

Date	May 26, 2026
To	Board of Trustees
From	Ron Thompson, Superintendent of Schools
Subject	Follow-up to the Seclusion Reporting in the 2025 Annual Education Results Review (AERR) RFI #002
Originator	Kathy Muhlethaler, Assistant Superintendent, Instructional and Strategic Division Supports
Resource Staff	Dave Bennell, Vicki DeHaan, Terri Gosine, Christie Ladouceur, Elaine Redderburg, Alexis Renwick, Sunita Sas
Reference	Standards for Seclusion and Physical Restraints in Alberta Schools HAH.AR Seclusion Rooms and Use of Physical Restraint

ISSUE

The following motion was brought forward at the December 9 Board Meeting:

Request for Information regarding follow-up on Seclusion Reporting in the 2025 AERR to be prepared as an information report.

The following key questions are to be addressed:

1. Transparency, Consistency, and Informed Governance:

Please provide the division's regular annual reporting on seclusion and restraint for the 24/25 school year, including:

- Number of seclusion incidents reported by month.
- Number of restraint incidents reported by month.
- Number of combined restraint and seclusion incidents reported by month.
- Number of unique students per type of incident.
- Number of staff participants in training programs that 'support systemic changes so that these practices are no longer used.' Please provide data for: Complex Behaviour Modules A, B and C, Non Violent Crisis Intervention, Studio 3, as well as any other relevant training or systemic changes.

2. Oversight, Review Processes, and Continuous Improvement:

In order to fulfill the Board's governance responsibilities, further detail is requested regarding the goals and strategies related to reducing seclusion and restraint.

- A. What feedback mechanisms are in place to gather student and family experiences related to seclusion and restraint, and how has this feedback informed policy or practice?
- B. What lessons have been identified from schools within EPSB that have reduced or eliminated reliance on seclusion and restraint?

3. External Expertise and Comparative Learning:

Please provide a summary of any external consultation related to reducing the use of seclusion and restraint. What key findings, recommendations, or evidence-based outcomes were shared during those consultations and how did they inform division policy and contribute to decreased use of seclusion across Edmonton Public Schools?

BACKGROUND

The [Standards for Seclusion and Physical Restraints in Alberta Schools](#) (Ministerial Order #042/2019) are the basis for our Division's Administrative Regulation, [HAH.AR Seclusion Rooms and Use of Physical Restraint](#) in alignment with this Ministerial Order, the Division has established practices and standards that prioritize the safety and well-being of students and staff within a welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy learning environment providing clear standards and expectations with respect to the use of seclusion rooms and physical restraint in the Division.

Division staff are expected to meet the training standards for the use of seclusion and physical restraint. Training provides staff with the skills to safely recognize and respond to crisis situations, focusing upon proactive approaches and de-escalation techniques. Additionally, the training ensures that when proactive and preventative strategies have not been effective, and the safety of the student or staff is at imminent risk resulting in the decision to use physical restraint or seclusion, that the well-being, safety and dignity of students and staff are preserved.

CURRENT SITUATION

1. TRANSPARENCY, CONSISTENCY, AND INFORMED GOVERNANCE

Please provide the Division's regular annual reporting on seclusion and restraint for the 24/25 school year, including:

- *Number of seclusion incidents reported by month.*
- *Number of restraint incidents reported by month.*
- *Number of combined restraint and seclusion incidents reported by month.*
- *Number of unique students per type of incident.*

The Division continues to support systemic change and build staff capacity to implement positive, proactive approaches for students with complex behavioural needs. This work emphasizes prevention, with a focus on de-escalation, diffusing challenging behaviours, and fostering positive relationships. Seclusion and/or physical restraint occur only in exceptional circumstances where a student's behaviour presents a serious and imminent risk of physical harm to themselves or others, and when preventative, de-escalation, and alternative interventions have proven ineffective. In these situations, crisis management strategies, including the use of seclusion and/or physical restraint, are considered strictly as a last resort and are used only in emergency conditions where there is imminent danger.

Alberta Education and Childcare requires school divisions to track and provide data each month on the use of operational seclusion rooms for each school with an operational seclusion room in their building. The following data is provided regarding the number of schools with operational seclusion rooms and the number of operational seclusion rooms:

- 2023–2024 school year, there were 80 schools that had one or more operational seclusion rooms, for a total of 167 operational seclusion rooms.
- 2024–2025 school year, there were 56 schools that had one or more operational seclusion rooms, for a total of 105 operational seclusion rooms.
- 2025–2026 school year, there are no operational seclusion rooms in Interactions program classes.
- As of March 31, 2026, there are 24 schools that have one or more operational seclusion rooms, for a total of 46 operational seclusion rooms.

With respect to the tables below, please note the following:

- Unique Students refers to the number of different students using the seclusion room that month (the same student may have used a seclusion room more than once).
- 2021–2022 data reflects in-person learners with approximately five per cent of Division students learning online due to COVID.
- 2024–2025 data reflects support staff labour disruption from January 13 to March 20 where some students with complex behaviour needs participated in rotational at-home learning.
- 2024–2025 school year was the final year this data was collected and reported for self-selected seclusion.
- 2025–2026 data reflects teacher labour disruption from October 6 to October 29, 2025.

Month	RECORD OF USE SECLUSION									
	2021–2022		2022–2023		2023–2024		2024–2025		2025–2026	
	Monthly Seclusion Room usage	Monthly Seclusion Room Unique Students	Monthly Seclusion Room usage	Monthly Seclusion Room Unique Students	Monthly Seclusion Room usage)	Monthly Seclusion Room Unique Students	Monthly Seclusion Room usage	Monthly Seclusion Room Unique Students	Monthly Seclusion Room usage	Monthly Seclusion Room Unique Students
September	115	46	114	54	111	48	112	59	64	31
October	108	62	142	55	235	93	83	46	6	6
November	141	57	172	61	196	69	53	35	45	21
December	109	53	141	66	166	66	67	49	24	16
January	110	47	103	49	185	71	22	17	48	27
February	208	62	88	47	164	65	18	13	33	21
March	215	71	70	40	106	50	24	17	52	31
April	187	55	97	54	181	80	66	38	N/A	N/A
May	168	52	105	56	149	60	49	29	N/A	N/A
June	108	44	64	40	88	38	40	23	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	1,469	549	1,096	522	1,581	640	534	326	272	79

The seclusion room data from September 2025 to March 2026 indicates there were 272 uses of these spaces across the Division:

NEW FOR 2025-2026: The data for the three data tables has been further refined to ensure greater accuracy. In previous years, the total unique students was calculated by adding the number of unique students cumulatively in each month. This year, the data was further refined to identify the overall number of unique students throughout the year. For example, in the above table, from September to March, there were 79 unique students involved in the total of 272 seclusion room uses.

With respect to the Physical Restraint table below, the data is separate from the seclusion room use data.

Month	PHYSICAL RESTRAINT									
	2021–2022		2022–2023		2023–2024		2024–2025		2025–2026	
	Total Incidents	Unique Students	Total Incidents	Unique Students	Total Incidents	Unique Students	Total Incidents	Unique Students	Total Incidents	Unique Students
September	50	36	75	39	61	40	79	47	80	53
October	81	45	67	45	90	55	76	51	18	17
November	76	44	78	33	66	38	71	48	76	51
December	41	25	51	35	59	34	39	31	45	33
January	44	21	51	40	53	29	23	18	62	51
February	81	35	37	25	64	35	26	19	48	26
March	68	34	59	41	47	29	35	24	45	28
April	75	43	63	40	51	34	74	36	N/A	N/A
May	60	35	75	52	65	40	62	31	N/A	N/A
June	36	25	54	30	50	32	37	26	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	612	343	610	380	606	366	522	331	374	187

With respect to the Seclusion and Physical Restraint table below, the data is for the combined use of seclusion and physical restraint:

Month	SECLUSION AND PHYSICAL RESTRAINT									
	2021–2022		2022–2023		2023–2024		2024–2025		2025–2026	
	Total Incidents	Unique Students	Total Incidents	Unique Students	Total Incidents	Unique Students	Total Incidents	Unique Students	Total Incidents	Unique Students
September	30	25	50	35	45	27	58	31	42	31
October	31	27	54	34	103	49	46	22	7	6
November	54	43	34	25	64	43	43	21	47	30
December	32	24	36	23	40	29	35	24	25	17
January	11	11	47	31	52	33	21	15	37	29
February	39	29	32	23	37	23	12	8	28	19
March	45	31	34	23	40	28	13	10	26	20
April	51	36	42	33	50	37	36	20	N/A	N/A

Month	SECLUSION AND PHYSICAL RESTRAINT									
	2021–2022		2022–2023		2023–2024		2024–2025		2025–2026	
	Total Incidents	Unique Students	Total Incidents	Unique Students	Total Incidents	Unique Students	Total Incidents	Unique Students	Total Incidents	Unique Students
May	44	24	44	27	41	30	41	24	N/A	N/A
June	55	29	31	18	21	17	33	16	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	392	279	404	272	493	316	338	191	212	104

- **Number of staff participants in training programs that ‘support systemic changes so that these practices are no longer used.’ Please provide data for: Complex Behaviour Modules A, B and C, Non Violent Crisis Intervention, Studio 3 as well as any other relevant training or systemic changes.**

Staff Professional Learning:

The Division offers professional learning to meet Division training standards, including Non-violent Crisis Intervention (NCI) and three complex behavior modules. Furthermore, the Division is committed to the continuous refinement and updating of professional learning opportunities, ensuring alignment with current research and evidence-based strategies to effectively support students with complex behavior needs.

Non-violent Crisis Intervention (NCI)

Non-violent Crisis Intervention (NCI) training includes conflict de-escalation training and techniques through theory modules and physical competency sessions. At its core, Nonviolent Crisis Intervention is a training program developed by the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) designed to teach staff how to safely manage and de-escalate disruptive or high risk behavior. It focuses on maintaining the care, welfare, safety, and security of everyone involved, prioritizing verbal de-escalation over physical intervention.

NCI topics also include information specific to supporting Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This specific training is designed to help staff prevent, and safely respond to crisis situations involving autistic individuals, emphasizing de-escalation and reducing the need for restrictive interventions. Applying NCI to autism means prioritizing strategies such as sensory reduction and minimal verbal input to support an individual whose crisis is often a physical reaction to an overwhelming environment. To enhance clarity and relevance, facilitators incorporate targeted autism-specific case studies and examples where applicable.

NCI requires recertification every two years. The participation numbers below include staff re-certification as well as staff taking the training for the first time.

Non-violent Crisis Intervention (NCI) September 2025 – April 1, 2026 Number of Staff Participants	1330
---	------

As of May 11, 2026 there are currently 3062 Division staff who are certified in NCI.

[Complex Behaviour Modules \(linked\)](#)

The complex behaviour professional learning modules A, B and C provide positive behaviour interventions and strategies through all tiers (universal, targeted, specialized) of the pyramid of intervention:

- Module A: Provides a foundational look at positive behaviour supports and universal strategies that can support and promote mental health in the classroom.
- Module B: Builds on the foundations of Module A and provides information about how complex behaviours develop, and some of the precipitating factors that can impact a student in the classroom such as executive functioning, regulation and trauma.
- Module C: Provides in-depth instruction regarding Individual Behaviour Support Plan (IBSP) creation and building a supportive collaboration between family and school to support students with complex behavioural needs, including data tracking, and developing specific strategies for supporting students.

Complex Behaviour Modules A, B, and C are currently being revised to ensure they continue to reflect current best practices, positive behaviour supports, high impact strategies and trauma-informed approaches. This work will focus on strengthening consistency across the pyramid of intervention tiers (universal, targeted and specialized) of support and enhancing practical application for staff in complex and diverse learning environments.

Historically, there has been strong participation in the Complex Behaviour Modules A, B and C as they are part of Division training standards for staff involved in the use of seclusion and/or physical restraint. When there is potential for the use of seclusion and/or physical restraint, schools are required to have a minimum of two staff who meet training standards. Modules B and C as well as Non-violent Crisis Intervention (NCI) are required for staff in schools with operational seclusion rooms. All modules are also available to any Division staff member interested in taking them.

Attendance in these modules is as follows:

Since data collection commenced in 2019, a total of 5,395 staff have participated in Complex Behaviour Module professional learning sessions.

- 1745 staff have attended Complex Behaviour Module A
- 1839 Division staff have attended Complex Behaviour Module B
- 1623 Division staff have attended Complex Behaviour Module C
- 137 Division Staff have attended Complex Behaviour Modules B and C Combined (the combined session is no longer offered)
- 51 Division Staff have attended Complex Behaviour Module C Condensed (Pre-DLM session for administrators)

Module	A: Universal	B: Targeted	C: Specialized	Pre- DLM
September 2024 –June 2025 Number of Staff Participants	52	33	68	25
September 2025– April 2026 Number of Staff Participants	24	31	37	0 (cancelled due to strike)

Low Arousal Approach (LAA)

In addition to Division training standards, the Division is offering the Low Arousal Approach to crisis prevention and management. The Low Arousal Approach through Studio 3 is a non-aversive crisis management approach to managing distress by encouraging stress reduction and de-escalation. LAA is a crisis prevention method that prioritizes the reduction of stress, fear, and frustration in students and staff. The

approach focuses on supporting proactive and preventative strategies that may be implemented as part of a student's Individual Behaviour Support Plan (IBSP) and/or crisis management plan.

The key components of LAA are:

- Student-centred, non-confrontational method for managing behaviour to reduce incidents of physical and verbal aggression over time.
- Staff are empowered to look past the "action" to identify the underlying causes.
- Focus is placed on staff responses (body language, tone, and energy) that can either escalate or soothe a situation.
- Prioritizes humanistic, student centered approaches, utilizing compassion and empathy to build positive relationships rather than relying on power or authoritative dynamics.

As of April 2026, 16 staff have completed the LAA "Train the Trainer" required certification. These trainers are available to begin working with 139 staff in May 2026 and will continue into the 2026-2027 school year. Professional learning will be offered on Professional Learning Days for staff, with some returning early in August 2026 to participate. Throughout the school year, training will continue to be offered, to support the development of a crisis management approach to student dysregulation. It is best practice that school leaders participate alongside their staff as part of a coordinated effort to support complex behavioural needs.

LAA Training includes:

- Day 1: Universal Supports (theory)
- Day 2: Targeted Support (Distract and Redirect Skills), followed up by two coaching sessions
- Day 3: Intensive Support (Hold and Release Skills) is offered on an as needed basis.

September 2024– August 2025 Number of Staff Participants - Low arousal Approach (LAA)	16
September 2025–April 2026 Number of Staff Participants - Low arousal Approach (LAA)	58

Examples of professional learning and resources available to schools include:

- Educational Assistant Learning Modules (available to all staff on Connect)
- Staff Professional Learning Sessions for 2025-2026
- Mental Health Capacity Building Sessions
- Social Emotional Learning Lessons
- Behaviour and Social Emotional Supports resources and toolkits (available to all staff on Connect)
- Specialized Learning Supports School-Linked Consultation

[Educational Assistant Learning Modules \(linked\)](#)

The primary goal of the Educational Assistant Internship (EAI) 2025/26 program is to improve the recruitment and retention of Educational Assistants (EAs) in Alberta. By providing high-quality, targeted, and meaningful professional development, the program equips EAs with the skills and foundational knowledge needed to effectively support students, including those with complex social, emotional, and social needs. The EAI modules, covering essential topics like diverse learners and complex behavioral needs, are available to

Educational Assistant interns and all staff within Edmonton Public Schools to ensure a consistent, research-based approach to student support across the Division.

[Staff Professional Learning \(linked\)](#)

Staff professional learning sessions focus on building understanding of brain development, regulation, executive functioning, and evidence-based practices to support students with complex emotional, behavioural, and social needs. These sessions equip staff with practical strategies to enhance classroom environments, strengthen relationships, and effectively support diverse learners.

[Mental Health Capacity Building\(MCHB\) \(linked\)](#)

The Mental Health Capacity Building initiative is a partnership between Edmonton Public Schools and Alberta Health Services (AHS). The Division has a three year contract with AHS that provides funding for six Wellness Coaches and a Program Coordinator. These Division staff are trained and able to access AHS resources to provide universal, proactive and preventative programming supporting mental health and wellness.

MHCB sessions for the Division are designed to support classrooms with emotional and mental health literacy while building a strong sense of community. By integrating evidence-based resources, the MHCB program provides teachers and students with a shared language to navigate the four core themes of the MHCB program. These core themes are:

- Social Emotional Learning
- Anti-Racism and Building Inclusive Communities
- Healthy Choices
- Mental Health and Resilience

The goal is to reduce behavioral escalations by building the social-emotional skills students need to succeed, while providing teachers with support to help foster a resilient, regulated, and respectful classroom culture. The Mental Health Capacity Building (MHCB) Wellness Coaches work directly with teachers to provide support, demonstrations, resources, and coaching. In addition to this, several professional learning sessions for teachers are offered throughout the year. This collaborative approach is designed to empower teachers to confidently introduce and implement these programs in their own classrooms. Coaches will partner with teachers to create a schedule that ensures a successful and seamless experience for everyone.

[Social Emotional Learning Lessons \(linked\)](#)

A set of 14 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons have been developed by Specialized Learning Supports (SLS) consultants for teachers in Connections classrooms to support students with significant social, emotional, and behavioural regulation needs. These evidence-based, hands-on lessons focus on building self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Topics include developing classroom community, recognizing body signals and emotions, flexible thinking, understanding others' emotions, conflict resolution, and celebrating progress. Together, these lessons provide a structured framework to support students' social-emotional development.

[Behaviour and Social Emotional Supports resources and toolkits \(available to all staff on Connect\).](#)

This resource hub contains a wide range of supports and resources to assist with programming for students with complex behaviour needs. The sites also provide information and strategies to differentiate levels of support, to address behaviour and social emotional needs, and tools to help implement classroom strategies.

Specialized Learning Supports School-Linked Consultation (available to all staff on Connect).

SLS School linked team consultations and specialized assessments support the Division’s commitment to evidence-based professional learning by building school teams (i.e., principal, teachers, educational assistants, SLS) capacity to effectively support students with complex behaviour needs.

2. OVERSIGHT, REVIEW PROCESSES, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

In order to fulfill the Board’s governance responsibilities, further detail is requested regarding the goals and strategies related to reducing seclusion and restraint.

A. What feedback mechanisms are in place to gather student and family experiences related to seclusion and restraint, and how has this feedback informed policy or practice?

Parents/guardians are important members of a student’s learning support team and are key partners in their child’s education. Strong, positive home-school relationships are foundational for meaningfully involving parents and supporting positive learning outcomes.

One of the first mechanisms to engage families and gather their feedback is through the development of the student’s Individualized Behaviour Support Plan (IBSP). Each school year, an IBSP that includes a crisis management plan is developed for students with complex behavioural needs. Schools work collaboratively with families to gather their feedback to help inform the crisis management plan for each student. This plan includes preventative and proactive strategies as well as reactive strategies in the event of behaviour that has the potential to put the safety of the student and/or others at risk. The use of a seclusion room and/or physical restraint as part of a crisis management plan to support a student, must be documented in the IBSP.

Once the IBSP has been developed in conjunction with school staff, parents, and, where appropriate, the student, it is then signed by the parents/guardians, school staff who work with the student, school administration, and, where appropriate, the student.

In cases where, through the development of the student’s IBSP, the parents have indicated that they do not support the potential use of a seclusion room and/or physical restraint for the child, the school works with the parents to identify an alternate crisis management plan.

When a crisis management plan includes the use of a seclusion room and/or physical restraint, ongoing parent/guardian communication and feedback occurs in a number of ways, specifically:

- Parents/guardians are notified about the use of seclusion and/or physical restraint as soon as possible after the incident and on the same school day as the incident. The IBSP also includes the development of a communication strategy between home and school in the event that the use of seclusion and/or physical restraint has occurred.
- Parents/guardians and the student, where appropriate, have the opportunity to meet with staff to discuss and debrief the incident. This supports a discussion around the specific incident while providing an opportunity for feedback and to discuss next steps in supporting the student.
- The student’s IBSP is reviewed regularly and updated where appropriate to prevent and reduce recurrence. This review process takes into consideration the feedback from parents/guardians. The updated IBSP is shared with parents who may meet with staff and provide further feedback if desired.

This ongoing communication between home and school enables school staff and families to reflect and review the strategies used, collaboratively identify potential next steps and/or identify additional strategies or resources to access that will further support student growth and success.

B. What lessons have been identified from schools within EPSB that have reduced or eliminated reliance on seclusion and restraint?

Lessons learned within EPSB that have reduced or eliminated reliance on seclusion and restraint demonstrate several consistent lessons grounded in proactive, student-centred practice and strong staff capacity:

- **Prioritizing prevention over intervention:** The Division has focused on providing universal and targeted supports such as social-emotional learning, mental health promotion, and positive behaviour strategies to address student needs early, reducing the likelihood of crisis situations.
- **Building staff capacity through ongoing, evidence-based professional learning:** Availability for Division staff to attend training (e.g., Staff Professional Learning Sessions, Complex Behaviour Modules, Non-violent Crisis Intervention, and Low Arousal Approach) in order to equip staff with skills in de-escalation, understanding behaviour, and implementing individualized supports.
- **Using IBSPs as proactive planning:** Use of Individual Behaviour Support Plans (IBSPs), informed by data and collaboration with families and multidisciplinary teams, helps address root causes of behaviour and implement consistent, preventative strategies.
- **Supporting low-arousal, non-confrontational approaches:** The Division has emphasized approaches that reduce stress, sensory overload, and escalation (e.g., Low Arousal Approach), focusing on staff responses, relationship-building, and understanding underlying needs.
- **Strengthening collaboration and shared responsibility:** Ongoing collaboration among school teams, families, and specialized supports including Communities of Practice (e.g., Connections and Interactions) and complex case conferences that builds consistency, shared understanding, and more effective responses to student needs.
- **Communities of Practice (COP):** The Interactions COP and the Connections COP both occur three times a year and are collaborative professional learning groups where teachers and educational assistants come together to engage in ongoing evidence-based professional development, share effective strategies, and build staff capacity.
- **Embedding continuous monitoring and reflective practice:** As outlined in the monthly reporting [noted above](#), regular data tracking, incident review, and debriefing processes allow Division schools to identify patterns, adjust supports, and continuously improve practices to prevent future crises.

3. EXTERNAL EXPERTISE AND COMPARATIVE LEARNING:

Please provide a summary of any external consultation related to reducing the use of seclusion and restraint. What key findings, recommendations, or evidence-based outcomes were shared during those consultations and how did they inform division policy and contribute to decreased use of seclusion across Edmonton Public Schools?

The Division's Specialized Learning Supports (SLS) school-linked teams provide multidisciplinary expertise to support schools in reducing the use of seclusion and restraint. This internal team includes the specialized expertise of consultants such as educational behaviour consultants, registered psychologists, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists, for example. Consultants who are regulated health professionals under the *Health Professions Act* are required to maintain their competence by staying current

with evidence-based research and practices. As a Division, this team conducts ongoing environmental scans to review emerging research and best practice to identify research and evidence-based strategies and approaches that could be implemented within our school Division. SLS has reviewed a range of crisis prevention and intervention programs to assess their suitability for the Division. This is ongoing work as SLS continues to identify potential intervention programs and frameworks in alignment with safe, trauma-informed, and student-centered practices.

SLS staff attend the Children’s Autism Services of Edmonton (CASE) annual conference each year. The Division secures spots which are covered centrally.

School authorities across the province meet regularly through The College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS). These meetings enable the Division to liaise with other school authorities across the province to share emerging research and best practices related to specific topics including supporting students with complex behavior. Some examples of professional learning and research sharing are listed below:

CASS (College of Alberta School Superintendents) Sessions

Division leadership have attended CASS sessions on Proactive Strategies for Managing Aggressive Student Behaviour: Supporting Alberta System Education Leaders in Building Safe, Caring, and Inclusive Learning Environments.

- [Part 1: Understanding Aggressive Behaviour in School Contexts](#)
- [Part 2: Evidence-Based Strategies for De-Escalation and Intervention](#)
- [Part 3: Building Sustainable, System-Wide Capacity](#)

Key findings from this work emphasize that aggressive behaviour is best addressed through proactive, preventative approaches rather than reactive interventions. The sessions highlight the importance of early identification of triggers, relationship-based approaches, environmental adjustments, and consistent use of evidence-based de-escalation strategies. A strong focus is placed on building staff capacity and confidence in responding to complex behaviour in ways that maintain safety for students and staff.

This external expertise has informed Edmonton Public Schools’ approach by reinforcing system-wide emphasis on proactive behaviour supports, strengthening staff training in de-escalation and regulation-focused practices, and supporting more consistent, preventative responses across schools. Collectively, this has contributed to reducing the use of seclusion by prioritizing early intervention, relationship-based supports, and consistent application of evidence-informed strategies.

CASS Inclusion Community of Practice

External consultation on reducing the use of seclusion and restraint has been supported through ongoing collaboration within the CASS Inclusion Community of Practice (CoP): Supporting Students with Complex Needs (2025–2026). This group includes representatives from multiple Alberta school divisions and meets regularly to share practices, review emerging evidence, and strengthen approaches to supporting students with complex and diverse needs. Key areas of focus have included responding to increasing classroom complexity, strengthening proactive and preventative behaviour supports, and clarifying the role of safety planning in relation to behaviour support planning.

Within Edmonton Public Schools, this work has informed the ongoing refinement of practices by reinforcing preventative, regulation-focused approaches and providing clearer guidance for behaviour support and crisis

response. Within SLS, CASS research and key messages are shared with SLS disciplines (i.e., Education Behaviour consultants, occupational therapy consultants) for review and integration into best practices for students and schools. This has contributed to a continued focus on reducing reliance on seclusion through proactive, relationship-based supports that prioritize safety, regulation, and a sense of belonging.

Next Steps:

The Division will:

- Continue to refine and review daily and monthly data related to seclusion room use and work to support schools.
- Continue building staff capacity through ongoing, evidence-based professional learning (e.g., Staff Professional Learning Sessions, Complex Behaviour Modules, Nonviolent Crisis Intervention, and Low-Arousal Approaches) and the development of new professional learning topics to enhance skills in de-escalation, understanding behaviour, and implementing individualized supports. Staff participation in training will continue to be tracked and reported.
- Continue to collaborate and seek out new research, approaches and strategies to access findings, recommendations, and evidence-based research, fostering partnerships that support informed decision-making and the implementation of best practices.
- Continue to work with schools to identify when a seclusion room is no longer needed and shift the space to sensory/self-regulation spaces as student programming needs warrant.
- Continue to access mental health support for students with complex needs.
- Create a Complexity Behaviour Support Team (CBST): A dedicated SLS team to work alongside school teams to provide professional learning, support Connections classrooms and students with complex social, emotional, and behavioural needs.

SS:lp