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Leading Inclusion: The Principal's Oversight Role

Principals—and Vice-Principals acting as their designates—hold significant responsibility for the supports and services provided to students with disabilities or diverse abilities. This includes ensuring that Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and other student support plans are appropriately developed; that staff understand their respective responsibilities; and that plans are implemented, monitored, reviewed, and communicated effectively with families and the broader school-based team.

This oversight role is reflected in the *School Act* and *School Regulation*, which assign Principals responsibility for supervising the school, implementing educational programs, placing and programming students, and reporting to parents. Principals must consult with teachers regarding the placement of students with disabilities or diverse abilities; however, responsibility for placement and programming decisions at the school level rests with the Principal, in accordance with board policy and the *School Regulation*. ([*School Act, s. 20*](#); [*School Regulation, s. 5\(6\)–\(7\)*](#)).

The Ministry of Education and Child Care's *Inclusive Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines* further emphasizes this leadership role. It states that Principals should ensure an effective school-based team is in place and facilitate its collaborative work. For students requiring an IEP, the Principal should also ensure that a case manager is appointed to coordinate the plan's development, documentation, and implementation. ([*Ministry of Education and Child Care, Inclusive Education Services Manual, pp. 15 and 20.*](#))

While many staff members contribute to inclusive education, Principals remain accountable for ensuring that supports are coordinated, implemented, and responsive to students' needs.

Leading inclusion requires more than familiarity with processes and documentation. It involves establishing clear expectations, facilitating effective collaboration, monitoring whether plans are working in practice, and ensuring that students and families experience meaningful and timely communication. As the new school year begins, Principals and Vice-Principals are encouraged to take the opportunity to review their school's processes and ensure that effective, collaborative practices are in place to support the development, implementation, monitoring, and communication of student plans.

Members interested in strengthening their knowledge and confidence in this important area of responsibility are encouraged to register for the BCPVPA Management Foundations module, [Leading Inclusion](#).

Members can seek support and representation by contacting mssinfo@bcvpva.bc.ca