

Every principal's guide to special education in British Columbia

B.C. School Superintendents' Association
B.C. Ministry of Education



Leadership

- Principals as special education leaders
 - *“As we looked deeper into the dynamic process of leadership... we uncovered fundamental practices that enable leaders to get extraordinary things done.”*
 - Key Points
 - Inspiring a shared vision
 - Modeling the way
 - Enabling others to act
 - Challenging the process
 - Encouraging from the heart
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Leadership

- Effective communications
- *Successful principals communicate effectively with the whole school community and ensure vital information networks are in place.*
- Key Points
 - Using effective communication skills
 - Serving diverse communities
 - Listening to other perspectives to gain understanding
 - Demonstrating empathy to students, parents and staff
 - Sharing critical information

Leadership

■ Cultural competence

■ *Principals today need to promote cultural competence in their schools.*

■ Key Points

- Ensuring fair and equitable treatment
 - Recognizing the impact of cultural values on special education
 - Ensuring differences do not hinder student success
 - Developing a local strategy for cultural competence
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Leadership

- What are the key competencies of principals in providing leadership in special education?
 - What are your current strengths/competencies?
 - What competencies do you want to develop further?
 - Special topics
 - How do you organize resources?
 - How do you allocate resources in an equitable manner?
 - How do you support staff in managing diversity?
 - Other?
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Educational Practices

■ Assessment

- *Principals who support assessment as a foundation for instruction provide a model for effective special education decision making.*

■ Key Points

- Identifying needs of students early
 - Arranging assessment by trained personnel
 - Basing student goals and strategies on assessments
 - Allocating resources based on assessment findings
 - Evaluating achievement in relation to IEPs
 - Engaging in ongoing assessment and evaluation
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Educational practices

■ School-based teams

- *Principals support the efforts of school-based teams, ensuring team member continually diagnose, problem-solve and recommend viable strategies, resources and services for students with special needs.*

■ Key Points

- Supporting school-based teams
 - Recognizing school-based teams as a collaborative problem-solving groups
 - Valuing the strength of a team model
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Educational practices

- Individual education plans (IEPs)
 - *Principals set school standards for IEP development. Effective services require sound collaboration and planning.*
 - Key Points
 - Ensuring timely development of IEPs
 - Consulting with parents in the planning process
 - Including students in the planning process
 - Following Ministry of Education guidelines
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Educational practices

■ Intervention and instruction

■ *A principal supports the practice of interventions as part of the services of a healthy school, supporting the classroom teacher and support staff in the delivery of specialized instruction.*

■ Key Points

- Regarding special needs students in the same way as other students
 - Maintaining high expectations for all students
 - Balancing challenge and support for all students
 - Influencing resource allocation and staff focus
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Educational practices

■ Reporting

- *Principals ensure the provincial policy of reporting is followed in an effective and timely way so staff can provide relevant information and parents can respond appropriately.*

■ Key Points

- Ensuring parents are provided with regular reports on student progress
 - Reviewing expectations for the provision of written reports in the B.C. Student Progress Report Order
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Educational practices

■ Records management

- *Principals, working with school staff, ensure the school's methods of storing and maintaining student records are efficient, accurate and current.*

■ Health and safety

- *Principals must understand safety regulations and make sure they are followed for the protection of all students and staff.*

■ Critical incidents and crisis response

- *Principals support the development of school-wide plans and contingency plans for students with special needs to ensure proper response to crises or critical incidents.*
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Policy, procedure and guidelines

■ Provincial policy

- *Principals inspire a shared vision that “all students are unique, all students are valued and all students can learn.”*
–Sawatsky and Jacobsen, 1992

■ Key points:

- Meeting the educational needs of all students
 - Following the three Goals of BC Education: intellectual, human and social, and career development
 - Creating an equitable education system
 - Considering alternatives to the integrated classroom
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Roles, rights and responsibilities

- *Principals, as school leaders, need to be clear about the roles, rights and responsibilities of everyone in the education system and ensure everyone is working together for the benefit of students.*

 - Roles, Rights and Responsibilities for:
 - Students
 - Parents
 - Teachers
 - Teachers' Assistants
 - School principals
 - School-based special education teachers
 - School district support staff
 - School superintendents or designates
 - School boards
 - B.C. Ministry of Education
 - The public
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Implementation

- How can this Guide support leadership development in your school/district?
- How might you implement the use of this Guide in your school/district?