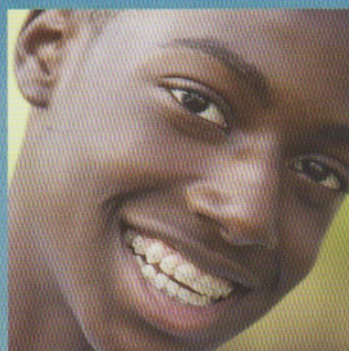
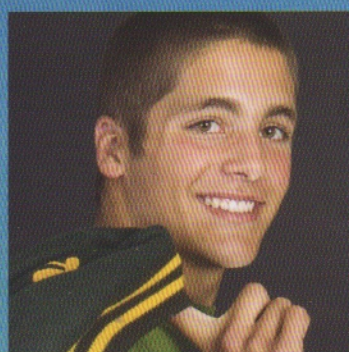
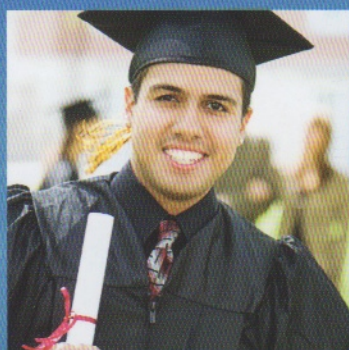
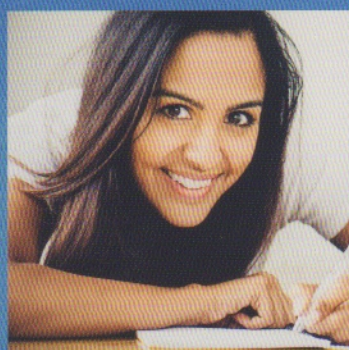
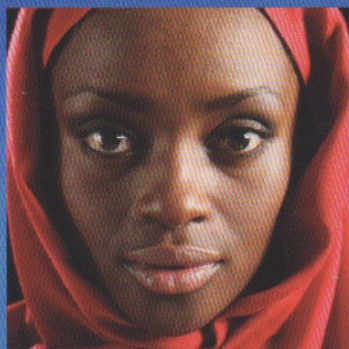
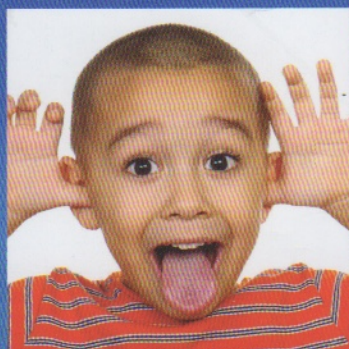


# the CASS CONNECTION

The official magazine for the College of Alberta School Superintendents

Spring 2017



## Leadership Learning: Promising Practices for Inclusive Education, Part 2





# Inclusion through Personalized Programming

By Teresa Di Ninno, CAPE Public Charter School

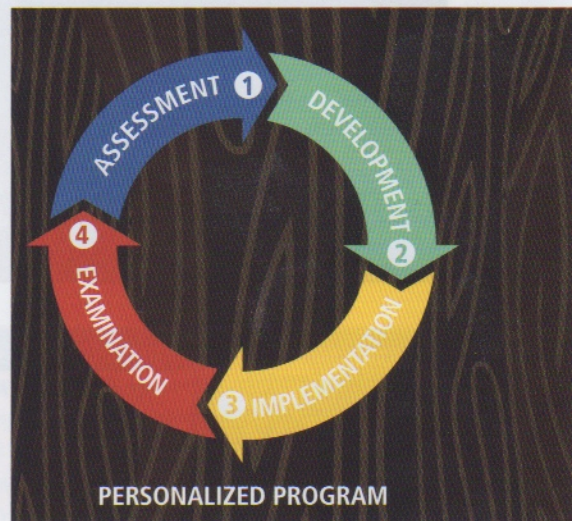
**C**APE Public Charter School is a Kindergarten to Grade 9 public charter school in Medicine Hat, Alberta. It opened its door in September 1994 as a private school and received its charter in September 1995. Its mission is to foster the development of academic and personal skills through the provision of a personalized, integrated program so that each child or student may achieve success in the pursuit of personal and academic goals, strive for personal excellence, become an engaged thinker and ethical citizen with an entrepreneurial spirit, an independent learner and a world citizen.

The program is grounded in the belief that each student presents with individual academic and personal needs and is best served through a personalized, integrated program that is flexible, innovative and responsive. Each student is supported by school, parents and community. The school creates a shared learning atmosphere for all members to develop and maintain a student-centred learning environment. Parents provide valuable perspectives and support for their children. The community provides the domain for opportunities and experiences

which expand beyond the school, including leadership, collaboration, diversity and resourcefulness.

CAPE tends to attract a high percentage of students with identified issues: mild-moderate, gifted, twice-exceptional, multiple concerns, high-functioning autism, and a conglomerate of challenges. There is an increasing number of students who require emotional supports and/or overt social skill development in addition to "schooling." Other students, who do not present with diagnosed concerns, still have unique learning profiles. By acknowledging the individual learner profile, CAPE strives to provide the program best suited to each student. This personalization is not only responsive to cognitive, emotional and psychological needs, but is also respectful of culture, ethnicity, beliefs, family structure, and "the personal story." It is inclusive.

CAPE's personalized program has evolved in response to identified needs within its population. In its current iteration, CAPE's program is grounded in research, is data-driven, provides Individualized



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# The goal is to demonstrate one's knowledge in multiple, yet personal, ways.

Program Plans for every child and student, benefits from the expertise of a full time psychologist and external services, responds quickly to student needs, and supports the whole person.

Providing for each of these students requires an increasing understanding of assessment procedures, recommended supports from research, implementation, impacts on learning, tracking and reassessment. Our collaborative team

approach is integral to our ability to support our students. We strive to respond efficiently and effectively. Our ability to respond and, as one evaluator once said, "turn on a dime," is facilitated by our small size, school-based decision-making, capped classes and extensive use of educational assistants.

Classes are capped at 18+/-1 for Kindergarten to Grade 3, at 22+/-1 for Grades 4 and 5, and at 24+/-1 for Grades 6 to 9. This allows greater time for personalized supports and reasonable, responsive implementation of accommodations and recommendations. Support from educational assistants allows for the implementation of a greater variety of accommodations and recommendations in a timely manner and for tracking effectiveness.

Our personalized program is a research-based, data-driven, purposeful, collaborative and cyclical process through which each student's program is developed, implemented, monitored and re-evaluated to maximize the achievement of personal goals.



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- Evening Snack
- Breakfast
- Dance Lessons
- DJ Barn Dance
- Sports Field & Equipment
- Campfire
- Overnight Lodging in the Barn

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website: [www.gcbd.ca](http://www.gcbd.ca)

## Data collection

- Assessment of student current competencies and capacity. Assessment can be cognitive, academic, social, emotional, behavioural and/or sensory. Valid standardized assessment tools are used to "drill down" as needed. Assessments from outside services are acquired as needed to gain understanding.
- Anecdotal and survey data are collected from students, parents and teachers, past student files, current classroom assessments, standardized tests and current diagnostic assessment results.
- Individual learner profiles are developed.



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## CAPE Graduation Rate to November 2016

Graduated in 3 Years	90%
Graduated in 4 Years	7%
Did Not Graduate	3%

## CAPE Students Post High School November 2016

University	32%
College	25%
College and then University	13%
Time Off/Worked-College/University	20%
Work	9%



### Development of an individual program plan

- Teachers, support staff, administration, school psychologist, parents, students and community agencies collaborate in the development of the Individual Program Plan.
- The Individual Program Plan and the individual profile are used to establish effective learning groups.

### Implementation and tracking of individual achievement

- Responsive re-assessment of student competencies and capacity facilitate modifications to the plan.
- The frequency of tracking and assessment depends upon severity of student needs and strategies implemented.

### Examination of viable options as the individual support plan evolves

- The Individual Program Plan is a living document that evolves as the student needs change.

### Personalization for student success

Students have a voice and are empowered to participate in the decision-making. Parents are invited and expected to be active partners in the student learning. Parents and students participate in goal setting meetings at the beginning of the year and in student-parent-teacher conferences near the end of each term. Class websites, blogs, planners, e-mails, and face-to-face meetings keep parents informed and involved.

Student assessment is also tailored to the child/student. Assessment tools range from whole class to individual, from hands-on to formal tests, and take the form of individual or group projects, presentations, demonstrations, and art pieces or animations, to name only a few. The goal is to demonstrate one's knowledge in multiple, yet personal, ways. Reporting of student learning and achievement is focused on the student. It provides traditional, numerical achievement indicators and looks at movement over time. The report includes reporting on curriculum as well as academic objectives, using a scale. An integral component of our reporting process is the inclusion of Individual Program Plan updates.

CAPE's personalized program requires commitment at multiple levels, Board of Directors, administration, staff, parents and community. It is financially taxing, requiring extremely careful allocation of funds and resulting in extremely tight budgets. The learning community strives towards continuous improvement, investigating innovative practices, reviewing the most current research, establishing new partnerships. New students joining our community bring new challenges and new learnings. However, facing these challenges is validated when we look at the future success of our students.

Our students' post-CAPE educational efforts are tracked. Our students acquire the personal and academic skills they need to achieve success in the pursuit of personal and academic goals, strive for personal excellence, become engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit, independent learners and world citizens. ■

*Teresa Di Ninno is Superintendent of CAPE Public Charter School, located in Medicine Hat, Alberta.*

## THE BEST ASSESSMENT ISN'T A TEST

*The research is clear. Formative assessment improves student learning.*

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