

Provincial Protocol Framework (PPF) *Frequently Asked Questions*

What is the *Provincial Protocol Framework*? (PPF)

- Success in School for Children and Youth in Care is a cross-ministry initiative of the ministries of Education and Children and Youth Services, to promote strategies and working relationships between partners who support success in school for children and youth in care.
- The *Provincial Protocol Framework* (PPF) forms the basis for, and guides the development of, local regional agreements between school authorities and Child and Family Services Authorities (CFSAs), and, where appropriate, other partners such as Delegated First Nation Agencies (DFNAs), Alberta Health Services, and Solicitor General and Public Security.

What purpose does the *Provincial Protocol Framework* serve?

- The PPF and regional agreements lay the foundation for positive working relationships between the child or youth in care, educators, CFSA and DFNA staff, caregivers and other partners to share information and engage in joint planning and decision-making.
- The PPF clarifies processes and practices, outlines roles and responsibilities and provides a foundation for partners who are working together to support children and youth in care.

Why is the *Provincial Protocol Framework* necessary?

- Children and youth in care are a particularly vulnerable group of students who often have extraordinary needs due to their life circumstances.
- Current practice is not achieving adequate educational results for children and youth in care, particularly when compared to overall results for all students in Alberta. The PPF helps focus on these young people in more purposeful ways to improve educational outcomes.
- The educational results (1997-2007) for children and youth in care compared to all Alberta students show:
 - Children and youth in care comprise about one per cent of all Alberta students.
 - Fewer children and youth in care complete high school, and those who do, take longer to do so compared with other Alberta students.
 - The average provincial achievement test results are lower for children and youth in care compared to other Alberta students in all grades and subjects, and the gap widens from Grades 3 to 6, and again at grade 9 at both the acceptable and excellence levels.
 - A higher number of children and youth in care (Grades 1 to 9) have a special education code, compared to the provincial average.

How was the *Provincial Protocol Framework* developed?

- The PPF was drafted and revised by Children and Youth Services and Education based on stakeholder consultation, review of research and current best practices, and learnings from four demonstration sites around the province.
- The four demonstration sites tested the draft PPF and provided valuable information regarding strengthened relationships between children and youth in care and their caseworkers, teachers, caregivers and other professionals.
- The Deputy Ministers of Children and Youth Services and Education signed-off the PPF on September 10, 2010. Gradual, phased provincial implementation began in fall 2010.

How does the PPF impact teacher and caseworker time and workloads?

- Children and youth in care are on existing caseloads and in many classrooms.
- Strategies within the PPF include joint planning that allows teachers and caseworkers to be proactive rather than reactive, and saves time by avoiding crisis management and by supporting partners in addressing needs.
- The PPF strategies are intended to align with current practices, such as meeting with parents and students at typical report periods or for Individual Program Planning during the school year, and face-to-face meetings with caregivers, children and youth as part of ongoing casework practice.

Why is the PPF directed at all children and youth in care – why not just those who are struggling?

- Research indicates that learning challenges, such as language or academic delays and emotional or behavioural problems, are more prevalent in children and youth in care, often resulting from the traumatic or neglectful situations that brought them into care in the first place.
- Teachers need to focus on all children and youth in care and not wait for obvious signs of difficulty. The provincial education data reinforces the need to be proactive and work together collaboratively on students' behalf.
- It is important to encourage all children and youth in care to do well and to recognize their achievements because of the positive impacts for them and their families when successes are acknowledged.

What is the implementation schedule or plan for implementation?

- Regional partners have begun drafting regional agreements and joint implementation plans for phased implementation beginning fall 2010. The plans include collaborative core team meetings to create Success in School Plans for a sub-population of children and youth in care that the partners have selected for the first year of implementation.
- Phased provincial implementation of the PPF will be gradual over the next three years, and allow flexibility at the regional level for school authority, CFSAs, participating DFNAs, and other partners to determine a manageable, but progressive implementation of the PPF.

Will there be additional resources made available to implement the protocol?

- At this time, schools and CFSAs will implement the first phase of the protocol based on what the regional partners determine is manageable within existing resources. The need for additional resources and ongoing supports in subsequent years for implementation is being monitored and considered within the ministries, within the context of implementation of strategic directions from the *Setting the Direction Framework, Government of Alberta Response*.

What if regions already have a protocol in place for working with children and youth in care?

- The PPF was developed with consideration of existing regional protocols.
- Relevant sections of existing local protocols can be inserted into the appropriate areas of the regional agreements. Regional partners can take this opportunity to review, discuss and enhance their agreements to meet current needs while aligning with the PPF

If students have an Individualized Program Plan, will they need a Success in School plan, as well?

- It is not necessary to create duplicate plans. However, it will be necessary to add components of the Success in School plan to the Individualized Program Plan (IPP), or refer to the IPP in the Success in School plan as appropriate, recognizing that the entire core team has a role to play in implementation of the plan. For example, the Success in School Plan has holistic goals and information will be included to outline who to contact, and involve in specific situations. The Success in School Plan and the IPP can be developed at the same time.

What are the next steps?

- Opportunities will continue through "Sounding Board" meetings to learn from each other as implementation begins, whereby people interested in this work participate face-to-face in Edmonton or via videoconference.
- School authorities and CFSA partners will include their staff in activities designed to provide information as to roles in implementing the PPF and with supporting children and youth in care in our schools.
- The Ministry staff will continue to provide information and support materials as well as assist the regional partners to develop their regional agreements and implementation plans. They may also help with staff orientation activities.
- Continue to align this work with other ministry initiatives such as *Setting the Direction, A Government of Alberta Response*, High School Completion Framework, and Outcome Based Service Delivery.

Where can I get more information about the PPF and how to successfully implement it in my region?

- Tip Sheets and other information that outline successful strategies to use with children and youth in care can be found online at www.education.alberta.ca/ppf.
- Partners can get help with developing a regional agreement and implementation plan by contacting:

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