

## Respect in School: Creating Safe and Respectful Schools

Wayne McNeil, Allen Davidson and Chad Erickson

The intent of a CASS Learning Guide is to apply research, deepen understanding and enhance professional practice within the Alberta context. With a focus on optimum learning for all students, a Learning Guide provides an opportunity to grow system leader knowledge, resulting in quality school leadership and quality teaching throughout Alberta.

### Summary Points



**CASS Workplace Wellness Framework includes a focus on developing a comprehensive and integrated Approach.**

*When school authority leaders allocate time, provide resources, and demonstrate a commitment to a comprehensive and integrated approach to workplace wellness, the staff, organization, and community benefit.*

Indicators: School authority leaders model a coherent approach to workplace wellness planning when 1. The plan addresses the wellness needs of all leaders, teachers, staff, and students within the physical, mental, and social-emotional dimensions of well-being. 2. The plan gathers the people and resources to develop the school authority workplace wellness plan.

Respect in School Program would support school authority workplace wellness plans.

Watch the recording here:  
<https://youtu.be/l8nm4UF5KPo>



**Respect Group Inc - Founded 2004** - Sheldon Kennedy and Wayne McNeil **Vision:** To be the Canadian leader in on-line certification to prevent all forms of BAHD (Bullying, Abuse, Harassment, Discrimination) in sport, schools and the workplace... *“I encourage all school leaders and staff to complete the Respect in School training for the benefit of our children.”* Adriana LaGrange Minister of Education

**Allen Davidson - Assistant Superintendent of Employee Services for Foothills School Division**

- Foothills School Division was the first to implement Respect in School in the country. Allen shares his experience of implementation, recertification, and how it supports our legislative responsibility of creating maintaining and promoting a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and working environment that respects diversity, equity and human rights and fosters a sense of inclusion and belonging.
- Foothills implementation plans were part of mandatory training for all staff, including the employee onboarding process. Recertification is required for all employees every 5 years. Time is provided on System Learning Days, or as part of their assigned time.



**Chad Erickson - Associate Superintendent, Student Services for the Red Deer Public School District**

- Chad shares his experience of implementing Respect in School through an initiative titled ‘Valuing Mental Health’. He discusses the natural fit of Respect in School with the Awareness and Prevention aspect of the mental health framework. He also shares the specific details of implementation and onboarding process for all staff.
- Implementation is ongoing and embedded in half-day training in November of each year. Certification is also part of the onboarding process, and employees have 90 days to complete the training.

**Return to School Realities**

- Wayne McNeil stresses the importance of ensuring a psychologically safe and welcoming learning environment as students and all school leaders prepare to return to school. The **Respect in School** program is one tool to support students’ self-esteem, mental health needs, and overall well-being.

Presenters were asked to highlight one key strategy that was used:

**Allen** indicated the importance of ensuring that the program connects to the vision of the school district.

**Chad** focused on the importance of providing flexible time and gaining support from the local ETA.

Allen and Chad were asked if they have seen any impact of the program. They both indicated that they do not have specific data, however, Allen feels that the program creates clear behaviour expectations and Chad has seen fewer complaints around bullying and harassment from parents.

Of the 2299 certified participants from across both School Divisions, 96% felt that the program would make them a more child-centred leader

For more information about the program: Kathy Theberge, Project Manager - Respect in School e: [kttheberge@respectgroupinc.com](mailto:kttheberge@respectgroupinc.com) tel. 416-995-1730 w: [www.respectgroupinc.com](http://www.respectgroupinc.com)

**Research to Practice**

**Questions for reflection and dialogue within your context.**

Considering the safe, caring and respectful environment messages shared in the presentation and as summarized:

1. How might you implement the Respect in School program, as part of a comprehensive and integrated approach to workplace wellness, in your school district?
2. What would you connect the Respect in School program to the vision of your school district? What outcomes would you expect to see as a result of providing the Respect in School Program?
3. How can implementing the Respect in School program support staff in meeting their professional responsibilities as identified in the SLQS and the CASS System Education Leader Practice Profile? <https://cassalberta.ca/resources/practice-profile/>

**Additional Supports for System Leadership Capacity**

CASS Workplace Wellness Resources <https://cassalberta.ca/resources/wellness/>

This learning opportunity is mostly coherent with the WW Conditions focused on Comprehensive and Integrated Approach and Systemic Professional Learning and SLQS competencies indicated below.



**The Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard**

Quality superintendent leadership occurs when the superintendent's ongoing analysis of the context, and the superintendent's decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply, result in quality school leadership, quality teaching and optimum learning for all students in the school authority. Alberta Education February 2018



- Building Effective Relationships
- Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning
- Visionary Leadership
- Leading Learning
- Ensuring First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education for All Students
- School Authority Operations and Resources
- Supporting Effective Governance