

## Roles and Responsibilities of Education Personnel

The first step in working positively with the school is knowing who to contact if you have concerns or need more information.

**NOTE:** Most schools employ people in the following positions, but there can be some differences in the specific roles and titles used in each school.

### Principals

Principals are responsible for leading their schools. A principal's duties often include the following.

- ▶ Making sure the school reflects the community's expectations.
- ▶ Monitoring results and confirming that all students are learning and achieving at high levels.
- ▶ Supporting all school staff so they can do their jobs well.
- ▶ Ensuring the school is safe.
- ▶ Managing school operations, including its rules and procedures, scheduling, busing, reporting to parents, etc.
- ▶ Communicating with the School Board or First Nation School Governing Authority.
- ▶ Overseeing the conduct of students.
- ▶ Managing the school budget.

You can contact the school principal if you have questions about the school generally or about your child's learning specifically.

## Classroom Teachers

Classroom teachers are responsible for leading the learning of all students in their classes. A teacher's duties include the following.

- ▶ Planning and delivering instruction.
- ▶ Adapting teaching and learning activities to meet the needs of different students.
- ▶ Ensuring that each student is meeting high expectations.
- ▶ Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on each student's progress.
- ▶ Communicating with parents about their child's education.
- ▶ Supervising and coordinating the work of teaching assistants / education assistants.
- ▶ Coordinating work with other support personnel, such as counsellors, therapists, etc.
- ▶ Helping to plan and implement strategies included in Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students who have special learning needs. An IEP is a written plan describing the unique interventions and services required by a student who has exceptionalities, based on a thorough assessment of the student's strengths to identify what will help the student learn and grow.

**Classroom teachers are key to the education of your child.**

- ▶ Teachers spend the most time with students when they are at school.
- ▶ Research shows that teachers have the greatest impact on student's education outcomes.
- ▶ Research also shows that teachers are most effective when they work in partnership with parents and families to support students.
- ▶ **It can be very beneficial to get in touch with your children's teachers early in the school year to make a connection as soon as possible.**
- ▶ **Additionally, it is very important to participate in formal opportunities to meet with your children's teachers – such as parent-teacher nights, or parent-teacher-student conferences.**
- ▶ **You can also email or arrange to talk to your children's teacher at any time if you have questions or concerns, or if you wish to discuss anything about your children's education. Regular communications are very helpful.**

## Teaching Assistants (TAs) / Education Assistants (EAs)

TAs and EAs work with students individually and in groups. They work under the supervision of teachers. The duties of TAs or EAs may include the following.

- ▶ Helping teachers organize the classroom, supervise students, and assist with learning activities.
- ▶ Helping students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) meet their IEP goals.
- ▶ Promoting students' social and emotional learning.

Some TAs / EAs may be specifically assigned to help with First Nations Language and Culture teaching.

EAs may help students who need assistance with personal care, or in some cases schools employ Care Aids or Personal Care Assistants to help with that role.

**Note:** Although parents may sometimes speak informally with a TA or EA about their child's learning, formal communications about students should always involve the teacher.

## Support Teachers

Different types of support teachers, such as Learning Assistance Teachers or Resource Teachers, do not work in a specific classroom, but they provide valuable support to students who need extra help. Usually, the duties of support teachers include some combination of the following.

- ▶ Providing assistance to individual students and coordinating school-based teams who work with students who have special learning needs.
- ▶ Coordinating IEP implementation strategies.
- ▶ Helping students with their physical or behavioral needs.
- ▶ Assisting students when they are moving to a new classroom or new school.

## First Nations Support Workers

Sometimes called First Nations Liaison Workers, First Nations support staff are employed in many public schools, and they have the following roles.

- ▶ Help support and improve education outcomes for First Nations students.
- ▶ Sometimes lead specific programs for First Nations students.

First Nations Support Workers are often available to help parents when they need information, or to assist parents when they are meeting with school staff about their children's needs. You can always ask for their involvement.

## Other Professionals

School psychologists, speech and language pathologists (SLPs), occupational therapists (OTs), physical therapists (PTs), counsellors, and other professionals may sometimes support students and may be part of school-based teams. If several professionals are helping your child, someone should be assigned to coordinate your child's services and communicate with you regularly.

## Support Staff

Custodians, bus drivers, secretaries, and administrative staff all have very important roles in schools and contribute greatly to student success.