 7 – 12. <p>Academic delay is in core subjects, language arts and/or math. Academic delay is determined through use of common assessment</p>

Code 94	Continued....	<p>tools:</p> <p>K-3 Jerry Johns 3-8 Canada QUIET, Jerry Johns for language arts 7-12 combination of tests that assess multiple facets of language arts and/or math; appropriate tests include Woodcock Johnson Achievement Test, McCracken, Jerry John, WRAT</p> <p>(This list could be altered in future dependent upon agreement on other suitable assessment tools.)</p> <p>Individual Program Plans (IPPs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an IPP must be in place for the student that demonstrates significant modifications have been made in the areas of weakness for the student; • these modifications must be in curricular program, instructional strategies, and assessment practices. <p>Student History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school must demonstrate that they have accessed all available resources to assist those students they are seeking to identify as code 94; • these resources would include but not be limited to, resource room, special program, early literacy, volunteer tutors, etc. • in general, the test accommodations for provincial achievement tests need to have been applied and use in the previous achievement test year(s); this criteria would apply only to Alberta students in grades 4 through 12. <p>Outside Agency Involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schools must include documentation of previous and/or current involvement of outside agency/professional resources for student, if applicable.
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Note: Coding information is obtained from the document, “Guide to Education of Students with Special Needs, 1997,” Special Education Branch, Alberta Education.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Medicine Hat School District No. 76 offers a continuum of programs and services for students with special needs and students for whom alternative programs might be beneficial. Placement options range from total integration within a regular classroom setting to full congregation. These programs and services are categorized according to the following headings: Adapted Classroom Settings, Congregated Classroom Settings, Outreach Programs, Other Programs/Services and Regional Programs/Services.

ADAPTED CLASSROOM SETTINGS

1. Integrated Setting students with learning disabilities remain in their neighborhood schools	
K-12	All schools, as needed
2. Integrated Setting with Resource Room Assistance (averages 30 minute per day of small group instruction, usually in language arts)	
K-12	Availability is a school based decision
3. Integrated Setting within the Learning Assistance Program (LAP)	
K-12	All schools with LAP programs
4. English as a Second Language	
Elementary	Southview School
Senior High	Medicine Hat High School
5. Program for the Hearing Impaired -Deaf	
K-12	Itinerate teacher provides programs in neighborhood school
6. Visually Impaired Programs - Blind	
K-12	Available, as needed
7. Gifted and Talented (students with outstanding ability, capable of exceptional performance)	
K-12	Availability is a school based decision

**CONGREGATED CLASSROOM SETTINGS
LEARNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

1. Preschool Development Program (Program Unit Funding students, a preschool program for students with severe delays or multiple handicaps)		
Primary Level:	Herald School Southview School Elm Street School	
2. Learning Disability (average IQ range, significant academic lag)		
Elementary Level:	Elm Street School Vincent Massey School	Grade 4 to 6 -congregated classroom Grade 4 to 6 - congregated in one school but integrated into classrooms
Junior/Senior High Level:	Alexandra Junior High - Grade 7-8 Medicine Hat High School - Grade 9-12 Crescent Heights High School Grade 7-12	
3. Mild Cognitive Disability (approximate IQ 50-75)		
Primary Level:	Southview School Crestwood School	Junior Class Junior Class
Elementary Level:	Crestwood School Southview School	Intermediate & Senior Class Intermediate & Senior Class
Junior/Senior High Level:	Medicine Hat High School Alexandra Junior High School Crescent Heights High School	
4. Moderate Cognitive Disability, (approximate IQ 30-50) Academic & life Skills Program		
Primary Level:	Georges P. Vanier	
Intermediate Level:	Georges P. Vanier	
Senior Level:	Georges P. Vanier	
5. Dependent Handicapped Program (for students with severe handicaps, IQ below 30)		
All Levels:	Herald School	
6. Transitions Program (modified program for students with a history of academic difficulty)		
Junior/Senior High	Medicine Hat High School	

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

1. Stay in School	
Grades 7-9	
2. Career High	
Grades 10-12	
3. Alternative High School	
Grades 10-12	
4. Teen Mother	
Junior/Senior High	
5. Reeducating About Living (REAL) Program	
Grades 7-12	

OTHER PROGRAMS/SERVICES

1. Native Education	
K-12	Medicine Hat High School - a program of Medicine Hat School District and Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education
2. Counsellors	
K-12	Available at most schools
3. District Psychologist	
K-12	Available to all schools
4. Director of Student Services	
K-12	Available to all schools
5. Director of Primary Services	
ECS-3	Elementary Schools
6. Behavior Consultant	
K-12	Available to all schools
7. Home Schooling	
1-12	Available to all schools

REGIONAL PROGRAM/SERVICES

2. Palliser Adolescent Services (P.A.S.)	
Students 10 – 17 years	Medicine Hat Regional Hospital
3. Southeastern Alberta Student Health Partnership (SASHP)	
K-8 Students	All schools, as needed

ADAPTED CLASSROOM SETTINGS

INTEGRATED SETTING

Student population served: All coded students

Description:

Some students with special needs are fully integrated into regular school programs. Some parents choose to have their children attend the neighbourhood school or, at times, a congregated classroom placement may not be available. Special needs students in a regular classroom setting have an Individualized Program Plan designed to meet their needs. As a supplement to their program, students might access Resource Room assistance. Students might qualify for a full-time or part-time Teacher Assistant (TA) or modifications may be made to their program to include small group instruction.

Most special needs students in these settings have been assessed by a psychologist or medical doctor, or qualify through district criteria. Case conferences including such personnel as a district psychologist, school administrator, counselor, homeroom teacher, resource room teacher and parents are held to report assessment results and outline the options for programming available to the student. Parents are asked to consider the options and together with school and other appropriate personnel determine the student's placement.

INTEGRATED SETTING WITH RESOURCE ROOM ASSISTANCE

Student Population Served: Students having difficulty with language arts, school based decision as to which students will attend

Description:

Resource room programming is offered in most schools. Students who attend resource room programs include special needs students who have chosen to attend their neighbourhood schools and regular stream students who are experiencing difficulty in language arts.

Students are referred to the resource room teacher by classroom teachers or counselors in consultation with parents. Each student is pre-tested and results are communicated to parents. When parental permission to attend resource room programs is obtained, an Individualized Program Plan is designed and implemented. Post-testing occurs at the point of departure and again results are communicated to parents. Resource room programming includes pull-out programs, assistance within the classroom and consultation services.

INTEGRATED SETTING WITHIN THE LEARNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Student Population Served: Code 54 – Learning Disability

Description

The program is designed to meet the needs of students of average ability with learning difficulties. The aim of the program is to provide specialized, intensive intervention in the education of students who, while academically able to complete regular class curriculum, require some extra assistance or modification to the curriculum. Emphasis is placed on improving reading skills, teaching organizational and study skills, and providing assistance in completing regular class work. Students may qualify for coding through assessment by a psychologist or through district criteria.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Student Population Served: Code –301

Description:

Program for students whose first language is one other than English.

Elementary Program

The English as a Second Language Program is a pull out program offered to students from grade one to six within the Medicine Hat School District No. 76. The program is located at Southview Community School and is open to all students who are learning English as their second language.

The students develop English language skills through viewing, listening, speaking, reading and writing. The program is taught as an interrelated program with integration opportunities offered the students in their classroom, their school, and their community.

Transportation is provided through Totem Transportation.

Secondary Program

The English as a Second Language classes introduce English to students whose first language is one other than English and have little or no command of English. Basic English survival skills are introduced in Level 1. Speaking, reading, and writing skills are developed as students gain confidence with the language. Credits are awarded for levels 2, 3 and 4. Level 5 is an enrichment course to help those students who need it to integrate into the regular core courses.

HEARING IMPAIRED STUDENTS

Student Population Served: Code 45 - Deaf

Description:

Services for hearing impaired students are offered in students' neighbourhood schools. Program adaptations are provided through consultative services with outside agencies and school personnel. Teacher Assistants are provided according to students' needs. An Individualized Program Plan is designed and implemented for each student.

VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

Student Population Served: Code 46 - Blind

Description:

Services for visually impaired students are offered in students' neighbourhood schools. Program adaptations are provided through consultative services with outside agencies and school personnel. Teacher Assistants are provided according to students' needs. An Individualized Program Plan is designed and implemented for each student.

A student with a severe visual disability is one whose corrected vision is so limited that it is inadequate for most or all instructional situations, and information must be presented through other means.

GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

Student Population Served: Code 80 - Gifted and talented

Description:

Medicine Hat School District No. 76 offers enrichment to gifted and talented students within the neighbourhood school settings. Availability is a school-based decision. The student who is gifted and talented is one who by virtue of outstanding ability is capable of exceptional performance in one or more of several areas: general intellectual ability; specific academic aptitude; creative or productive thinking; leadership ability; visual and performing arts; psychomotor ability.

Students are identified as gifted and talented through teacher observation and parent referral.

MEDICINE HAT HIGH SCHOOL LEARNING STRATEGIES

Student Population Served: Students Identified as Requiring Extra Assistance

Description:

The Learning Strategies Program at Medicine Hat High School assists students who experience difficulties with attention and metacognitive skills. Students' difficulties impede their ability to work effectively in the regular classroom to the extent that they perform three years below their grade level as measures on standardized assessment tools. The student is placed on an individual program plan which is shared with all the students' instructors thus enabling the student to access the assistance required to help them perform more successfully. One period a day is designated for work with the Learning Strategies teacher and for the remainder of the school day the student attends regular classes.

CONGREGATED CLASSROOM SETTINGS LEARNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Student Population Served: Code 47 - Severe communication disability – ECS

Description:

The preschool development programs located at Herald and Riverside Schools are early intervention programs designed to meet the needs of children 2 ½ to 6 years of age with assessed developmental and communication delays. The programs focus on total child development with special emphasis on language and communication skills.

A language enriched environment, developmentally appropriate activities and a low student/adult ratio enhance student growth in all areas. A multi-disciplinary approach is used in consultation with physio-therapists, occupational therapists, and speech and language resource professionals.

The program is funded primarily by Program Unit Funds (P.U.Fs.). The program includes the following features:

- Funding available for three preschool years.
- Half-day program with a full-day option.
- Integration into regular kindergarten and school activities.
- Individual Program Plans for each student.
- Daily snack program.
- Community involvement.
- Parental involvement in the classroom and the Parent Advisory Council.
- Transportation may be available through City of Medicine Hat Special Transit.

LEARNING DISABILITY

Student population served: Code 54 - Learning disability

Description:

Programs for students with a learning disability (SLD) are located at Vincent Massey, Elm Street, Alexandra Junior High, Medicine Hat High School and Crescent Heights High Schools. The format of these programs varies from congregated classroom with integration to fully integrated classrooms based upon the ability of the student. Classes are staffed at a lower than average pupil/teacher ratio with Teacher Assistants (TAs) employed according to student needs.

Typically, classes contain twelve to fifteen students. Students either walk or are bused to these schools.

Students with learning disabilities usually have average intelligence, but have specific learning disabilities which interfere with normal academic learning. These learning disabilities are intrinsic to the individual and are not due primarily to visual, hearing or motor handicaps, to mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental disadvantage. Such disorders may be manifested by difficulties in any of the following areas: attention, memory, reasoning, coordination, communication, reading, writing, spelling, calculation, social competence, or emotional maturation.

The classroom teacher and/or parents initiate placement discussions after extensive observation and/or request by parents. A district psychologist provides psychological testing. Parents are informed of assessment results and placement options within the district. Parental permission is required for placement. An Individualized Program Plan is designed and implemented for each student.

MILD COGNITIVE DISABILITY

Student population served: Code 51 – Mild cognitive disability

Description:

Classes for students who have a mild cognitive disability are located at Crestwood, Southview Alexandra Junior High, Medicine Hat High and Crescent Heights High. The classes are staffed at a lower than average pupil-teacher ratio with TAs employed according to the needs of the student population. There are typically twelve to fifteen students in each class. Students are bused to these schools or they walk if they are within the school's boundaries.

According to Alberta Education criteria, to be eligible for placement in this program, students should have an intelligence quotient (IQ) in the range of 50 to 75 ± 5 as measured on an individual intelligence test, have a score equivalent to the mildly delayed level on an adaptive behaviour scale and exhibit developmental delays in social behaviours. To initiate placement in this program, refer to the sections on Screening and Referrals. This program is funded through a portion of basic education grant. No other special education funding is available.

Admission to class for students with mild cognitive disabilities is based upon extensive teacher reporting and observation. A psychologist administers formal testing instruments to determine intelligence quotient as required by the government coding system. Parent permission is obtained for formal testing and parents are advised of assessment results and placement options available within the district. An Individualized Program Plan is designed and implemented for each student.

MODERATE COGNITIVE DISABILITY/Academic & Life Skills Program

Student population served: Code 52 – Moderate cognitive disability

Description:

A program for students with moderate to severe disabilities is located at Georges P. Vanier School. Students in this program range in age from six to twenty years. Three levels of programming are provided: primary, intermediate and senior. Students move between levels based upon individual strengths. Staffing features low student-to-adult ratios with a teacher and teacher assistant assigned to each class.

The general program is regulated by a series of Alberta Learning documents entitled “Programming for Students with Special Needs”. Each student has an Individual Program Plan. Students’ programming focuses on living/vocational skills, which may include functional literacy, numeracy and other cognitive skills. Many activities are community based. Opportunities for integration are provided through close cooperation with Herald School and other local community schools. A “Transitions Program” is utilized to assist students in their transition from the school community to the adult community.

If parents choose a congregated setting, the majority of Code 52 students will attend Georges P. Vanier School. To initiate placement in this program, refer to the sections on Screening and Referrals. This program is funded through a portion of the basic education grant. Some students may qualify for severe disability funding.

Transportation is provided through Totem Transportation and the City of Medicine Hat Special Transit.

DEPENDENT HANDICAPPED PROGRAM

Student population served: Code 41 – Severe cognitive disability
Code 43 – Severe multiple disability

Description:

The dependent handicapped program located at Herald School is a program for children six to eighteen years with multiple and/or severe disabilities. To be eligible for the program, students must meet the requirements of one of the categories for severe disabilities funding as outlined in “Eligibility for Severe Disabilities Funding” published yearly by Alberta Learning. Categories include Severe Mental Disabilities (Code 41) and Severe Multiple Disabilities (Code 43). Students require intensive individual assistance or supervision in all areas of functioning including daily living skills.

A multi-disciplinary approach is used in consultation with physio-therapists, occupational therapists and speech/language pathologists. Each student has an Individual Program Plan developed in consultation with parents and community support professionals. Programming involves communication skills, self care skills, sensory training, fine motor skills, gross motor skills and cognitive development.

Inclusion in school activities occurs whenever possible but primarily with regularly scheduled activities such as age-appropriate classroom activities, Dependent Handicapped Buddies, Monday morning assemblies, D.E.A.R.(Drop Everything And Read), lunch hour routines, bi-weekly bowling and all special assemblies.

The program also features low student-to-adult ratios, adaptive equipment, support technologies, and a therapy pool.

Transportation of students is provided through City of Medicine Hat Special Transit.

TRANSITIONS PROGRAM

Student population served: Students entering a grade nine to twelve program who may have not experienced success in a regular learning program

Description:

The Transitions Program offered at Medicine Hat High School has been developed to meet the needs of students who have experienced difficulty in learning in the regular elementary and secondary school program. The purpose of the VPP is to enable these students to:

- develop essential concepts, skills and attitudes in preparation for their roles in the home, community and workplace;
- obtain a sense of success and achievement in their learning experiences, thereby enhancing self-esteem;
- develop entry level job skills (work experience);
- recognize the need for life long learning;
- become responsible members of society.

REEDUCATING ABOUT LIVING (REAL)

Student population served: Students not experiencing success in the regular classroom setting

Description:

The REAL program is operated in partnership with the Southeast Alberta Child and Family Services Authority. Students are placed on an individualized academic program developed by a certified teacher; however there is also a large life skills component developed by Southeast Alberta Child and Family Services Authority personnel. Emphasis is placed on returning students to the regular classroom by assisting students to develop the social skills necessary to successfully function in both schools and the community at large.

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

STAY IN SCHOOL

Student population served: Students (Grades 7-9) experiencing difficulty in a regular school setting

Description:

The Stay in School program is offered at the YMCA Community Learning Centre and is an outreach program of Alexandra Junior High School. The Stay In School Program is an alternative education program designed to provide individualized academic instruction and personal life management skills for youths who are having difficulty in a regular school setting.

The program is staffed on a lower pupil/teacher ratio (less than 20:1) and offers academic and non-academic components. The educational program is individualized and taught in a self-pacing format.

Several factors are considered before admission to the program is granted. Students must be twelve to sixteen years of age to attend this program. They must be achieving below grade and age expectations and experiencing difficulties with behaviour, motivation or attendance in regular school settings. They may also be demonstrating inappropriate social and life skills, and standard school interventions have been unsuccessful. Students must agree to the program policies and demonstrate a willingness and commitment to participate fully in the Stay in School Program. Consultation must take place with parents and the students before admission.

To initiate placement in the program, contact the YMCA Community Learning Centre or Alexandra Junior High School.

CAREER HIGH

Student population served: Students (grades 10-12) experiencing difficulty in a regular school setting

Description:

Career High is offered at the YMCA Community Learning Centre, and is an outreach program of Alexandra Junior High School.

Career High is designed to assist student in completing their education in a flexible and supportive environment. There are three program components: academics; life management skills; and career research and employment preparation. The program is staffed on a lower pupil/teacher ratio (less than 20:1). Core high school subjects and a wide range of electives are available. Nine week mini semesters, an individualized self-paced working environment and flexible hours accommodate working students.

Students may gain admission to the program at any time throughout the year. A nominal student fee is charged.

To initiate placement in the program, contact the YMCA Community Learning Centre or Alexandra Junior High School.

ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL

Student population served: Students who require or choose an alternative senior high program and are between the ages of 16 and 20.

Description:

The Alternative High School is an education program designed to provide individualized academic instruction to youth who require or choose an alternate setting. Courses are accessed through the Independent Learning Program (Virtual School) and Alberta Distance Learning. The educational program is individualized and self-pacing. Guidance and counseling services are available through Alberta Mental Health, Medicine Hat High School and McMann Youth Services.

To initiate placement in the program contact the Alternative High School.

TEEN MOTHER

Teens who are pregnant or have young babies (up to 18 months).

Description:

The Teen Mother program is offered at the YMCA Crescent Heights Childcare Centre, and is an outreach program of Crescent Heights High School.

The program is designed to provide high school credit courses, life skills, parenting, and career development to pregnant teens and teen mothers. Education courses are delivered through use of Alberta Distance Learning materials, while other components of the program are delivered by a life skills coach, or other community resource people.

The program is a “stepping stone” to help these teens form a plan to return to mainstream school, attain a job, or further their education through other means such as college.

An intake interview is required for acceptance to the program.

OTHER PROGRAMS/SERVICES
AFFILIATED WITH MEDICINE HAT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 76

NATIVE EDUCATION

Student population served: Students from aboriginal families.

Description:

The Native Education Program:

- acquires and provides students and teachers with recent materials developed by the Alberta Native Education Project.
- provides assistance to teachers and schools in implementing this program.
- serves as a partner with the community and acts as a referral agent, providing liaison services for Native students, parents, school staff, administrators and the Native Education Program Parent Advisory Committee (NEPEC).
- enhances the education experience of Native students while ensuring that “All” students are educated.
- provides support to Native families.

COUNSELLORS

Student population served: Students with social, emotional and educational difficulties.

Description:

Elementary School Counsellors

The duties of an elementary school counsellor are varied. The program has three major strands: developmental, preventative and crisis intervention.

The school counsellor is the child’s advocate providing support, direction and alternatives in dealing with a variety of situations.

The school counsellor is a resource to the teacher and other staff members. The counsellor assists in helping the teacher incorporate effective approaches in helping their students be successful in areas from academic success to success with peers. The counsellors may be directly involved in the classroom.

The school counsellor is a resource to parents. The counsellor directly helps them resolve issues with their children as well as coordinates their involvement with community services to provide support.

DISTRICT PSYCHOLOGISTS

Student population served: All students within the school district

Description:

The Educational Psychologist is responsible for assessing the psychological needs of the school population; assisting administrators, teachers, parents and other specialists in planning and implementing educational programs; and providing informational interpretations for children with special needs.

DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

Student Population Served: All identified students with special needs

Description:

The Director of Student Services is responsible for coordinating school and district efforts to provide suitable education experiences for students with special needs. A primary function is coordination planning in special needs areas by establishing priorities for what needs to be accomplished.

DIRECTOR OF PRIMARY SERVICES

Student population served: Preschool Development Program – children with diverse needs ages 2 ½ - 6 years
Students attending Kindergarten to grade three

Description:

The Director of Primary Services:

- provides assistance and consultation to the special needs students, their teachers, and the Extended Grade One Program.
- provides consultative services to teachers and students in the Kindergarten to Grade three programs.
- coordinates the district Early Childhood Service program.
- consults and assists with the development of individual program plans, collecting data, placement assessments and monitoring, suggestions for remediation and behavior modification.
- participates in parent-teacher conferences, coordinates the District Kindergarten Parent Advisory Committee.
- assists teachers with classroom management, procedures, curriculum implementation and provides examples of appropriate materials and methodology.
- promotes and organizes workshops for parents, teacher assistants and teachers.

BEHAVIOUR CONSULTANT

Student population served: At risk students

Description:

The Behavior Consultant provides teachers with direct, consultative support in managing behaviorally disruptive students within their regular school environments. The Behavior Consultant is available to:

- ❑ make student/classroom observations as appropriate;
- ❑ work directly with teachers in developing behavior management plans for individual students and/or classes;
- ❑ model teaching practices that demonstrate behaviour management strategies;
- ❑ make recommendations to staff and parents about behaviour management interventions.

HOME EDUCATION

Student population served: Students whose parents choose to educate the child at home or elsewhere.

Description:

Home education is a program of education designed and taught by parents. The requirements of the Alberta Learning curriculum must be addressed. Supervision by a school board or an accredited private school is required by Alberta Learning.

To access this program, parents must contact the Assistant Superintendent of Program Planning directly.

REGIONAL PROGRAMS/SERVICES

PALLISER ADOLESCENT SERVICES (P.A.S.)

Student population served: Adolescents experiencing mental or emotional health difficulties

Description:

The Palliser Adolescent Service Program is housed at the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital. It is a collection of coordinated Mental Health Services. The services are available to students who reside in the Palliser Health region and who do not require hospitalization.

Comprehensive, multidimensional assessment and/or treatment is offered. Ideally, the adolescent and his or her family enter into an intensive day program for a two-week initial assessment with the option for continued treatment. Students who require long-term treatment are generally referred to other medical programs.

Educational staffing for this program is provided by Medicine Hat School District No. 76.

Criteria:

- 10-17 years of age
- Adolescent and family must enter treatment voluntarily
- Adolescent and family are assessed by the PAS Team as being able to benefit from emotional, behavioural and/or relationship therapies.

SOUTHEASTERN ALBERTA STUDENT HEALTH PARTNERSHIP (SASHP)

Student Population Served: All students in Southern Alberta

Description:

SASHP is comprised of organizations in the Palliser Health Region (education, health, mental health, and children's service authorities) that developed a joint service plan to address the special health needs of students registered in school programs. Under a joint services plan approved by Alberta Learning in September 1999, a variety of services are provided to schools across the region. In Medicine Hat School District these services are directed to students with emotional behaviour needs, K-8 and students with speech needs K-6.

OCCUPATIONAL, PHYSICAL AND RESPIRATORY THERAPY

Occupational, Physical And Respiratory therapy services may be available in the school through the Southern Alberta Student Health Partnership. In addition, the Children's Health and Development Services Program (CHADS), through the Palliser Health Authority, may also provide occupational or physical therapy for children.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY (OT)

The name 'occupation' encompasses the activities of a child such as play, work (school or education) and self-care (dressing, bathing, eating, etc...). The primary focus of OT for a child in school includes educational activities such as reading, handwriting, fine motor coordination, calculation, and problem solving.

Students may benefit from referral for an Occupational Therapy assessment if they have difficulties with:

- developmental delays in the fine motor area;
- visual perceptual difficulties;
- developmental delays/difficulties in activities of daily living;
- developmental delays/difficulties in attention span, approach to tasks.

For example, a child may have difficulty recognizing letters consistently and therefore have trouble reading. The OT can assess the child and provide strategies to help the child recognize letters resulting in better reading.

PHYSICAL THERAPY (PT)

Physical therapy is a rehabilitation discipline that assesses and treats musculoskeletal, neurological, and cardio respiratory dysfunction. This means that the physical therapist is able to evaluate and treat difficulties with muscles, joints, bones and the coordinated integration of movement.

Students may benefit from referral for a Physical Therapy assessment if they have difficulties with:

- developmental delays in the gross motor areas (running, balance, coordination, strength and ball handling);
- muscle tone/postural difficulties (poor posture/pain, etc.);
- adaptation, eg. walkers, standers, etc.

For example, a child may not be able to keep up with his classmates on the playground or gym. A physical therapy assessment might help to define the problem area (muscle weakness, balance difficulties etc.) and give suggestions as to activities that might help with the gross motor skills to improve success.

RESPIRATORY THERAPY (RT)

Students may benefit from referral for a Respiratory Therapy assessment if they have:

- diagnosis of asthma;
- similar classroom or school yard symptoms.
- high incidence of school absenteeism due to illness associated with colds, coughs, wheeze, or hay fever;

BEHAVIOR CONSULTANT

Student population served: At risk students

The Behavior Consultant provides teachers with direct, consultative support in managing behaviorally disruptive students within their regular school environments. The Behavior Consultant is available to:

- make student/classroom observations as appropriate;
- work directly with teachers in developing behavior management plans for individual students and/or classes;
- model teaching practices that demonstrate behaviour management strategies;
- make recommendations to staff and parents about behaviour management interventions.

MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTANTS

Student population served: At risk students

This program is offered through the Southeastern Alberta Student Health Partnership. Members of the partnership include: Alberta Mental Health Board, Alberta Learning, Palliser Health Authority and Southeastern Alberta Children's Services.

This is a school-based program which promotes children's health and well-being through the following programs:

- ❑ individual counseling;
- ❑ assessment;
- ❑ treatment;
- ❑ case consultation;
- ❑ skill development;
- ❑ referral services.

Services are flexible, depending on the needs of the children. Themes include, but are not limited to:

- ❑ anger management;
- ❑ substance abuse;
- ❑ running way;
- ❑ safety on the school ground;
- ❑ friendship;
- ❑ self-esteem;
- ❑ stealing;
- ❑ conflict resolution;
- ❑ cultural issues;
- ❑ depression;
- ❑ peer pressure;
- ❑ etc.

GROUP FACILITATORS

Student population served: At risk students

This program is offered through the Southeastern Alberta Student Health Partnership. Members of the partnership include: Alberta Mental Health Board, Alberta Learning, Palliser Health Authority and Southeastern Alberta Children's Services.

This is a school-based program which promotes children's health and well-being through the following programs:

- ❑ psycho-educational programming;
- ❑ small group experiences;
- ❑ treatment;
- ❑ skill development;
- ❑ case consultation;
- ❑ referral services.

Services are flexible, depending on the needs of the children. Themes include, but are not limited to:

- ❑ anger management;
- ❑ substance abuse;
- ❑ running way;
- ❑ safety on the school ground;
- ❑ friendship;
- ❑ self-esteem;

- ❑ stealing;
- ❑ conflict resolution;
- ❑ cultural issues;
- ❑ depression;
- ❑ peer pressure;
- ❑ Etc.

PARENTING EDUCATION

Population served: Parents interested in parenting skills

The “Parenting With Love and Logic” program is presented over a six week cycle through Alberta Mental Health. It is designed to provide caregivers with tools to develop a positive relationship with their child by:

- ❑ putting parents back in control;
- ❑ raising the level of the child’s responsibility;
- ❑ teaching children to make decisions for themselves;
- ❑ teaching parents to let consequences with empathy do the teaching.

PROCEDURES

A. Screening

Teacher's Role:

- Identify students experiencing difficulty;
- Initiate intervention strategies to maximize the student's success.
- Collect as much information as possible.
- Discuss issues with parents and other teachers;

Parents' Role:

- Discuss concerns with the teacher;
- Provide pertinent information to the teacher and Program Planning Department, e.g. medical background, current involvement with other agencies.

The pre-referral stage is very important. The classroom teacher has the expertise to develop a comprehensive overview of a student's learning. Review of records, history, portfolios and student work samples provide excellent information about strengths, areas of need and previous interventions. Close contact with the parents is also important. Parents from the onset need to be aware of any concerns a teacher might have. Parents can also provide valuable information that may not be in the student's records and often have insights into strategies that have or have not worked for their child in the past.

Screening At the Pre-School Level:

The screening of pre-school children for special needs is a community effort. Children may be identified by parents, Day Care workers, Social Services, Palliser Health, Kindergarten teachers, etc. Referrals are initially handled by personnel at the Palliser Health Authority.

Information Gathering:²

A learning problem may be suspected on the basis of observable behaviours, past history and performance. It is the combined responsibility of school personnel, other professionals and parents to gather this information and document any concerns.

The following factors, identified by Rosner³, may assist in the early identification of the student who may be at risk for learning disabilities:

- complications in the student's medical history, prenatal to present;
- delayed language development (receptive and/or expressive);
- speech articulation problems;
- difficulty with phonemic awareness;
- delayed development;
- poor memory, particularly when it comes to directions that comprise more than one or two steps;
- delayed development of consistent hand preference;
- delayed gross and fine motor development;
- difficulty with tasks that involve a sequence of actions: student does not recognize that tasks can't be accomplished satisfactorily unless they are broken down into a series of steps and that step one must be dealt with first;
- avoidance of activities that involve sustained visual and/or auditory attention, for example, colouring, working with puzzles and listening to stories;
- poor classification skills: student does not readily recognize that things may be categorized on the basis of certain attributes, such as colour, size and function;
- poor association skills: student does not recognize that there are significant similarities and differences in certain units of information, which if noted, facilitate learning new information;
- short attention span (relative to age);
- difficulty copying basic designs;
- difficulty interpreting idioms, jokes, riddles, play on words;
- misses or misunderstands non-verbal cues;
- unable to interpret body language of others expressed through body movements, tone of voice and facial expressions;
- difficulty developing peer acceptance/relationships.

² From *Guide to Education for Students with Special Needs*, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1997

³ From *Helping children overcome learning difficulties*, by J. Rosner.

B. Referrals

Teacher's Role:

- Collect as much pertinent information as possible (see Assessments);
- Discuss information with school administrator and/or counselor;
- Discuss issues with parents;
- Carefully complete all referral forms.

School Administrators' Role:

- Assist teacher with decision to refer student.

Parents' Role:

- Supply parental permission to test;
- Supply pertinent information on assessment forms.

Program Planning Role:

- Process student forms;
- Assess student;
- Report results of assessment to teacher and parents.

Students “at risk” in terms of learning problems and those identified as having special needs are referred for consultation and/or assessment. Consultation and assessment begins at the home school and then continues on to include district office personnel if required.

Referrals to Program Planning Department

A referral should be submitted to the Program Planning Department after discussion of the referral with the School Resource Team or the principal. When submitting a referral the classroom teacher should:

1. Accumulate as much pertinent information as possible (see: Assessments).
2. Discuss the referral with parents in a personal or telephone interview. This should be a continuation of your contact with parents. The first contact was initiated during the screening stage and parental contact should be an ongoing process.
3. Complete the “Parental Permission to Test” form and have the parent sign the form. This form should be filed in the student’s cumulative file.
4. Complete a “Referral For Students Services Assistance” form and forward it to Program Planning, Central Office. This form does not need to be completed if the student has been referred to Central Office in previous years.
5. Complete a “Referral For Psychological/Consultative Services” form. Carefully consider which services would be most beneficial to you in planning the student’s program. Forward this form to Program Planning, Central Office.

REFERRAL FORMS FOR MEDICINE HAT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 76				
FORM	COLOUR	AVAILABLE FROM	SOURCES OF INFORMATION	SUBMIT FORM TO
Parental Permission to Test	Grey (see next pages)	School Secretary, School Counselor, Resource Room Teacher, Program Planning Dept.	Teacher: Classroom Assessments and Observations	Student’s Cum File, Copy To Program Planning
Referral for Student Services Assistance	Coral (see next pages)	School Secretary, School Counselor, Resource Room Teacher, Program Planning Dept.	Student Information Sheet (available from school secretary) Cumulative File	Program Planning,
Referral for Psychological/ Consultative Services	Coral (see next pages)	School Secretary, School Counselor, Resource Room Teacher, Program Planning Dept.	Student Information Sheet (available from school secretary) Cumulative File Teacher: Classroom Assessments and Observations	Program Planning,

Referrals for Kindergarten Students

These are the steps **kindergarten teachers** should follow when they have concerns about a child's progress relating to speech language/language development:

1. Notify the parents about concerns regarding the child's language development;
2. Obtain written parental consent for screening;
3. Send referral to Palliser Health Authority;
4. Palliser Health contacts the parents to arrange a testing time which may be during school hours;
5. Children are assessed in the areas of receptive and expressive language by certified speech pathologists;
6. Speech pathologists discuss assessment results with the teacher;
7. A program is decided upon;
8. Parents are contacted by the teacher with assessment results and program description.

Once it is determined a child is experiencing a language difficulty, placement is dependent on the child's age. If the child is kindergarten age, she/he may be integrated into a kindergarten setting with the support of a Teacher Assistant. If the child is pre-school, up to three years of special education will be supplied at a Preschool Development Program.

C. Assessments

Teacher's Role:

- Maintain adequate records (see information below);
- Communicate results to student and parents on an on-going, consistent basis;

Psychologist's and/or Primary Consultant's Role:

- Complete requested assessments;
- Report results of assessments at a conference meeting including the teacher, the parents and, if required, a school administrator;
- Prepare reports.

Parents' Role:

- Complete any forms sent home by district office personnel;
- Attend the report conference

For a complete guide to assessment information, please see:

Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities pages LD.58 – LD.69

Book 6 in the series Programming for Students with Special Needs

D. Program Placement

Teacher's Role:

- Attend the case conference;
- Be prepared to answer questions regarding academic progress and work habits within a classroom setting.

School Administrator's and/or Counselor's Role:

- Attend the case conference;

Program Planning Role:

- Present assessment results at the case conference;
- Outline placement options to the parents.

Parents' Role:

- Consider placement options;
- Decide the placement they consider most suitable for their child.

A case conference is held to discuss the best placement for each student. The district psychologist presents the results of assessments to the parents and the homeroom teacher. The school counselor, a school administrator and the resource room teacher may also be in attendance. The case conference is an opportunity for all interested parties to discuss the needs of the student. After the parents have had a chance to ask questions and listen to all of the information which has been collected about their child, they will be asked to consider carefully the placement options. Within a few days parents and school and/or school district personnel should decide on a placement for the student.

E. Planning Students' Programs

Teacher's Role:

- develop an individualized program plan (IPP) designed to meet the specialized needs of the student;
- review the IPP formally with parents, and where appropriate, students, on an ongoing basis throughout the year;
- implement programs in accordance with the IPP;
- review and update the IPP at least three times a year;
- use results of IPP reviews to assess, and where necessary, revise student programs and placement.

School Administrator's and/or Counselor's Role:

- identify a key professional teacher whose primary responsibility is to co-ordinate and monitor students' IPPs.

Program Planning Role:

- provide assistance with assessment;
- provide guidance in the completion of the IPP.

Parent's Role:

- review and sign the IPP;
- communicate with the teacher on a regular basis by attending parent-teacher interviews and contacting the teacher to advise of any difficulties.

Individualized Program Plans:

An Individualized Program Plan (IPP) is developed and implemented for each student identified as having special needs. It is a written commitment of intent by an educational team. It is meant to ensure the provision of appropriate programming for students with special needs and to act as a **working document**. It also provides a record of student progress. Modifications in programming should be reflected and documented in a student's IPP. Preparation of the IPP provides the opportunity for parents, teachers, counselors, school-based administrators and others involved with the student to address the learning needs of the student. Although the nature and degree of involvement will vary, students should also be involved in the IPP process.

The following essential information must be included in the IPP:

- assessed level of educational performance;
- strengths and areas of need;
- long-term goals and short-term objectives;
- assessment procedures for short-term objectives;
- special education and related services to be provided;
- review dates, results and recommendations;
- relevant medical information;
- required classroom accommodations; e.g., any changes to instruction strategies, assessment procedures, materials, resources, facilities or equipment;
- transition plans;
- provision of health-related support services, if required.

An IPP should describe what the student knows and can do, what the student should learn next, where the instruction will take place, who will provide it, how long it will take and what the student will do to demonstrate learning.

Students with learning disabilities sometimes have an extensive collection of facts and experiences, but have difficulty seeing relationships among concepts, making inferences, and generalizing and transferring skills and strategies. To address this need, the IPP should include the development of metacognitive strategies such as self-monitoring or problem solving strategies, and opportunities for generalization of skills and strategies across a variety of tasks and contexts.

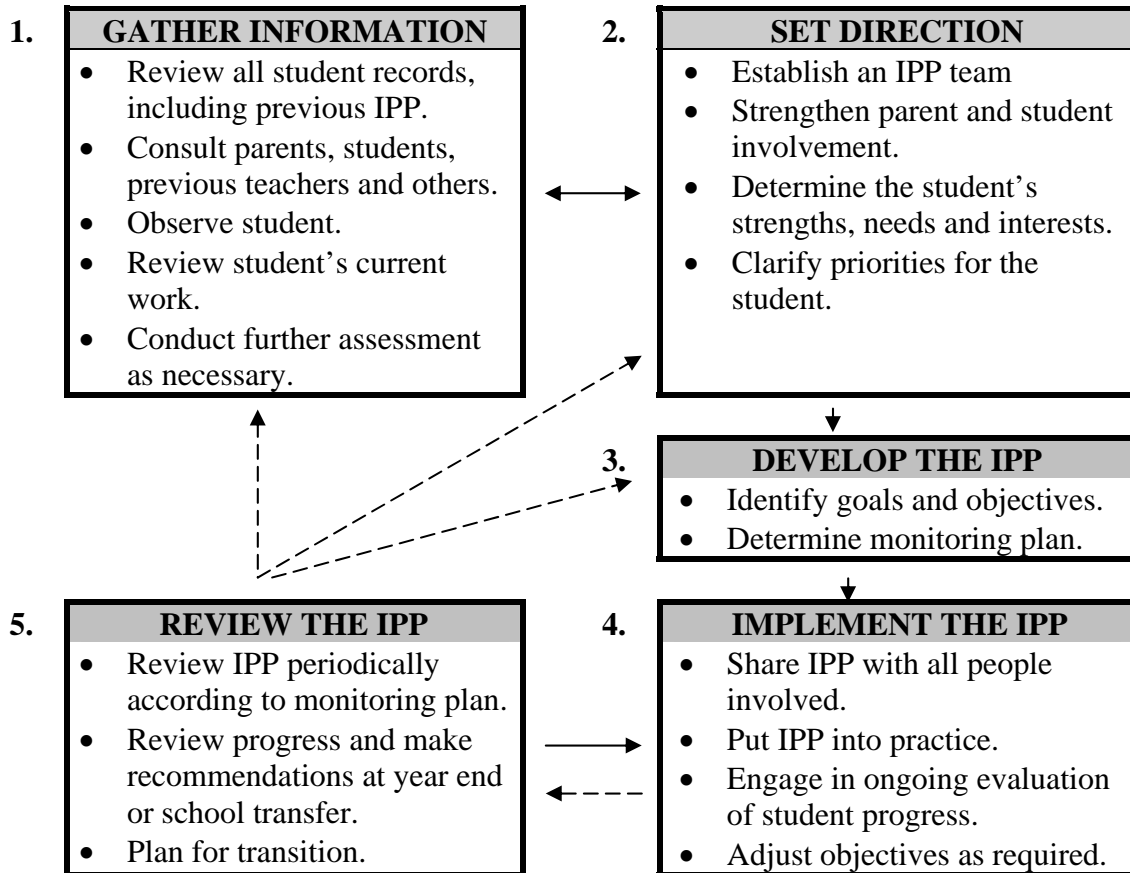
IPP Process:

The process for developing an individualized program plan is outlined in the following stages:

1. gather information
2. set direction
3. develop the IPP
4. implement the IPP
5. review the IPP.

Although the stages are given in sequence, teachers may vary the emphasis and order to meet individual needs. Several stages may be worked simultaneously.

The following graphic represents an overview of the five stages in the IPP process. It may be used as a reference to ensure that the steps in developing, implementing and reviewing an IPP are addressed. Note the interaction among the stages indicated by the arrows. The dotted arrows emanating from stage five indicate that during the review it may be advisable to refer back to the preceding stages in the IPP process.



LD.71

For further information on developing IPPs, refer to **Book 3 – Individualized Program Plans**, in the **Programming for Students with Special Needs**, Special Education Branch, Alberta Learning series available from the LRDC.

F. Transition Planning:

Clearly defined transition strategies are required to ensure smooth placement and adjustment to new programs and environments for students.

Teacher's Role:

- check to ensure cum file contains:
 - latest Individualized Program Plan;
 - latest psychological testing results;
 - notations regarding previous community involvement.

- the transition envelope **might** contain:
(decide on additional information)
 - report cards;
 - additional assessment information;
 - anecdotal records (social, behavioural, academic performance);
 - suggestions for academic placement;
 - referrals to counseling;
 - Resource Room reports;
 - previous tutoring;
 - pertinent medical history;
 - description of previous educational setting.

- complete enclosed transition document and sign.
- sending teachers are responsible for contacting the receiving teacher within one week of the transfer notification to arrange a convenient time to deliver transfer information and personally discuss the student's individual needs with the receiving teacher. A telephone interview will suffice if time does not permit a meeting. Transition information may be sent through school mail.
- receiving teachers are responsible for contacting the sending teacher if they do not hear from the sending teacher within one week of notification of placement

Administrator's and/or Counselor's Role:

- sign transition document;
- receiving administrators – arrange with parents for a tour of the school (if this has not already been done).

Parent's Role:

- arrange with receiving administrator for a tour of the receiving school.

MEDICINE HAT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 76

TRANSITION FORM

STUDENT: _____

SENDING TEACHER: _____

SCHOOL AND PROGRAM: _____

DATE SENT: _____

RECEIVING TEACHER: _____

SCHOOL AND PROGRAM: _____

DATE RECEIVED: _____

MATERIAL FORWARDED:

- **CUM FILE MUST INCLUDE:**
 - _____ **Individualized Program Plan**
 - _____ **Psychological testing results**
 - _____ **Notations regarding previous community involvement**
- **TRANSITION ENVELOPE MIGHT INCLUDE:**
(Teachers would decide what information is appropriate for each student.)
 - _____ **report cards**
 - _____ **additional assessment information**
 - _____ **anecdotal records (social, behavioural, academic performance)**
 - _____ **suggestions for academic placement**
 - _____ **referrals to counseling**
 - _____ **Resource Room reports**
 - _____ **previous tutoring**
 - _____ **pertinent medical history**
 - _____ **description of previous educational setting**

Sending Administrator's/ Counsellor's Signature:

Receiving Administrator's/Counsellor's Signature:

Receiving Teacher's Signature:

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

In order to provide parents and students with information about community resources in the Medicine Hat area, it is recommended that they be referred to the Bridges program. Bridges offers one-stop access to all community programs. It is a community family support service which provides comprehensive support, information and service coordination for children and families. When parents contact Bridges, consideration will be given to the nature of the request and information might be relayed, a program might be immediately recommended, or a case worker might be assigned to the family to assist with the acquisition of services. One important service which could be recommended to parents is the utilization of a Parent Advocate to be in attendance at meetings where psychological reports and educational options are being discussed. Parents should be responsible for contacting the Bridges program.

The Table of Contents from the Bridges Directory is enclosed (Appendix 4) to give you an idea of the scope of community services available. A full copy of the directory is available for purchase from the Bridges office. Telephone 526-7473.

School Administrators should ensure that a copy of the Bridges Directory is available in the school.

BOOK 6 RESOURCES: ALBERTA LEARNING

Analysis of Testing Instruments:

An extensive Annotated Test Inventory for alternative education students may be found in Book 6, Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, pages LD 305 – LD 320. For further information on the use of testing instruments, teachers may wish to contact a mentor (Section VII, Medicine Hat School District No. 76 Mentors.)

Program Modifications:

A listing of program modifications may be found on page LD 270, Book 6, Teaching Students With Learning Disabilities, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch.

Recommended Teacher Resources:

A listing of recommended teacher resources may be found on pages LD 285 – LD 301.

Strategies for Alternative Education:

An extensive listing of strategies for alternative education may be found on pages LD 91 – LD 215, Book 6, Teaching Students With Learning Disabilities, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch.

Student Support Teams:

The Special Education Advisory Committee report, “Vision For the Future”, which was accepted by the Board June 16, 1999, recommends the formation of Student Support Teams. Information on establishing Student Support Teams and forms to coordinate the work of the team may be found on pages LD 49 – LD 55 and Appendices LD 238 – LD 241, Book 6, Teaching Students With Learning Disabilities, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR PREVIEW

This section is designed for a beginning special education teacher, a classroom teacher with an integrated special needs student or a special education teacher looking for a new resource. The purpose of this section is to give teachers an idea of what programs and materials are being used and judged to be excellent by practicing teachers. Please contact these teachers to preview any materials which might meet your needs and gain their perspective on the application of these materials in the classroom. The expectation is that these items are only available for preview. Teachers are not required to lend any resources.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

PROGRAM OR MATERIAL (INCLUDE SUBJECT AREA)	RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVELS	CONGREGATION/ INTEGRATION (C OR I)	TEACHER	SCHOOL
Programmed Phonics	3-6	C or I	Jacquie Bishop, Res. Room	Conn.
Sounds & Letters	1 3	C	Jacquie Bishop	Conn.
New Practice Readers	1-6	C or I	Jacquie Bishop	Conn.
S.R.A. Individualized Reading Skills	1-6	C or I	Jacquie Bishop	Conn.
How To Teach Spelling	1-12	C or I	Jacquie Bishop	Conn.
Primary Phonics – Controlled Vocabulary Phonetic Reading Series	K-3	C or I	January Russill, Res. Room	Webster Niblock
Daily Oral Language – daily exercises in grammar (10 min./day)	1-5	C or I	Susan Nelson, Elem. SLD	Elm Street
Corrective Reading Series by S.R.A. – letter sounds, recognition, beginning comprehension	1-3	C or I	Susan Nelson, Elem. SLD	Elm Street
Reading Mastery Series by S.R.A. – comprehension	3-5	C or I	Susan Nelson, Elem. SLD	Elm Street
Science – biology, Chemistry, Physical Science – workbook format – Globe Book Co.	7-8	C	Christine Watson, SLD	AJHS
Social – Distance Learning Module One and Two	8	C	Christine Watson, SLD	AJHS
Social – Geography Skills (5 themes of geography)	7	C	Christine Watson, SLD	AJHS

PROGRAM OR MATERIAL	RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVEL	CONGREGATION/ INTEGRATION (C or I)	TEACHER	SCHOOL
Writing Assignments – handouts	7	C or I	Christine Watson, SLD	AJHS
Critical Reading Workbook: Total Panic – Jamestown Publishers	7-8	C or I	Christine Watson, SLD	AJHS
Sunshine Books – Ginn – readers with BLM	1-2	C or I	Sandy Buchko, Resource Room	Elm Street
Dolch Word Lists	1-3	C or I	Sandy Buchko, Resource Room	Elm Street
Explode the Code - phonics	1	C or I	Sandy Buchko, Resource Room	Elm Street
Programming For Students With Special Needs – Books 1-6	1-6	C or I	Sandy Buchko, Resource Room	Elm Street
Stepping Into Reading (maybe not the <u>best</u> , but covers a wide range of skills)	3-4	C or I	Sandy Buchko, Resource Room	Elm Street
S.R.A. Corrective Reading Program	4 +	Designed for small group instruction	Sandy Buchko, Resource Room	Elm Street
“Soundtown” – Reading, Spelling	Primary/ Elementary	C or I	Dianne Morton, Primary EMH	Crest-wood
“Lionsquest” – Life Skills, Health	Primary to Jr. High	C or I	Dianne Morton, Primary EMH	Crest-wood
“Focus” Reading – Reading, Language	K to 6	C or I	Dianne Morton, Primary EMH	Crest-wood

PROGRAM OR MATERIAL	RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVEL	CONGREGATION/ INTEGRATION (C or I)	TEACHER	SCHOOL
Instant Spelling Words for Writing	K to 6	C or I	Dianne Morton, Primary EMH	Crest-wood
Steck-Vaughn Reading Comprehension Series	1 to 6	C or I	Dianne Morton, Primary EMH	Crest-wood
Total Language Development (Revised Edition)	Preschool	C	Barb Frerichs Preschool Dev. Prog.	River Heights
Stepping Into Reading – Levels B – F (MCP)	2-6	C or I	Barb Taylor Resource Room	Crest-wood
Power Words Program A – D (Steck Vaughn)	2-6	C or I	Barb Taylor Resource Room	Crest-wood
The Kim Marshall Series – Books 1 – 2 (E.P.S.)	2-6	C or I	Barb Taylor Resource Room	Crest-wood
Reading Exercises, Books B, C <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read and Remember ▪ Read Beyond the Lines (Teachers College Press) 	2-6	C or I	Barb Taylor Resource Room	Crest-wood
Victory, Gr. 3-6 (two books at each level) – Brigance Linguisystems	3-6	C or I	Barb Taylor Resource Room	Crest-wood
RESOURCE: Complete Reading Disabilities Handbook, W. H. Miller	1-6	C or I	Barb Taylor Resource Room	Crest-wood

PROGRAM OR MATERIAL	RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVEL	CONGREGATION/ INTEGRATION (C or I)	TEACHER	SCHOOL
RESOURCE: Remediating Reading Difficulties, 2 nd Edition, by Crawley/Merrit	1-6	C or I	B. Taylor Resource Room	Crest-wood
Distar	1-6	Individual or Very Small Group	M. Crisp	Vincent Massey