Membership and Participation

"In the case of many people with disabilities, integration into the Christian community may require nothing more than issuing an invitation and pursuing it. For some others, however, full participation can only come about if the Church exerts itself to devise innovative programs and techniques. At the very least, we must undertake forms of evangelization that speak to the particular needs of individuals with disabilities, make those liturgical adaptations which promote their active participation and provide helps and services that reflect our loving concern." **(Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on People with Disabilities)**

"Inclusion done poorly simply makes students with disabilities 'islands in the mainstream' - isolated from the social and instructional life of the school." (Douglas Biklen)

"I believe the role of special education should be to minimize the impact of disability and maximize the opportunities for children with disabilities to participate in general education in their natural communities." (Thomas Hehir)

In inclusive schools, faculty and administration are committed to the full membership and participation of all students in their school communities.

All students receive the supports and opportunities they need to become participating members of their school communities. Appropriate educational programming is a collaborative school-family-community process of creating learning environments and providing resources and services that respond to the cognitive, social, and emotional needs of each student. Inclusive schools provide learning environments that are accessible to all students and that are places to learn, grow, and enjoy all the benefits of citizenship and community. *Respectful partnerships between home, school and community* are critical in developing supports and opportunities.

The school-based **Learning Services Support Team** typically includes the student services school facilitator, a school administrator, classroom teacher, the student's parents/guardians and, when applicable, the student. The team may also consist of a variety of specialized service providers including division psychologist, the learning assistance teacher, mental health worker, occupational therapist, physical therapists, speech language pathologist…etc. The team works to develop exemplary practice in inclusion and to promote the planning, development and monitoring of Individual Program Plans (IPPs) for students in all aspects of their learning. When a student requires an IPP, a member of the school-based Learning Services Support Team usually acts as the student's case manager, and coordinates meeting and planning efforts.

While most of the students in MHCBE receive their educational programming in general education classrooms, a continuum of services at the school and divisional levels is necessary to meet the wide range of student needs. A divisional priority is to create schools that ensure success for every student and it is the division's belief that this success is grounded in collaboration and relationship building. The school-based Learning Service Support Teams provides service plans for programming to students

because they are the ones who best understand the student's environment and needs. When needed, school based teams and division based staff collaborate to ensure student's needs are being met through inclusionary strategies.

MHCBE School Based Student Support Centers

Behaviour Support Centers

Monsignor McCoy – (TLC) The Learning Centre - Philosophy and Overview

The *Learning Center* was established to provide students in grades 10 to 12, who meet the criteria, with opportunities to experience success and become well prepared for further studies, citizenship and lifelong learning. The Learning Center supports students who are currently struggling behaviourally to be more successful within the context of the school environment.

Enrolment in the Learning Center requires each student to have a Success Plan. The plan is a collaborative document that is designed to share key information about a student with staff who work with the child. The plan will be developed with input from the student, staff, parents and outside agencies when applicable.

Key Elements
The foundation for the Learning Center is based upon key elements that are critical to help students with behavioural issues. The elements may have varying degrees of importance based upon the strengths, needs and priorities of a particular student. (Supporting Positive Behaviour in Alberta School).

- Positive relations with staff, peers and parents
- Modified classroom environment that ensures the routines support the opportunity for positive behavior
- Understanding individual student behavior- goals, functions and triggers
- Social skill instruction that provides help to the student to learn acceptable behaviours
- Positive reinforcement that encourages the students to consistently display pro-social behavior
- Fair and predictable consequences
- Collaborative teamwork with all stakeholders
- Individual success plans

St. Mary's – "HUB" program – Philosophy

Goals:
- To provide students the opportunity to experience success in the general education classroom, maintain school ties and friends, and participate in extracurricular activities.
- To provide an environment that supports the student so that he or she is able to be successful in the general education classroom.

Strategies:

- Provide a small group setting when student is struggling with classroom activities to complete school work assignments.
- Allow opportunity to work on problem solving skills that help students learn acceptable alternatives to inappropriate behavior and work habits.
- Provide students opportunities built into the timetable to learn and practice social skills, anger management, and friendship-making skills,
- Monitor progress in student behavior through term reports, anecdotal checklist, and team collaboration meetings.
- To provide the student with the opportunity to build a positive attitude towards school.
- Provide Mental Health support and individual one-on-one therapy.
- Involve parents in the child's education plan, meeting throughout the year to keep communication open on student progress and discuss effective strategies.
- Provide wrap-around services

Notre Dame – "P.A.S.E." *Pursue Achievement through Self-Discipline and Education- Philosophy*

"Working together to support students in schools."

This program will provide students with positive social, emotional and behavioural support to promote a safe and caring environment to better meet the diverse learning needs of all students. Students will learn resiliency skills to guide and support personal goal setting reinforcing their ability to self-regulate and assess personal efforts. This collaborative model advocates a collective responsibility for the success of each student.

Learning Assistance Centers (located at St. Michael's MH, St, Louis, St. Mary's and Monsignor McCoy)

Any time that a student spends apart from his/her peers should be justified. For some students there are strong justifications for some educational services to occur outside of the general education classroom. Depending on the service that needs to be delivered and the age of the student, this may happen in common school spaces, Learning Assistance Centers or in the local community with or without other peers involved.

Learning Assistance Centers serve as a home base for the Learning Assistance Teacher (LAT). LATs deliver both direct and indirect services to students in a variety of spaces including the general education classroom, common spaces throughout the school, in the community and in the Learning Assistance Center. Direct services to students with disabilities that are delivered in or through the Learning Assistance Center include:

- Disability related skills that might need attention outside of general education classroom. Not all skills that a student needs to learn are embedded in general education curriculum. Some can be embedded through curriculum overlapping but others may require a more focused approach. The LAT, learning assistant and classroom/subject teacher will work together to ensure that skills learned in the Learning Assistance Center are applied to more general settings as the student begins to master them.
- There are times when providing specialized instruction to a child in a general education setting may bring unwanted attention to that child. During these times alternative locations will be used.

- Intensive interventions in areas where the student is significantly behind his age-level peers (particularly in the areas of literacy) may be needed for some students. A priority will be placed on providing these interventions during non-core academic time so the student can continue to participate and benefit from core academics with appropriate modifications.
- For some students, there are periods of time when the general education classroom cannot reasonably provide the optimal conditions for learning for that student.   Students are encouraged to understand and respond to the times when they feel an alternate environment would be more suitable for them to learn in. The Learning Assistance Center, along with other common areas, can serve this purpose for any student.
- As students get older, there is a need to learn skills within the community setting. It is important to maintain a balance between community learning and learning driven by the Alberta Program of Studies and to look for opportunities related to community learning that can be embedded in courses that follow the program of studies. Assuming that the entire education of any child with a disability must be "functional" is unduly limiting, deadly boring and at its root, ablest.

Learning Assistance Centers may also be used for a variety of purposes that will support both the students who are on the LAT's case list and any other student in the school. The following is a list of some other possible purposes the Learning Assistance Centers may serve dependent on the specific school and the needs of the students in the school:
- As a space for the Learning Assistance Teacher to collaborate and work with parents, classroom teachers, learning assistants, therapists and other support personnel.
- As a space to aid in sensory and self-regulation for any student who has this need.
- As a flexible space for the whole school - reverse integration activities, group work, class work, tutorials, peer tutoring or mentorship programs or meetings, co-teaching space, therapy or specialist group interventions…etc.
- As a space to provide workshops for students related to learning styles, goal setting, study skills, executive functioning skills, self-advocacy, social skills…etc.
- Gathering/socializing space for all students during unstructured times of the school day.
- Modified and adapted material lending resource space.
- Work space for classroom teachers during the school day.

Special Education as a Service: Collaboration, Co-teaching and Pull Out
Roles of Teachers in Inclusive Schools – Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education, 2010

Effective instruction and intervention must be coordinated across settings and consistent over time. The effects of research-based interventions can be diminished if classroom instruction is inconsistent or incompatible with the interventions provided to students experiencing difficulties. Carefully designed and implemented classroom instruction can support and enhance the outcomes of students who receive targeted or specialized interventions. Maximum effectiveness occurs when learning services and general education staff have shared responsibility for designing and delivering both universal instruction and targeted and specialized intervention through collaboration, co-teaching and/or team-planned pull-out.

The level of collaboration and co-teaching in inclusive schools will be impacted by a number of variables such as: students' diverse learning needs, teachers' training and background, physical space, classroom profiles, and available resources. It is expected that schools identify areas where collaboration and co-

teaching may be successful and begin there in order to ensure success and continued growth of this approach.

Learning services personnel support students with exceptionalities. Their efforts are directed according to the administration and learning support services team's determination of student need. In instances where the learning services team member is working in a classroom with students with exceptionalities, he or she may also support the learning of any other student as opportunities arise.

Although some roles are common to classroom/subject teachers and learning services teachers, it is important to acknowledge that both teachers bring areas of expertise from their respective fields which complement each other and enrich the teaching/learning environment for all students.

Collaboration is the process of merging the knowledge, experience and skills of professionals to meet common goals. Collaborative meetings and planning sessions as well as the work required to prepare and follow up on the meetings may involve:
* Problem solving around IPP issues, choice of instructional strategies, interpretation of assessment data to inform instruction, accommodations…etc.
* Participation on learning support services teams, program planning teams, etc.
* Participation in professional learning communities.
* Preparation and/or follow up re: parent/teacher conferences.
* Sharing resources.
* Collaborating with administration, district level staff, support service staff, community agencies, learning assistants…etc.

Co-teaching is two or more professionals:
* Working collaboratively to teach the same group of students – often in the same physical space.
* Sharing responsibility for curriculum delivery (either prescribed, modified or alternate), assessment and evaluation. The degree to which this occurs is heavily dependent on the co-teaching model employed.
* Devoting time for planning, reflection and /or problem solving.
* Instructing a heterogeneous class.

Professionals may employ various co-teaching models depending on students' needs, available resources, classroom profiles and curriculum expertise/ familiarity. Movement between models is expected to be fluid; different models may be employed within one class period or throughout a given topic. For example, a class may start with 10 minutes of alternative teaching and then another model may be better suited to the remainder of the lesson. The topic addressed on the following day may suggest the use of yet another model.

Professionals may work together using any or all of the following six models of co-teaching. Note that the Learning Services space or other common areas in the school may be used as a space to teach groups of students by either the learning services teacher or the classroom/subject teacher in some of these models (i.e. one group of students might be working on something that requires the use of the library, computer room, home economics room, the art room, a space that is quieter and easier to focus in, a space to do video-taping or recording…etc.)

- **One Teach, One Observe:** In this model, one person observes while the other teaches. Professionals should decide in advance what types of information are to be gathered during the observation and should agree on a system for gathering the data. Afterward, the two professionals should jointly analyze the information. That is, observation should be a deliberate part of the lesson, not just incidental checks of student activity.
- **One Teach, One Drift:** In this model, one person instructs while the other circulates throughout the room providing assistance to students as needed. If both are familiar with the curriculum content, either teacher may lead instruction.
- **Parallel Teaching:** In this model, the class is divided into two heterogeneous groups of approximately the same size. Both teachers plan the lesson(s) jointly and teach the same topic simultaneously. This approach gives each teacher an active – but separate – instructional role.
- **Station Teaching:** In this model, teachers divide students and content. Each teacher then teaches the content to one group and subsequently repeats the instruction for the other group. Other stations may be set up for independent work. Rotation through stations can occur during one or several class periods.
- **Alternative Teaching:** In this model, one teacher works with the larger group while the other works with a smaller group of students. In alternative teaching, the larger group completes the planned lesson while the smaller group either completes an alternative lesson or the same lesson at a different level. This arrangement might take an entire class period or it might be used for just a few minutes at any point in the lesson. For this approach to be successful, the purpose for the small group and its membership should vary. If both are knowledgeable of the curriculum content, either teacher may lead either group.
- **Team Teaching:** In this model, both teachers are delivering the same instruction at the same time. This implies that each speaks freely during large-group instruction and moves among all the students in the class. Instruction becomes a conversation, not turn taking.

Pull-Out refers to implementation of individualized programming which occurs outside of the general education classroom. Instruction should be offered in the least restrictive, most inclusive environment respecting the dignity of the student. Where it has been determined that outcomes or interventions designed for an individual student cannot be optimally met in the classroom setting, pull-out services may be required. Dependent on the individual student and circumstance, these outcomes/interventions can be addressed either in common areas of the school or the learning services space.

For a student to receive instruction or intervention in an alternate learning setting (pull-out) the following criteria must be met:
- It has been demonstrated that the learning cannot optimally occur in the general education classroom setting.
- The purpose, timelines, intended outcomes, and evaluation plan for the intervention have been determined and both classroom/subject teacher and student services staff in agreement on these things.
- There is a transition plan in place regarding returning the student to the general education classroom that includes provision for transfer of skills learned.

It is important that staff collaborate to determine whether the above criteria are met, and to collaborate on the development and implementation of transition plans.