



Raising Your Voice for Inclusive Education

Inclusion Saskatchewan



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Raising Your Voice: A Toolkit for Advocacy in Saskatchewan is a toolkit created by Inclusion Saskatchewan to help make advocating for change more accessible. It can help you to advocate for change in the provincial government by sharing your own experiences with the people who make decisions.

This resource, *Raising Your Voice for Inclusive Education*, will tell you some of the specific issues that are causing barriers for students with disabilities. It will also tell you some of the things that could be helpful to share with your MLA or a Minister if you are advocating to them for systemic change

About Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education is when all students learn together in regular classrooms with peers their own age. Students with disabilities have the supports that they need to learn within the shared learning environment. Inclusive Education is a right that is outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and it benefits people with and without disabilities.

In Saskatchewan, the Ministry of Education is responsible for making sure that all children have access to an education that meets their needs. Generally speaking, the Ministry is responsible for:

- Funding school boards to operate schools
- Setting the standards for what schools can or can not do
- Creating the curriculums that will be taught to students
- Developing tools for school to use when they make plans for supporting students
- Holding school boards accountable for ensuring that students have their needs met

Issues Your MLA Should Know About

School Exclusions

A school exclusion is when a student with a disability is not allowed to attend school in the same ways as their peers. It might be short-term or it might last a long time. Some students experience:

- Being told they can only attend half days or another shortened schedule
- Being sent home early
- Having to learn by themselves away from their classmates
- Not being allowed to attend school at all due to their disability or following an incident related to their disability

Unfortunately, school exclusions happen a lot, which means that a lot of students with disabilities are missing time in their classrooms. Here are a few key messages about school exclusions that you can consider sharing with your MLA or the Minister of Education:

- Disciplining students for things related to their disability is discrimination and needs to be stopped. I want you to hold school boards accountable when students with disabilities face suspension or expulsion.
- The Ministry and the public need more information about how often school exclusion is happening. I want you to require school boards to report to the Ministry any time they exclude a child from school.

Segregated Classes

Segregated classes are classrooms that are only for students who have disabilities. This type of learning environment violates a student's right to an equitable and inclusive education. Some school boards in Saskatchewan have been closing these types of classes so that all students can attend regular classes with the support that they need. Unfortunately, some school boards in Saskatchewan have been increasing how many students are going to school in segregated classes.

Here are a few key messages about segregated classes that you can consider sharing with your MLA or the Minister of Education:

- All students have the right to learn in an inclusive classroom. I want you to ensure that the Ministry's commitment to education is clear by updating their definition and policy to align with the right to inclusive education as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Inclusive education only works when teachers and schools have the support that they need, including educational assistants, speech pathologists, and psychologists. I want you to ensure that students in inclusive classes have access to supports they need when they need them.