Actualizing a Needs-Based Model

2023

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Versioning History

This chart provides a summary of revisions made to the final document since publication in 2023. The document posted on **Publications Saskatchewan** reflects the most recent version.

Date of revisions	Type of revisions made

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Preface

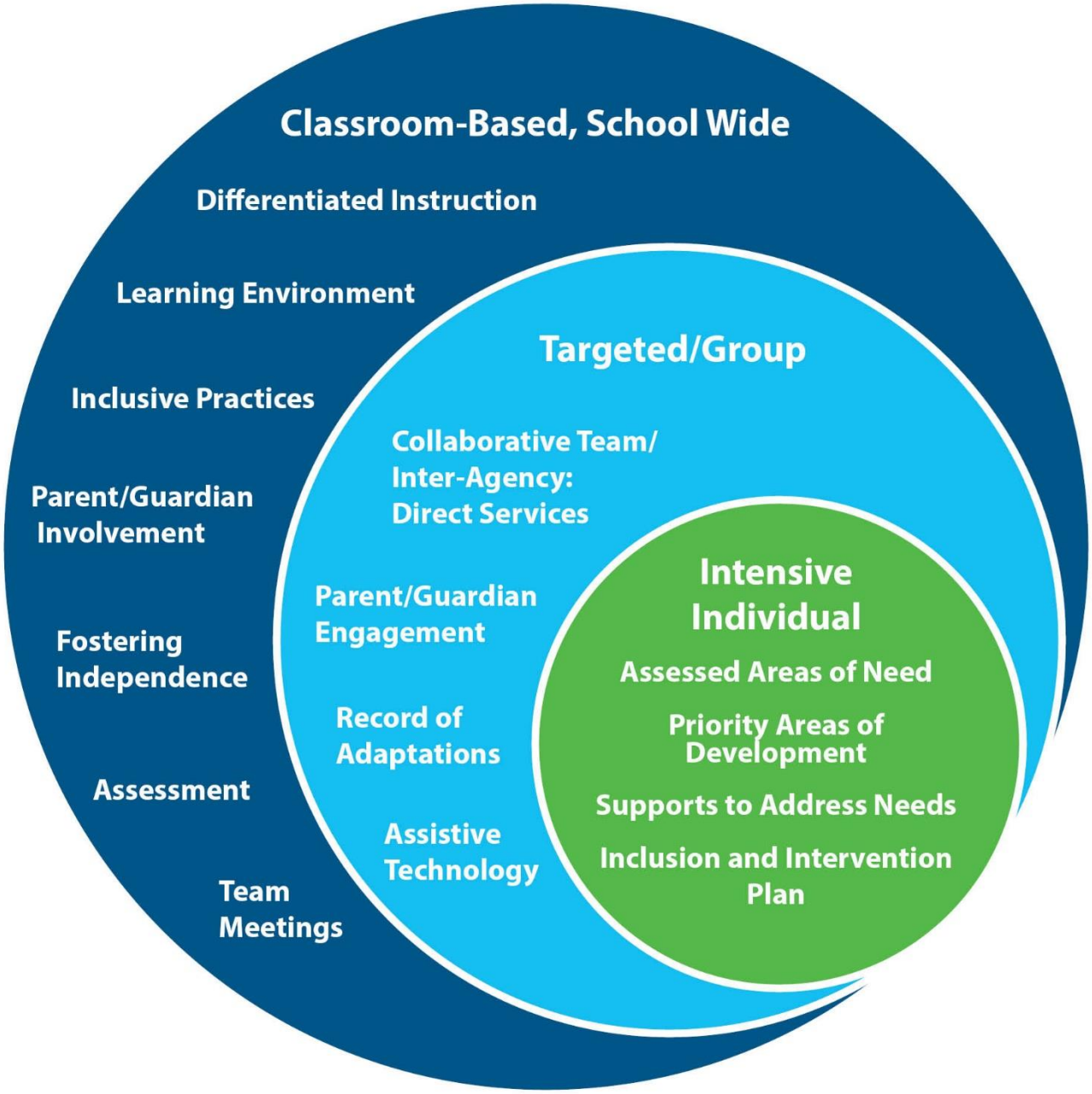
The mandate of the Ministry of Education is to provide leadership and direction to the early learning and child care, Kindergarten through Grade 12 education, literacy, and library sectors. The ministry supports these sectors through funding, governance and accountability with a focus on improving student success. The ministry is committed to improving the learning success and well-being of all Saskatchewan children and youth.

Any reference in this document to schools is deemed to include le conseil scolaire, the Saskatchewan Distance Learning Centre, First Nations schools, independent schools, and custody and care schools that have been approved by the Ministry of Education.

This document is intended to serve the following purposes:

- to provide pertinent information relative to a needs-based service delivery model;
- to outline the ministry's philosophical ideals and guiding principles; and,
- to reflect the provincial spirit of continuous improvement.

Supporting All Learners



The diagram above demonstrates that supports for learning are offered at the classroom-based and school-wide level at first and then at the targeted or group level and finally at the intensive or individual level.

The Ministry of Education, in partnership with stakeholders including school divisions, schools, parents/caregivers, inter-ministry groups, students, and human service agencies, encourages the actualization of a needs-based model of identifying and providing supports for students. The intent of this process is to ensure that:

- all students are provided with supports in the development and attainment of competencies and independence;
- all students have access to appropriate learning opportunities, resources, and supports;
- all students are supported through differentiated and responsive instruction; and,
- all students are provided with inclusive opportunities to reach their potential.

A number of significant practices that characterize this actualization include:

- creating positive, welcoming and responsive learning environments;
- differentiating instruction;
- nurturing student independence;
- screening and early intervention;
- involving collaborative, interprofessional teams;
- seeking supports through interdisciplinary teams;
- engaging parents, caregivers; and,
- building partnerships within the community and other agencies.

Planning for Whole Class Instruction

"Planning for whole class instruction provides the teacher an opportunity to make some initial decisions concerning the needs of all students in the class. Some students may require no adaptations because the learning environment, instructional practices and resources are appropriate to their needs. The teacher uses knowledge gained through formal and informal assessments to make decisions for adaptations to support student learning." (The Adaptive Dimension for Saskatchewan K-12 Schools, Ministry of Education, p. 8).

Targeted or Small Group Instruction

Targeted or Small Group Instruction may or may not occur in the regular classroom environment. It needs to be aligned with the curriculum and the behavioral expectations of the classroom. Targeted interventions are most effective when the team clearly identifies the specific problems or barriers to the student's learning prior to planning interventions.

Intensive Individual Instruction

A needs-based approach involves a comprehensive evaluation of the holistic needs of individual students and their families, the identification of concerns and priorities, and the coordination of appropriate supports through an efficient use of resources.

Responsive Instruction, Interventions and Supports

The needs-based model focuses on developing and implementing procedures and practices to support all learners. This is supported by three tiers of responsive instruction, interventions and supports at the classroom and school level, through targeted and/or group approaches and, when needed, at an intensive individual level. While we recognize that universal classroom practices meet the needs of most students, some require short-term targeted supports to be successful. In addition, a small percentage of students require an Inclusion and Intervention Plan (IIP) that is specific to their learning needs. Targeted group interventions and intensive individual instruction may still happen in the same classroom setting as the other students.

A Framework for a Needs-Based Service Delivery Model

Historically, a medical model influenced our thinking and guided our practice for educating students with intensive needs. This model focused on diagnosing students' disabilities or impairments with the purpose of curing or medically managing the symptoms. While the importance of medical science in the lives of children with intensive needs is acknowledged, the application of the medical model has also resulted in a limited view of student potential and has resulted in barriers to accessing services.

The basic premise underlying a needs-based service delivery model is that the needs of students are more important in determining programming and essential supports than are the categorical labels of disabilities. A needs-based model is based on the concept that students receive appropriate services, not just the services for which they qualify. This approach recognizes that students have different needs and that such needs can and do change over time. Accordingly, students require individualized, flexible, and responsive supports to meet their particular needs and to enhance the continued growth of their individual strengths and abilities. A needs-based approach involves a comprehensive evaluation of the holistic needs of individual students and their families, the identification of concerns and priorities, and the coordination of appropriate supports through an efficient use of resources.

Three key concepts form the framework for a needs-based service delivery model:

a) inclusionary philosophies and beliefs;
b) planning for instruction, interventions and supports; and,
c) interprofessional collaboration.

Key Concepts of a Needs-Based Service Delivery Model

A needs-based service delivery model is comprised of three main parts: Inclusionary Philosophy and Beliefs, Planning for Instruction, Intervention and Supports and Interprofessional Collaboration. The student is at the centre of the needs-based model.

Collaboration: The Key to Effective Implementation of a Needs-Based Model

No one professional has all the knowledge and skills required to successfully meet the range of diverse student needs in today's classrooms. Thus, collaboration among parents/caregivers, teachers, supporting professionals, educational assistants, human service agencies and community organizations is seen as central to student success within inclusive settings.

Collaboration is a dynamic interactive process, where there is genuine shared ownership for decision-making, action taking and outcomes. It recognizes that shared goals can be better achieved by working together in an interdependent and reciprocal manner.

A collaborative approach creates a forum for discussing ideas, reflecting on instruction, interventions, strategies and supports, and sharing expertise and perspectives. Team members work together to identify strengths and needs, develop plans, coordinate and implement services, and provide each other with support. Collaboration involves structural and attitudinal changes, which will improve services, personalize solutions to learning at the micro or school/classroom level, and transform whole-service sectors at the macro or government/community level.

The benefits associated with the collaborative approach include improved information sharing, problem solving and student outcomes. Collaboration requires an investment in the development of trusting relationships that contribute to effective teamwork.

In addition, effective collaboration requires:

- professional development and training in collaborative processes for all team members;
- systems and structures that support integrated service delivery models;
- clarity of purpose, roles and accountability;
- commitment and shared expectations;
- communication networks that support open, trusting and respectful dialogue; and,
- leadership committed to building and fostering a collaborative culture.

Collaboration moves professionals beyond traditional and isolated roles to the creation of educational partnerships and teams that engage in collaborative ways of delivering service.

For example, classroom teachers work collaboratively with other team members to develop and monitor inclusion and intervention plans for students. Educational assistants may participate in collaborative team meetings to share their ideas and perspectives, and to learn how they can support the team's decisions.

Collaboration has the potential of enriching learning experiences and outcomes for students. Collaborative team members share knowledge, develop skills, enrich problem solving and gain insights as they work together on behalf of students. A true learning community evolves when parents/caregivers, school personnel, and supporting professionals and agencies invest in collaborative relationships and professional growth, while supporting each other in the achievement of common goals.

Student Support Services Teachers and Their Collaborative Roles

Student support services teachers perform an array of collaborative roles, such as those identified below, to assist classroom teachers and provide instructional support to students.

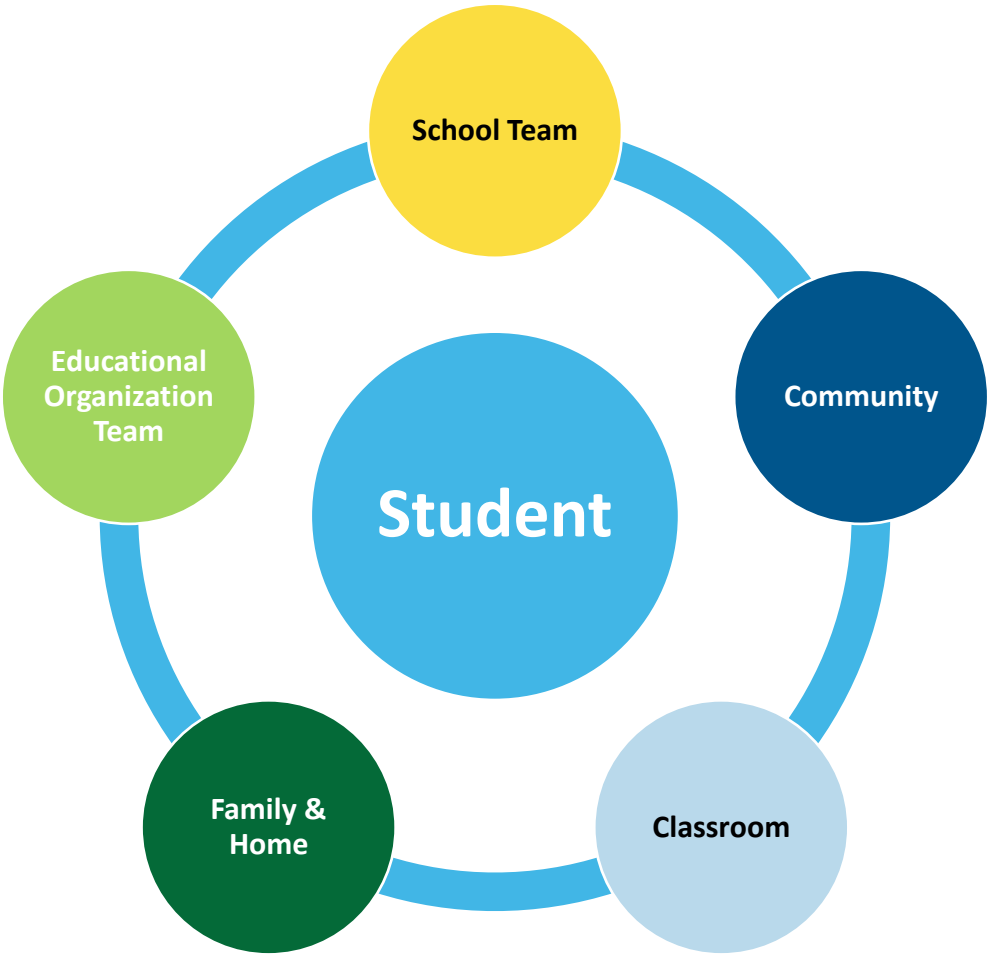
Learning Support Coach	• provides indirect support to targeted students through direct consultation with the classroom teacher
Co-teacher	• co-plans and co-teaches with the classroom teacher in a classroom context
Peer Collaborator	• works together with the classroom teacher to solve a problem or develop a plan of support
Supportive Teacher	• provides direct instruction or support to individual students or groups of students
Interventionist	• works within school-wide models (e.g., Response to Intervention and/or Instruction; School-Wide Positive Behavioural Supports) to provide support at multiple levels and across multiple settings
Case Manager	•often has the role of setting up meetings with parents and the school-based team professionals as well as with the student

Actualizing a Needs-Based Service Delivery Model

The Ministry of Education has embraced a student-centred approach to education that puts the student front and centre. Student-centred is about unifying and re-orienting the education system on what matters most – the student. A needs-based model for identifying and providing instruction, interventions and supports for students based on their strengths to meet their needs exemplifies a student-centred model.

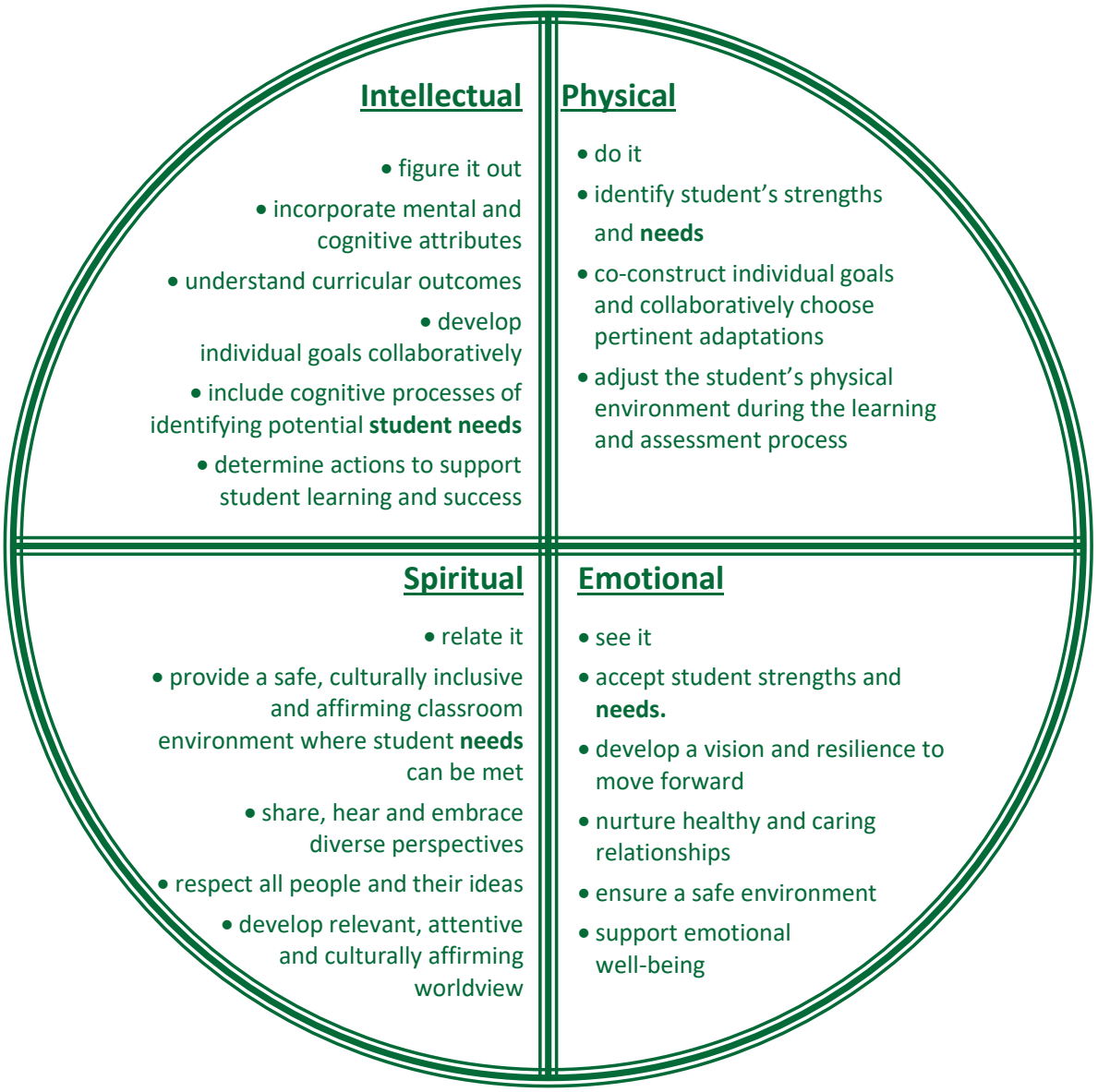
Actualizing a needs-based model takes commitment, partnership, collaboration and time. The ministry is committed to working collaboratively with all partners as we actualize a needs-based model, informed by student-centred, to improve learning outcomes and success for all Saskatchewan children and youth.

The student is at the centre of all their learning and the classroom, teacher, school-based team, family and community should surround the student and help the student find any necessary adaptations for success.



Four Dimensions which Support a Needs-Based Model

Actualizing a Needs-Based Model aligns with *Inspiring Success First Nations and Métis PreK-12 Education Policy Framework* (2018) where belief systems and worldviews of First Nations and Métis peoples are based on recognizing and respecting the delicate balance of interdependence within oneself and with all living things in the environment, both tangible and intangible. Within this balance are the intellectual (mental), physical, emotional, spiritual dimensions, as well as teachings that have been passed down through generations. These dimensions create balance and well-being in one's personal life, as represented by the four quadrants of the circle below. In *Actualizing a Needs-Based Model*, they can represent the progressive growth of all students when we meet their **needs** as well as the interconnectedness and cyclical journey of lifelong learning, these four dimensions align with the four dimensions in *Supporting Assessment in Saskatchewan Schools* (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2022).



Intellectual

The intellectual (mental) dimension can be simply expressed as “figuring it out.” Teachers strive to clearly understand and internalize curricular outcomes to support students and to collaborate with the student’s team in the development of individual goals, providing adaptations when needed. This includes the cognitive processes required to identify potential biases as well as student **needs** to determine actions to support student learning and success.

Physical

The physical dimension can be summarized as “doing it.” This aspect focuses on the physical energy required for the planning and collaboration process when identifying student strengths and **needs** as well as potential actions to support student learning. Teachers and students can co-construct individual goals and collaboratively choose pertinent adaptations. For example, adaptations to a student’s physical environment can be an adjustment to the student’s learning space within a land-based context.

Emotional

The emotional dimension can be stated as “seeing it.” Considering the Adaptive Dimension allows students and teachers to better “see” and accept student strengths and **needs** to develop a vision and resilience to move forward. Encouraging a growth mindset in a culturally safe and ethical learning space helps students and teachers nurture healthy and caring relationships within the class and community. In a safe and nurturing environment, the adaptations that are necessary for student success will become clearer and support emotional well-being.

Spiritual

The spiritual dimension can be expressed as “relating it.” Establishing a culturally inclusive and affirming classroom environment provides students and teachers a safe forum to share, hear and embrace diverse perspectives. At the core of the spiritual dimension are the interconnectedness and respect of all people and their ideas. As the team collaborates to consider the student’s **needs**, they develop a plan and a belief that they can move forward. Providing pertinent adaptations supports the co-construction of knowledge to further develop a worldview that is relevant, attentive and culturally affirming.

(Adapted from Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2022)

Resources for Further Support

A Guide to Using the Common Frame of Reference

Actualizing a Needs-Based Model

Inclusion and Intervention Plan Guidelines

Inclusive Education

Inspiring Success: First Nations and Métis PreK-12 Education Policy Framework, 2018

Policy, Guidelines and Procedures for Alternative Education Programs: Grade 10, 11, and 12

Policy and Procedures for Locally Developed Courses Policy, Guidelines and Procedures for Functional Integrated Programs

Policy and Procedures for Locally Modified Courses of Study

Registrar's Handbook for School Administrators Saskatchewan Curriculum

Supporting Student Assessment in Saskatchewan

Responsive Instruction Modules: Classroom Level Support

Module 1: Multi-Level Instruction – Planning for Student Diversity

Module 2: Reading Instruction – Critical Elements

Module 3: Instruction in Mathematics – Effective Instructional Practices

Inclusive Education Modules

Module 1: School-Wide Planning – Making Supports and Services a Priority

Module 2: Fostering Inclusion – Understanding the Classroom–Teacher's Role

Module 3: Instructional Support – Engaging Students and Classroom Teachers

Responsive Instruction Modules: Targeted/ Group Approaches

Module 1: Targeting Reading Instruction – Knowing Our Learners

Module 2: Targeting Mathematics Instruction – Knowing Our Learners

Module 3: Targeting Written Expression

Module 4: Written Expression: Effective Instructional Practices

Supporting Students with Intensive Needs in the Classroom

Autism Spectrum Disorder Supporting Students with Intensive Needs in the Classroom

Bipolar, Depressive, Anxiety or Related Disorders Supporting Students with Intensive Needs in the Classroom

Blind or Visually Impaired Supporting Students with Intensive Needs in the Classroom

Deaf or Hard of Hearing Supporting Students with Intensive Needs in the Classroom

Neurodevelopmental Disorder Associated with Prenatal Substance Exposure Supporting Students with Intensive Needs in the Classroom

Orthopaedic Disabilities Supporting Students with Intensive Needs in the Classroom

Physical Health Impairment Supporting Students with Intensive Needs in the Classroom

Substance Related or Addictive Disorders Supporting Students with Intensive Needs in the Classroom

References

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. (2015). *Actualizing a Needs-Based Model*.

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. (2017). *The Adaptive Dimension*.

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. (2018). *Inspiring Success: First Nation and Métis PreK-12 Education Policy Framework*.

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. (2022). *Supporting Student Assessment in Saskatchewan.*