



Calgary Board of Education

The Diversity Department of the Calgary Board of Education

The Diversity Department is a newly formed service unit which includes the Aboriginal Education Team, Diversity & Learning Support Advisors, ESL Specialists, Interpreter and translation services, Admissions and Assessment staff and In-School Settlement Workers. The Diversity Department supports student learning by coordinating service delivery to staff, students and their families, and community groups.

Admissions and Assessment Centre

Kingsland Centre is the reception centre for non-Canadian families who are newly registering in the Calgary Board of Education. The Admissions and Assessment Staff:

- Verify immigration documents
- Find designated schools
- Provide information about alternative programs
- Conduct an English language assessment which is sent to receiving schools to help them plan appropriate programming
- Answer questions about the school system and Calgary
- Connect families with settlement workers
- In collaboration with Special Education personnel, organize special placements and/or interventions for students with Special Needs

Interpreter Services

Interpreter and Translation Services in the CBE are centralized and coordinated. There is a process whereby schools request interpreters for parent-teacher conferences, parent orientation sessions, or Learning Team meetings. They also request translation of documents. Several Calgary Board of Education documents are available in translation. Approximately 150 interpreters speaking over 70 languages are available on an on-call basis. There are over 35,000 requests for interpreter services each year in the CBE. The CBE is developing an interpreter testing, training and certification process.

ESL/ELL Specialists

There is a team of nine ESL specialists whose responsibilities are to assist schools with organizing and programming for the needs of English Language Learners. They provide professional development on the topics of English Language development, Academic Language Proficiency and Cultural Competence. They also work collaboratively with other personnel to support linguistically and culturally diverse families with learning complexities or settlement concerns.

Aboriginal Education Team

The Aboriginal Education Team provides system leadership in the implementation and support of Aboriginal education programs and services; provides direction for the infusion of Aboriginal content into existing curriculum; and provides support to Aboriginal students, their families, and their schools. The team is comprised of an Aboriginal Education Specialist, a curriculum specialist, four liaison counselors, a career practitioner and an Aboriginal Pride coordinator.

Diversity and Learning Support Advisors

Diversity and Learning Support Advisors are staff of Calgary Board of Education and members of the Staff Association Professional Support Staff. These eight advisors work collaboratively with administrators, teachers, school support staff, system psychologists, specialists, and speech and occupational therapists to support the learning, participation and personal development of CBE's culturally diverse students and their families, both newcomers and first and second generation. The Diversity and Learning Support Advisors work with a variety of stakeholders to promote cross-cultural understanding. They:

- Facilitate first language and cross-cultural communication
- Help build learning and communication capacity between home and school
- Advocate for equitable programming and services for students
- Participate in parent/teacher conferences and learning team meetings
- Provide personal support as well as support for students' individualized in-school learning
- Offer presentations to CBE learners on cultural diversity and culturally responsive practice.
- Collaborate, identify and address issues of racism and discrimination
- Provide guidance and support through faith and cultural values
- Assist in resolving home conflicts
- Network with key community leaders and institutions
- Refer to community agencies and services
- Assist students and parents through the process of acculturation

In School Settlement Workers

The In-School Settlement Project is an initiative fully funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. In partnership with the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic School Board, it operates under the umbrella of the Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth. The 15 in-school Settlement Workers are assigned to various schools that have large numbers of immigrant students. However, their services are available throughout the city. Referrals for service come directly from the Kingsland Reception Centre, schools and from community/cultural organizations. Families may self-refer.

The In-School Settlement Workers help newcomer immigrant families with their settlement needs. They link families with community, school services and other important newcomer resources. They provide information on a range of settlement issues including; child care, housing, health care, immigration and legal issues, finances, transportation, recreational, cultural programs, adult ESL, employment and job preparation for adults. As well as working with individual families, they also offer group workshops and information sessions in libraries or community centers. In-School Settlement Workers are available at both the CBE and the CSSD Reception Centers to welcome newcomers to Canada/Calgary, describe services, answer immediate questions and refer families for further settlement support. Assessment of settlement needs and follow up of services by In-School Settlement Workers are arranged at times convenient to newcomer families in their homes, public libraries or community schools. Funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada is provided to support the settlement needs of newcomers (permanent residents) for up to three years.

LEAD (Literacy, English and Academic Development) Classes

The LEAD classes provide specialized programming for students with Limited Formal Schooling. Students who have been unable to attend school in the home countries due to war, conflict, or economic conditions are provided intensive instruction in English, literacy, numeracy and academic content for a period of up to two years to enable them to enter community school programming. There are also provisions and referral processes in place to address the medical or socio-emotional needs associated with the violence, trauma or loss they may have experienced. There are 10 LEAD classes in various CBE schools at the High School, Junior High and upper elementary levels. In addition, the CBE provides enhanced funding to schools with learners of this profile.