Alberta Provincial Wraparound Research Project

Administrators' Perspectives on Wrapping Supports and Services around Students: A Pan-Alberta Survey

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Thank you to the Edmonton Public School District for its leadership role.

Please contact the University of Alberta for more information about:
- *Administrators' Perspectives on Wrapping Supports and Services around Students: A Pan-Alberta Survey*
- *Integrated Support for Children, Youth and Families: A Literature Review of the Wraparound Process*
- *School-based Perspective on Wrapping Supports and Services around Alberta's Students: A Study of 13 Sites.*
- *Wrapping Supports and Services around Alberta's Students: Research Summary*.

Please contact Alberta Education for more information about the wraparound approach in Alberta.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine wraparound approaches from the perspective of Alberta school administrators. Key elements of this examination were to determine what was currently being done, attitudes toward wraparound, and the perceived capacity of schools and school authorities to engage in wraparound processes. A survey was created and sent to school authorities in the province of Alberta. The most likely principles to be incorporated are strategies that are individualized for each student, developed using a team-based and outcome-based approach. While participants indicated that all principles of wraparound were important, when forced to choose the principles of wraparound they deemed most important, they indicated family engagement, collaborative and community-based principles. Participants also indicated that capacity to incorporate principles of wraparound varied across sites. The results of this study indicate that while there is no single solution for all schools and school authorities, both importance and capacity seem to be significant factors in determining whether wraparound approaches will be implemented. Helping administrators to understand the importance of wraparound and increasing capacity may help to increase the likelihood that wraparound will be used.

Table of Contents

ADMINISTRATORS' PERSPECTIVES ON WRAPPING SUPPORTS AND SERVICES AROUND STUDENTS: A PAN-ALBERTA SURVEY

Wraparound

The needs of many children and youth in society are complex and require intensive resources. Different approaches and processes have been put in place to provide support for these children and youth in the hope that some of the hardships they experience can, at the very least, be ameliorated. One approach that has received recent attention is referred to as *wraparound*. With a wraparound approach, the child and the family are part of a team that works together to provide support for the family's needs. Wraparound approaches are focused on the strengths of the family and help to coordinate all the various resources that might be required. In a very real sense, the collaborative team wraps supports around the child and family.

Although there is currently a growing body of primarily theoretical research related to wraparound approaches, much of what is known is based on research conducted in the United States. As well, definitions of what constitutes a wraparound approach vary quite substantially (Prakash et al., 2010). Additional research is needed to help develop a more complete understanding of how wraparound approaches are currently being implemented in diverse contexts. Understanding how these different contexts influence the implementation and definition of wraparound is essential in determining how, in the future, wraparound approaches can be effectively used in Alberta.

According to Bruns, Suter, and Leverentz-Brady (2006), wraparound is a "process through which providers collaborate with families to develop an integrated and creative service plan tailored to the strengths and specific needs of the child and family" (p. 1586). Any type of social service (e.g., education, health, mental health, judicial) can use a wraparound approach to address the needs of children and youth. Children and youth with significant emotional and/or behavioural disabilities are often found to have the highest dropout rates, the lowest grades and academic achievement, and the highest rate of treatment and out-of-home placements (Eber, Nelson, & Miles, 1997). Programs or agencies may use wraparound as one of many strategies for facilitating positive outcomes in children, youth and their families (Winters & Metz, 2009).

Wraparound approaches use a collaborative planning process that results in a unique set of community services and natural supports that are individualized for a child or youth and his or her family (Burns & Goldman, 1999). Wraparound approaches are sometimes seen as alternatives to traditional mental health services because traditional agency-based services have not always been successful in supporting positive outcomes for children and youth with emotional and behavioural needs and have sometimes been ineffective and even detrimental to long-term success (Eber, Phillips, Upreti, Hyde, Lewandowski, & Rose, 2009).

Wraparound approaches have been described as progressive mental health interventions because they consider the family not as a cause or barrier to success but as a valuable resource for instigating and sustaining change. Wraparound approaches also emphasize the integration of traditionally separated sectors, such as education, health and social services for children and youth.

Traditional silo-based approaches to case management have not been very successful in finding positive outcomes for children and youth with significant emotional and/or behavioural disabilities (Eber, Breen, Rose, Unizycki, & London, 2008). Collaboration among families, community-based agencies and governmental bodies facilitates success in children and youth with multiple needs and is a key component of a wraparound approach. Collaboration is based on a recognition that children and youth with complex needs can present significant challenges that are extremely difficult for one sector alone to successfully address.

Over the last 20 years, wraparound approaches have gained momentum not only in the United States but in many other nations. These approaches are also currently employed in many sectors, e.g., education, health, justice and service agencies. Wraparound was considered such a promising practice that in 2007 the Governor of Oregon initiated The Statewide Wraparound Project and directed a steering committee to develop a strategic plan for implementation of a Systems of Care approach, including wraparound, for the delivery of behavioural health services and supports for children, youth and families. The subsequent House legislative bill, which requires specified state agencies and commissions to participate in wraparound when providing services for children and youth, was signed in 2009 (Oregon Live, 2010).

Wraparound approaches have also become highly regarded for promoting change in children and youth who do not respond to traditional services (Eber, Hyde, Rose, Breen, McDonald, & Lewandowski, 2009). Because of this potential, wraparound approaches have been used as preventative as well as crisis intervention strategies (Eber, Sugai, Smith, & Scott, 2002). Whether through prevention or intervention, wraparound approaches are seen by some to have the potential to help address the complex needs of children and youth with significant emotional and/or behavioural disabilities (Bruns, Suter, Force, & Burchard, 2005; Farmer, Mustillo, Burns, & Holden, 2008).

While definitions of wraparound vary, wraparound approaches are based on the beliefs that families should be equal partners in creating and implementing treatment plans and that plans should be focused on the strengths and assets of the child and family, as opposed to focusing on traditional deficit-based practices. Ten fundamental principles of wraparound have been defined throughout the literature on wraparound [Bruns, Suter, Force, & Burchard (2005), Bruns, Walker, & The National Wraparound Initiative Advisory Group (2008), Burns & Goldman (1999)].

1. **Collaborative (CO):** Team members work cooperatively and share responsibility for developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating a single wraparound plan. The plan reflects a blending of team members' perspectives, mandates and resources. The plan guides and coordinates each team member's work toward meeting the team's goals**.**
2. **Community based (CB):** The wraparound team implements service and support strategies that take place in the most inclusive, most responsive, most accessible and least restrictive settings possible, and that safely promote child and family integration into home and community life.
3. **Culturally responsive (CR):** The wraparound process demonstrates respect for and builds on the values, preferences, beliefs, cultures, and identity of the child/youth and family, and their community.
4. **Family engagement characterized by voice and choice (FE):** Family and child/youth perspectives are intentionally elicited and prioritized during all phases of the wraparound process. Planning is grounded in family members' perspectives, and the team strives to provide options and choices such that the plan reflects family values and preferences.
5. **Individualized (IN):** To achieve the goals laid out in the wraparound plan, the team develops and implements a customized set of strategies, supports and services.

6. **Natural Supports (NS):** The team actively seeks out and encourages the full participation of team members drawn from family members' networks of interpersonal and community relationships. The wraparound plan reflects activities and interventions that draw on sources of natural support.

7. **Outcome based (OB):** The team ties the goals and strategies of the wraparound plan to observable or measurable indicators of success, monitors progress in terms of these indicators, and revises the plan accordingly.

8. **Strengths based (SB):** The wraparound process and the wraparound plan identify, build on, and enhance the capabilities, knowledge, skills and assets of the child and family, their community and other team members.

9. **Team driven (TD):** The wraparound team consists of individuals agreed upon by the family and committed to the family through informal, formal, and community support and service relationships.

10. **Unconditional commitment (UC):** A wraparound team does not give up on, blame or reject children, youth and their families. When faced with challenges or setbacks, the team continues working toward meeting the needs of the youth and family and toward achieving the goals in the wraparound plan until the team reaches agreement that a formal wraparound process is no longer necessary.

Alberta Context

An important goal of developing the present study was to create an understanding of how wraparound approaches are currently being implemented in Alberta. Alberta is a western Canadian province with an estimated population of 3.7 million (Statistics Canada, 2010). Although the majority (82%) live in large urban centers, significant numbers live in rural Alberta (Statistics Canada, 2009). Alberta is a diverse province representative of a variety of cultures and challenges.

With respect to education, the Alberta context is actually somewhat of a misnomer because it implies a single context. While education is a provincial mandate and policy is set at the provincial level, Alberta is made up of 42 public, 19 separate and 5 Francophone school authorities, plus other private and charter schools, each with unique contexts and priorities (Government of Alberta, 2010). A one-size-fits-all approach is likely not an effective way to provide supports and services to students in Alberta.

In 2009, Alberta Education provided a grant to the Edmonton Public School District for the development of a research project and resource materials to support school authorities in establishing or strengthening the use of wraparound approaches. If wraparound approaches are to be optimized in Alberta, it is important to know about school administrators' perspectives on the implementation of wraparound in their schools and communities. The current study is one piece of a four-part research project that also includes a literature review (Prakash et al., 2010), a qualitative site-based study (Daniels et al., 2010), and the development of resources designed to support the implementation of wraparound approaches in school authorities throughout the province.

One of the potential benefits of conducting a province-wide study is that it allows us to examine different contexts and school authorities to see: (1) whether administrators believe that wraparound principles are, or are not, being implemented, and (2) whether administrators' perceptions of the importance of implementing elements of wraparound and their capacity to do so influence how wraparound is implemented (i.e., which principles are being implemented and how wraparound is defined) in each context.

Study Design

This study was designed to gather information from as many of the public, separate, and Francophone school authorities within the province as possible.[1]

A survey (Appendix: Provincial Survey) was chosen as the most efficient means of gathering information from many different people and as a complement to the qualitative information gathered in site visits at select locations. The survey had the added benefit of providing an opportunity to gauge a province-wide rating of, and capacity for, integrated supports and services. As an exploratory study, the primary aims were to examine the current state of wraparound use within Alberta and to understand more fully some of the reasons (i.e., perceived importance and capacity) why school authorities and schools are more or less likely to incorporate principles of wraparound as part of their approach to providing supports and services to address the needs of children and youth with significant emotional and/or behavioural disabilities.

Method

SURVEY

The survey was designed to gather information about the use of and attitudes toward wraparound approaches as well as information about the school authorities or schools of the. The survey was translated from English into French for respondents from Francophone schools. Ten principles of wraparound were presented and participants were asked about: (a) the likelihood of incorporating each principle into programming for vulnerable students in their authority or school, (b) the importance placed on each principle, and (c) the capacity of their authority or school to incorporate each principle into supports and services. Respondents answered using 5-point rating scales. Participants also were asked to select the three most important principles for their authority or school. Participants provided information regarding their role within the school authority and about the frequency with which various sub-populations of students required services. Finally, participants rated the extent to which access to integrated supports and services is equitable across schools in their school authorities.

PARTICIPANTS

All superintendents in the public, separate and Francophone school authorities of Alberta were invited to participate and sent a link via e-mail to the survey. Each superintendent was asked (a) to complete the survey or to forward it to a designate who could provide informed responses, and (b) to send the survey link to three principals within his or her school authority who could respond. Participants were given three weeks to complete the survey and were provided with as many as two reminders. All data were collected via online survey and stored on secure servers. Of the 66 public, separate and Francophone school authorities, responses were received from five superintendents and 26 designates for a response rate of 47.0% at the school authority level, and from 21 principals and three designates for a response rate of 36.4% at the school level. Of the 31 responses received at the school authority level, 18.8% were from large, urban districts (Calgary and Edmonton). Of the 24 responses at the school level, 29.2% were from these two districts.

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[1] Data were also collected from private and charter schools throughout the province. Data from private schools will be analyzed separately. There were too few responses from charter schools to conduct meaningful analyses.

Findings

Statistical analyses were conducted to determine whether results varied by organizational level (school authority versus school) and by location (large urban districts versus other districts). The 5-point scale used for participant ratings was collapsed to create a top-2 (4 & 5 out of 5), bottom-3 breakdown (1, 2, & 3 out of 5). Of the 60 tests, only one was significant (α = .05). This lack of relation is consistent with the interpretation that responses did not differ systematically depending on organizational level or location. In subsequent sections, therefore, the data reported are combined across organizational level and location.

Current Wraparound Practice

To assess what is currently happening within school authorities in Alberta, participants were asked to indicate the likelihood of their respective school authorities or schools incorporating each of the 10 wraparound principles into supports and services provided to children and youth. We found considerable variability with respect to the likelihood of different principles of wraparound being implemented. Data are presented in Table 1 and also in an alternative format in Figure 1.

Participants indicated that individualized (IN) planning was the principle most likely to be incorporated, with 88.9% responding that this was either likely or very likely. A key component of Alberta Education's special education policy requires individualized program planning. Thus, it is not surprising that the most likely principle of wraparound to be incorporated is individualized support. This finding reflects, perhaps, an underlying understanding that the needs of individual students are complex and unique.

Participants also indicated that the outcome-based (OB) and team-driven (TD) principles are typically part of a wraparound response, with 85.5% and 83.7% respectively responding either likely or very likely. A focus on outcome-based practices reflects, perhaps, an understanding of the need to provide evidence of the effectiveness of an intervention to ensure that children and youth are being helped in an effective manner and to prove to funders the worth of the process. A team-based approach that engages partners can help to maximize resources and better provide for the needs of children and youth. Of the 10 principles of wraparound, participants indicated that they were least likely to incorporate community-based (CB) strategies, with only 50.9% indicating that this was either likely or very likely (Table 1).

Table 1: Likelihood of Incorporating Principles of Wraparound

Principles of Wraparound	N	Frequency				
		Very Unlikely	**Unlikely**	**Neutral**	**Likely**	**Very Likely**
Collaborative (CO)	55	3.6%	3.6%	10.9%	40.0%	41.8%
Community Based (CB)	53	7.6%	22.6%	1.9%	39.6%	11.3%
Culturally Responsive (CR)	55	3.6%	7.3%	27.2%	38.2%	23.6%
Family Engagement (FE)	54	5.6%	5.6%	11.1%	33.3%	44.4%
Individualized (IN)	54	3.7%	7.4%	3.7%	31.5%	57.4%
Natural Supports (NS)	55	3.6%	10.9%	27.3%	40.0%	18.1%
Outcome Based (OB)	55	1.8%	1.8%	10.9%	49.1%	36.4%
Strengths Based (SB)	55	3.6%	1.8%	16.4%	30.9%	47.3%
Team Driven (TD)	55	3.6%	7.2%	5.5%	27.3%	56.4%
Unconditional Commitment(UC)	54	3.7%	7.4%	13.0%	38.9%	37.0%

Note. Principles listed in the table are in alphabetical order.

Figure 1
Percentages of Responses Regarding Likelihood of Incorporating Wraparound Principles
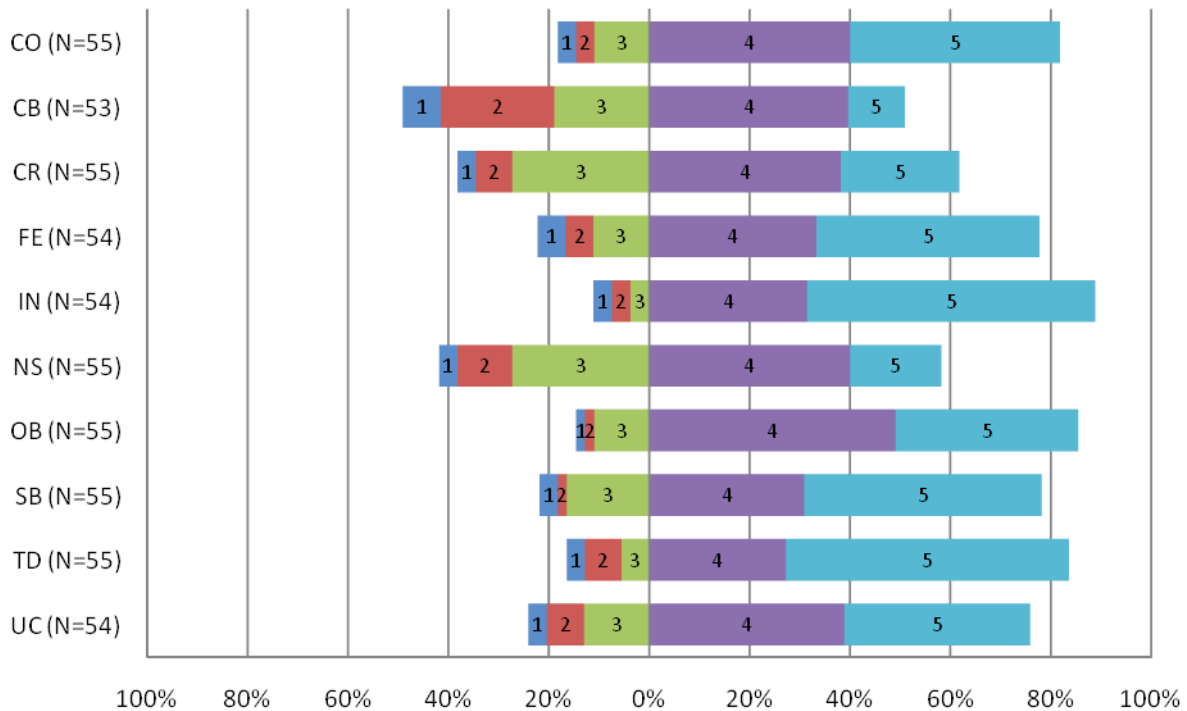
Collaborative (CO), Community Based (CB), Culturally Responsive (CR), Family Engagement (FE), Individualized (IN), Natural Supports (NS), Outcome Based (OB), Strengths Based (SB), Team Driven (TD), Unconditional Commitment (UC).

Note: 1=Very Unlikely, 2=Unlikely, 3=Neutral, 4=Likely, 5=Very Likely

This figure is a representation of data collected using a 5-point rating scale. It is divided into a top-2/bottom-3 configuration. The top 2 responses (4 & 5 on the 5-point scale) are to the right of 0% on the abscissa, and the bottom 3 responses (1, 2 & 3 on the 5-point scale) are to the left of 0% on the abscissa. For example, the majority of responses for IN are either 4 or 5 (in this case, roughly 90%), whereas only about 10% of the responses to this item were 1, 2 or 3.

Following the rating scale, participants were provided with the opportunity to give examples of promising practices related to the 10 principles of wraparound. The most frequent examples were of family engagement (FE), team driven (TD) and culturally responsive (CR).

- Family Engagement (FE)

  "Families are members of the learning teams and participate in the program development of their child."[2]

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[2] Minor spelling and grammatical errors that do not impact meaning have been corrected in some quotations.

- Team Driven (TD)

  "We have a pyramid of intervention model for the school. When we meet as a team, the meetings always include the parent(s), classroom teacher, psychologist, counsellor, administration and making connections or native liaison."

  "When vulnerable students are identified and are at risk, all agencies need to come together in what we call a 'summit' meeting, so that we can all work together as a team to support the student or the family."

- Culturally Responsive (CR)

  "We have recently had an influx of immigrants come to one of our communities, changing the English as a second language make-up of some of our schools. Partners came together to have a pot-luck evening to help welcome kids and families into the school."

  "Trained support workers assist new Canadian families with issues that relate to settlement. Trained interpreters are able to convey the messages that are being delivered in English."

Importance of the Principles of Wraparound

In addition to ratings of likelihood, we were also interested in some of the potential reasons why certain wraparound principles were more likely than others to be part of a wraparound approach. One potential reason may be the importance which administrators place upon principles of wraparound. If administrators in school authorities and schools feel that certain principles of wraparound are important, then, all things being equal, these may be more likely than other principles to be incorporated into a wraparound approach.

Responses to questions about the importance of each principle are provided in Table 2 and Figure 2. Respondents generally agreed that support should be unconditional (UC) and strengths based (SB), both with 94.6% indicating important or very important. Least important was that support be based on observable outcomes, but even in this case 87.3% indicated that it was important or very important. As is especially evident in Figure 2, all 10 principles of wraparound were rated as important or very important.

Table 2: Rated Importance of Incorporating Principles of Wraparound in Programming for Students Who Require Supports and Services that Extend Beyond the School

Principles of Wraparound	N	Importance				
		Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important
Collaborative (CO)	54	7.4%	0	3.7%	7.4%	81.5%
Community Based (CB)	54	7.4%	0	0	9.3%	83.3%
Culturally Responsive (CR)	55	5.5%	0	3.6%	27.3%	63.6%
Family Engagement (FE)	55	7.3%	0	0	12.7%	80.0%
Individualized (IN)	55	7.3%	0	0	16.4%	76.4%
Natural Supports (NS)	54	7.4%	0	3.7%	25.9%	63.0%
Outcome Based (OB)	55	7.3%	0	5.5%	14.6%	72.7%
Strengths Based (SB)	55	5.5%	0	0	20.0%	74.6%
Team Driven (TD)	55	7.3%	1.8%	0	7.3%	83.6%
Unconditional Commitment(UC)	55	5.5%	0	0	7.3%	87.3%

Note. Principles listed in the table are in alphabetical order.

Figure 2
Percent of Responses Regarding Importance of Wraparound Principles
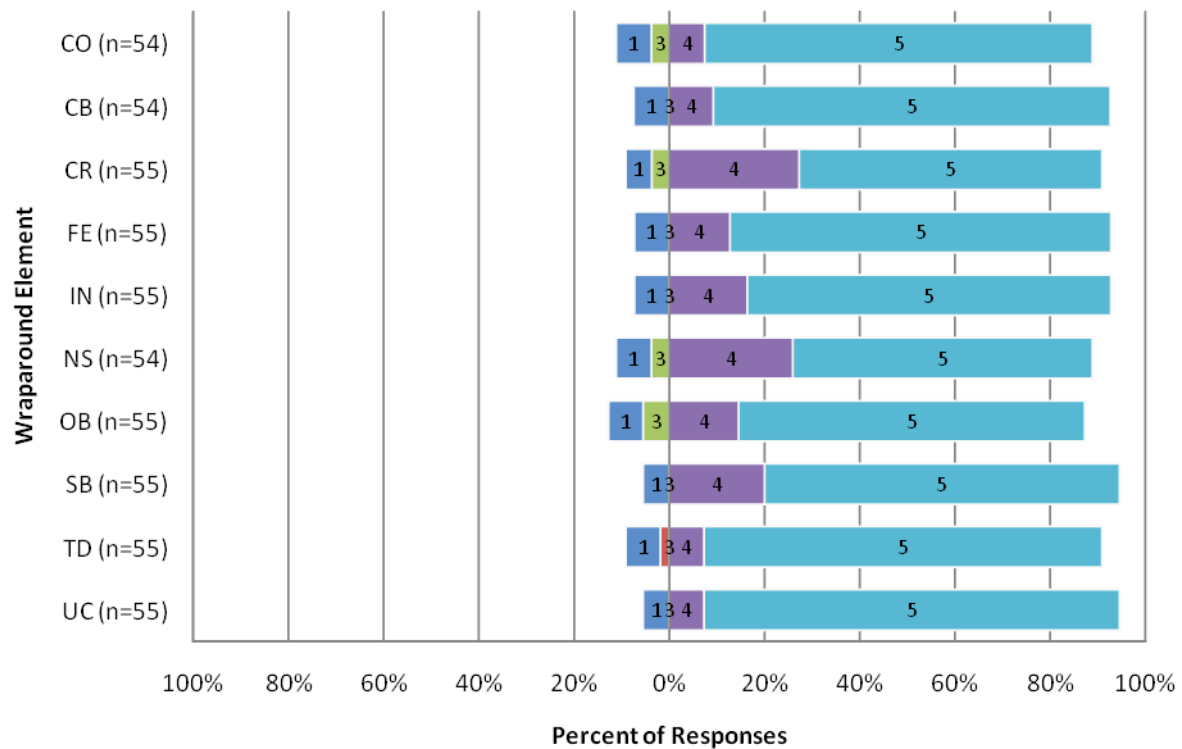
Collaborative (CO), Community Based (CB), Culturally Responsive (CR), Family Engagement (FE), Individualized (IN), Natural Supports (NS), Outcome Based (OB), Strengths Based (SB), Team Driven (TD), Unconditional Commitment (UC).
Note. 1=Very Unimportant, 2=Unimportant, 3=Neutral, 4=Important, 5=Very Important.
This figure is a representation of data collected using a 5-point rating scale. It is divided into a top-2/bottom-3 configuration. The top 2 responses (4 & 5 on the 5-point scale) are to the right of 0% on the abscissa, and the bottom 3 responses (1, 2 & 3 on the 5-point scale) are to the left of 0% on the abscissa.

Because we suspected that importance ratings would be uniformly high, we also included a forced-choice ranking question to determine which of the principles were most important for participants. When participants were asked to rank the three most important principles, a very clear pattern became apparent. As indicated in Figure 3, two principles were ranked among the top three by over 60% of participants: family engagement (FE) and collaborative (CO). No one ranked culturally responsive (CR) in their three most important principles, and very few cited outcome based (OB) and natural supports (NS).

Figure 3
Ranking of Three Most Important Wraparound Principles
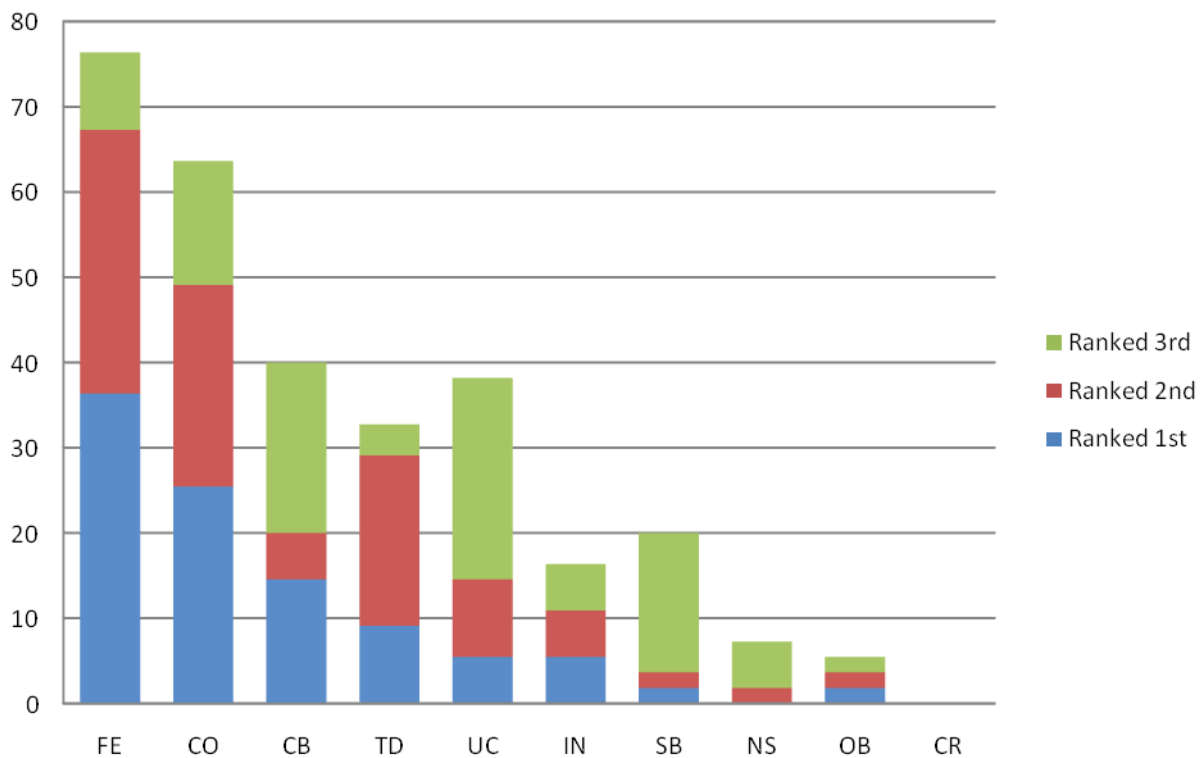
Family Engagement (FE), Collaborative (CO), Community Based (CB), Team Driven (TD), Unconditional Commitment (UC), Individualized (IN), Strengths Based (SB), Natural Supports (NS), Outcome Based (OB), Culturally Responsive (CR).

An open-ended question was provided for participants to give any additional comments regarding the importance of any of the wraparound principles. Participants provided multiple comments, but there did not seem to be any one dominant theme. Examples of some of the themes that were mentioned more than once are provided below.

- Family Engagement (FE)
  "If a family doesn't have supports we need to work around this barrier."

- Culturally Responsive (CR)
  "English as a second language students and families coming from other cultures need to be approached respectfully. They need time to develop their understanding and it is imperative that they receive communication in their first language even though they may appear to understand English. Many times they do not want to ask questions and so often leave meetings confused and angry."

- Community Based (CB)

    "In a rural jurisdiction, even though it is extremely important that services and supports are accessible within a community, they are often not."

- Outcome Based (OB)

    "One needs to be *very cautious* about the type of measures used for success. From time-to-time an external evaluator employed by a public agency, particularly mental health, comes at the measures in a very non-culturally sensitive, heavy-handed way that is not supportive of parents with limited English skills."

## Capacity to Implement Principles of Wraparound

Another reason why certain principles may or may not have been implemented in school authorities or schools may be tied to capacity. Using a 5-point rating scale, participants were asked to indicate their authority's or school's capacity to incorporate each principle into their programming for students who require supports and services that extend beyond the school. Results are provided in Table 3 and Figure 4. Respondents felt that authority or school capacity was highest for creating strategies that are individualized (IN) for each student, that strategies are outcome based (OB), and that strategies are strengths based (SB), with 84.5%, 74.6%, and 74.1% respectively indicating that their capacity was high or very high for each of these principles. The principle eliciting the lowest capacity ratings is that required services and supports be community based (CB), with only 38.2% indicating their capacity was high or very high.

Table 3: Reported Capacity for Incorporating Principles of Wraparound in Programming for Students Who Require Supports and Services that Extend Beyond the School

Principles of Wraparound	N	Frequency				
		Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Collaborative (CO)	55	1.8%	1.8%	30.9%	23.6%	41.8%
Community Based (CB)	55	5.4%	25.5%	30.9%	25.5%	12.7%
Culturally Responsive (CR)	55	0	9.1%	38.2%	32.7%	20.0%
Family Engagement (FE)	55	0	1.8%	27.3%	36.4%	34.6%
Individualized (IN)	53	0	3.8%	11.3%	32.1%	52.4%
Natural Supports (NS)	55	3.6%	10.9%	25.5%	40.0%	20.0%
Outcome Based (OB)	55	0	3.6%	21.8%	40.0%	34.6%
Strengths Based (SB)	55	0	3.7%	22.2%	38.9%	35.2%
Team Driven (TD)	55	1.8%	0	25.5%	34.6%	38.2%
Unconditional Commitment(UC)	55	1.8%	7.3%	18.2%	38.2%	34.6%

Note. Principles listed in the table are in alphabetical order.

Figure 4
Percent of Responses Regarding Capacity for Principles of Wraparound
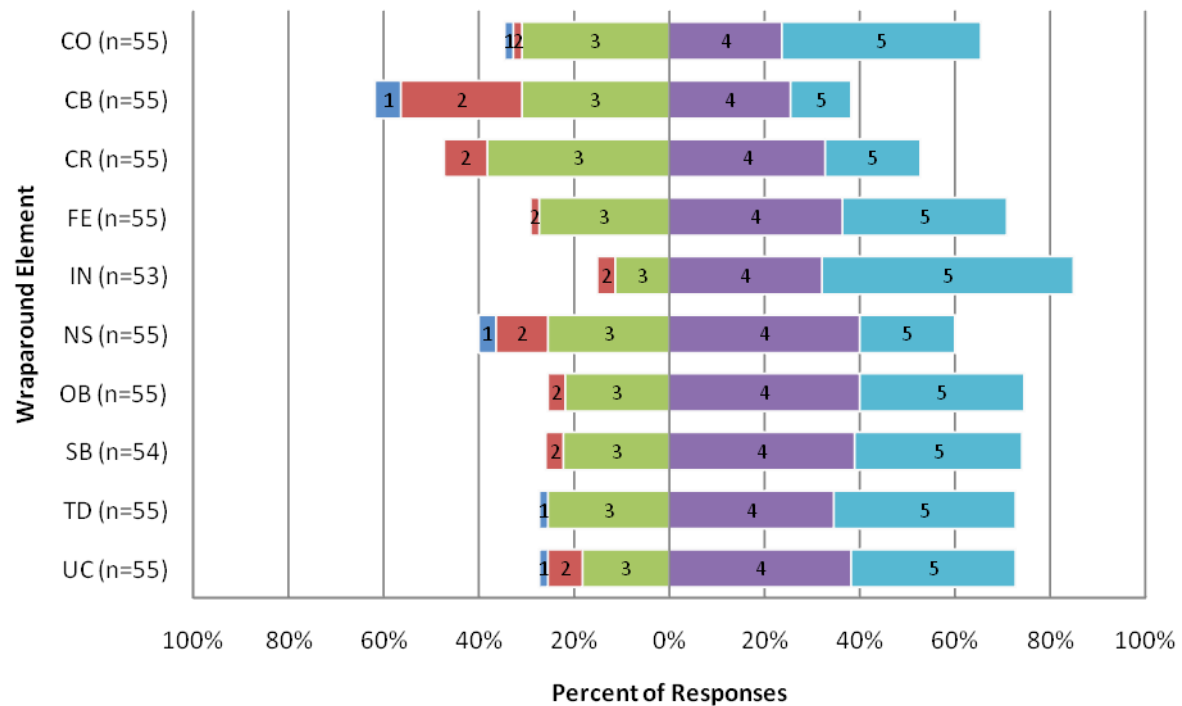
Collaborative (CO), Community Based (CB), Culturally Responsive (CR), Family Engagement (FE), Individualized (IN), Natural Supports (NS), Outcome Based (OB), Strengths Based (SB), Team Driven (TD), Unconditional Commitment(UC).
Note. 1=Very Low, 2=Low, 3=Medium, 4=High, 5=Very High.
This figure is a representation of data collected using a 5-point rating scale. It is divided into a top-2/bottom-3 configuration. The top 2 responses (4 & 5 on the 5-point scale) are to the right of 0% on the abscissa, and the bottom 3 responses (1, 2 & 3 on the 5-point scale) are to the left of 0% on the abscissa.

Once again participants were given the opportunity to provide comments regarding capacity. Most of the participants who provided comments indicated that they were concerned about the lack of resources.

> "The greatest challenge remains accessibility to partners and then their 'buying-in' to the process of student supports being a partnership."

Another theme that came from the comments of participants was the importance of developing partnerships and collaborating.

> "The best models I have seen is when services actually attach themselves to school boards and become a part of the culture of schools."

## Sub-Populations of Students Receiving Services

To better understand the context within which students received the services, participants were asked to indicate the frequency with which each of several sub-populations of students received services. Because we anticipated that categories of students are not mutually exclusive and all sub-categories might be receiving services frequently, we also included a ranking question. Participants indicated that students with social, emotional and/or behavioural disabilities are the sub-population that most frequently *received* supports and services, with 92.6% of respondents indicating that these students receive support frequently or very frequently. The sub-population of students least frequently receiving supports and services are immigrant or refugee students, with 42.6% indicating that these services are provided frequently or very frequently (Table 4).

Table 4: Reported Frequency of Provision of Supports and Services to Sub-Populations of Students

	N	Frequency				
		Very Infrequently	**Infrequently**	**As Equally Frequent as Infrequent**	**Frequently**	**Very Frequently**
Students with social, emotional and/or behavioural disabilities	54	0	3.7%	3.7%	20.4%	72.2%
Students with other disabilities or medical conditions	55	0	5.4%	10.9%	40.0%	43.6%
Students from families living in poverty	55	3.6%	9.0%	23.6%	34.6%	29.1%
Students from First Nations, Métis, or Inuit cultures	55	10.9%	16.3%	14.6%	32.7%	25.5%
Students in care (foster, group homes, etc.)	55	1.8%	23.6%	20.0%	30.9%	23.6%
Immigrant or refugee students	54	9.6%	31.5%	16.7%	22.2%	20.4%

When asked to rank the three sub-populations most frequently *requiring* supports and services, students with social, emotional and/or behavioural disabilities were selected most often, followed by students with other disabilities or medical conditions and students from First Nations, Métis or Inuit cultures (Figure 5).

Figure 5
Ranking of Three Sub-Populations Most Frequently Requiring Supports and Services

Legend: ■ First listed (n=55)   ■ Second listed (n=54)   ■ Third listed (n=53)
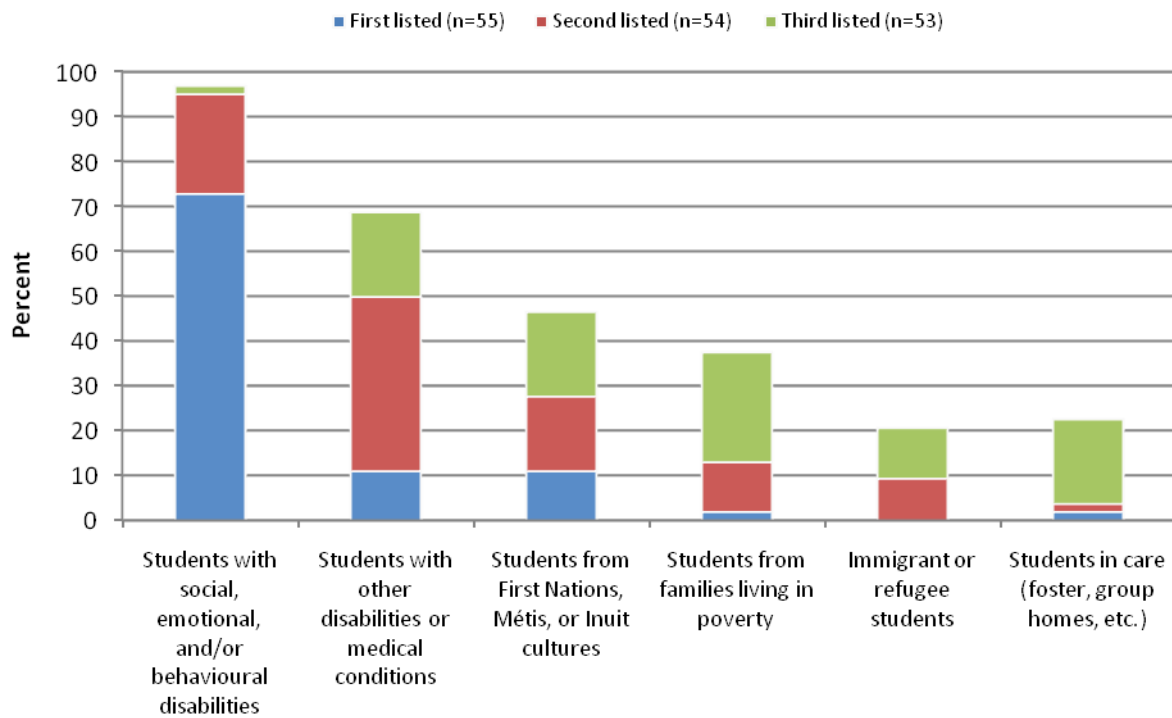
Perceived Equity of Service

Participants were asked to indicate whether they perceived that access to integrated supports and services was equitable across schools within their authority. The majority of participants indicated that access was either equitable or very equitable, but 30% (n=55) felt that access to supports and services was inequitable or very inequitable (Figure 6).

Figure 6
Equity of Access to Supports and Services Across School Authorities and Schools

- Very inequitable 1 — 4%
- Very equitable 5 — 25%
- Inequitable 2 — 26%
- Neutral 3 — 7%
- Equitable 4 — 38%
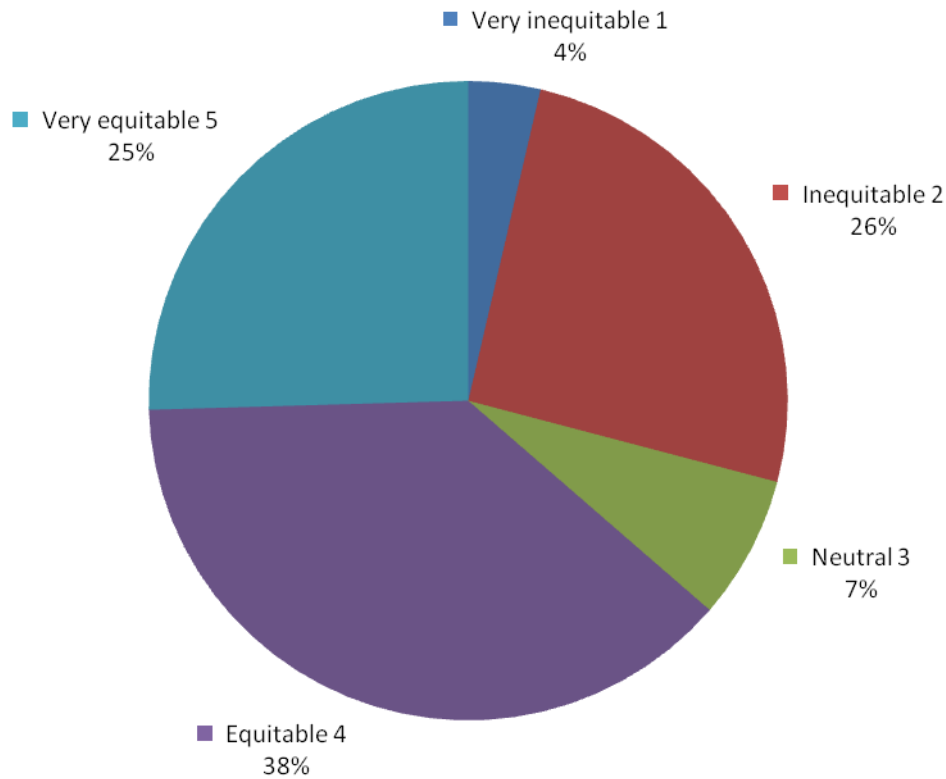
Some of the participants provided reasons as to why they felt that access to supports and services is inequitable within a school authority. For example, one participant remarked:

> "It is inequitable for several reasons, e.g., availability of partners with capacity to do more, limited pre-service training regarding importance of integrated services, relatively new awareness by district of benefits of integrated services or what it takes to put in place, and limitations of financial and human resources to put in the time and effort required upfront to successfully implement integrated services."

Another participant felt that the inequities among school authorities were important to consider as well.

> "The difficulty is *not* inequity across our schools, although this is an issue, but rather inequity across various authorities. A huge number of services stop at the [large urban centre] border."

Results by Position (School Authority and School)

Because results reflected the views of both school authority level (superintendent or designate) and school level (principal or designate) administrators, results were separated to examine whether there was any difference by role with respect to each of the different levels of analysis. Chi-square analyses were performed on each of the questions to determine whether the role and the different principles of wraparound were related. All analyses indicated that there were no significant differences between school authority level administrators and school level administrators on any of the questions.

Factors Impacting the Likelihood of Principles of Wraparound Being Implemented

The likelihood of any wraparound principle being implemented might well be a function of both the importance that each authority placed on that element and the capacity of each authority to implement that element. To examine this hypothesis, linear regressions were performed to examine the link among importance ratings, capacity ratings and the likelihood that principles of wraparound would be included in a school authority's approach to providing wraparound. Importance and capacity contributed independently in every case except one, team driven (TD). In addition, a moderate to substantial proportion of variability is linked to these predictors (Table 5 for regression statistics).

Table 5: Regression Analyses Predicting Likelihood from Importance and Capacity

Wraparound Principle	N	R^2	Importance β	Capacity β
Collaborative (CO)	55	.32*	.44*	.28*
Community Based (CB)	53	.48*	.51*	.52*
Culturally Responsive (CR)	55	.53*	.61*	.39*
Family Engagement (FE)	54	.32*	.41*	.40*
Individualized (IN)	54	.46*	.52*	.36*
Natural Supports (NS)	55	.28*	.46*	.24*
Outcome Based (OB)	55	.51*	.58*	.34*
Strengths Based (SB)	55	.48*	.59*	.29*
Team Driven (TD)	55	.35*	.57*	.13
Unconditional Commitment(UC)	54	.62*	.68*	.46*

Note. Principles listed in the table are in alphabetical order.
Note. *p < .05

Both importance and capacity are related to whether school authorities are likely to incorporate individual principles of wraparound within their own authorities. These findings confirm that the likelihood of implementing a principle generally is a function of both (a) the importance with which that principle is viewed, and (b) the capacity to implement it. The only exception is that implementing the team driven (TD) principle does not depend on capacity.

In general, all of the principles that were most likely to be included in a wraparound approach are also those that school authorities and schools indicate that they have the most capacity to implement. A correlation was conducted between likelihood ratings and capacity ratings. As expected, all of the principles of wraparound were significantly correlated, with the exception of team driven (TD) (Table 6).

Table 6: Correlation Between Likelihood and Capacity

Wraparound Principle	N	r	p
Collaborative (CO)	55	.35	.008
Community Based (CB)	53	.45	.001
Culturally Responsive (CR)	55	.40	.003
Family Engagement (FE)	54	.40	.003
Individualized (IN)	52	.45	.001
Natural Supports (NS)	55	.30	.028
Outcome Based (OB)	55	.43	.001
Strengths Based (SB)	54	.38	.005
Team Driven (TD)	55	.15	.273
Unconditional Commitment(UC)	54	.40	.003

Note. Principles listed in the table are in alphabetical order.

Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine wraparound approaches from a provincial perspective. Key elements of this examination were to determine what was currently being done, attitudes toward wraparound, and the perceived capacity of schools and school authorities to engage in wraparound activities. A survey was created and sent to all of the public, separate and Francophone school authorities in Alberta. Both school authority level administrators and selected school level administrators were provided with an opportunity to give responses.

Based on the responses received, many of the key principles of wraparound are reportedly being used throughout the province. Taken as a whole, the provincial data indicate that although all principles of wraparound are likely to be incorporated to some extent, some principles are more likely than others to be used. The most likely principles to be incorporated are strategies that are individualized (IN) for each student, are developed using a team-driven (TD) approach and are outcome based (OB).

Participants indicated that individualized (IN) responses are a key component of the existing wraparound approaches. This, perhaps, reflects an understanding that there is no overarching response that can be applied in all situations. Alternatively, the prevalence of individualized (IN) responses may also be a reflection of the capacity that school authorities have to implement different elements of wraparound. As the results of this study demonstrated, capacity was an important component in determining the likelihood of wraparound principles being adopted.

In considering individualized (IN) responses, capacity could be a limiting factor. Is it reasonable for schools or school authorities working alone to be able to create an individualized response for every child in need? Although this is an expectation for children with recognized needs for special education services and supports, the capacity of a teacher or even a school or school authority to provide this level of support for all vulnerable children (i.e., even those not already captured in the special education realm) may be unrealistic. This realization is manifest in the respondents' indications that current wraparound strategies are based upon team approaches. Effective teams allow for shared responsibility and resources to ensure that the children's needs are met.

When examining participants' ratings of the likelihood of incorporating specific wraparound principles, some of those rated 'most likely' are not ranked as the most important. For example, participants indicated that they are most likely to ensure that supports and services are individualized (IN); in terms of importance, however, this principle was ranked sixth. Strengths-based (SB) strategies were third most likely to be implemented but ranked seventh overall in terms of importance. One possible explanation for this seeming contradiction is that it reflects a difference between the best that schools and school authorities can do with their current resources and capacity and what they would ideally like to do if resources were not a limiting factor.

To examine this possibility, capacity was also measured in this analysis. The factors that were most likely to be included in a wraparound approach are also those that school authorities and schools indicate that they have the most capacity to implement. This seems to support the hypothesis that schools and school authorities are working within the limits of the capacity that they have, but that they realize there are other principles that would be at least as important as those they are currently incorporating.

The current makeup of the student population in Alberta is diverse. Within and among school authorities, there are differences with respect to the various sub-populations that require additional support and resources. As part of this study, we gathered information about the current allocation of resources for the different groups. Based upon this analysis, two sub-populations of students most frequently requiring additional supports and services were students with social, emotional and/or behavioural disabilities and students with other disabilities or medical conditions.

While the majority of participants indicated the access to integrated supports and services was either equitable or very equitable, a smaller (yet still sizeable) proportion indicated that services were inequitable or very inequitable. Perhaps not surprising in a province as diverse as Alberta, it is nonetheless troubling that close to a third of respondents felt that there were inequities. Again, this may reflect the realities of the schools and school authorities within the province. Interestingly, when examining this question with respect to those in large urban centers (i.e., Edmonton and Calgary), there were no significant differences with regard to perceived equity of services.

Although we initially expected that there might be differences in responses between those at the school authority level and those at the school level, there did not appear to be any meaningful differences between these respondents. This could be a reflection of the study design in that those at the school authority level were asked to send the survey to schools within their authority. Thus, it may not be surprising that the opinions of those to whom they sent the link are similar to their own.

This study was an initial attempt to examine the current use of wraparound within the province of Alberta. With a diverse population of students with diverse needs, strategies that can provide supports and services can be critical for student success, both in and out of school. Wraparound approaches are believed to show some promise in helping to provide supports and services to those who need them. This research has allowed us to examine the factors involved in providing wraparound services.

The results of this study indicate that while there is no single solution for all schools and school authorities, both importance and capacity seem to be important factors in determining whether wraparound approaches will be implemented. Helping administrators to understand the importance of wraparound and increasing capacity can both help to increase the likelihood that wraparound will be used.

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Appendix: Provincial Survey

We know that there are a significant number of students who may need more support than the school or teacher alone can provide to be successful as learners. Their needs may arise from traumatic or aversive life experiences, complex needs or disabilities, or other circumstances that make it difficult for them or their families to adapt and/or successfully engage in learning or other activities at school, at home and in the community. The services they need might come from the school, jurisdiction, and community agencies and partners. To be successful, these supports and services need to be coordinated/integrated. However, this can be challenging. We are trying to learn more about the extent to which schools engage in collaborative partnerships to provide integrated and coordinated services and supports for students who need them and how these supports extend to and engage families as part of this process. Sometimes, but not always, collaborative approaches to meet unique needs of students are called "*wraparound.*" We are interested in learning about how schools currently work with their community partners and families to provide a range of coordinated/integrated supports for those students who need them. Your responses to this survey will be instrumental in assisting us to understand current collaborative practices.

If you have any questions at any time, please feel free to contact Dr. Jason Daniels at 780–492–6332 or at jason.daniels@ualberta.ca (research lead for the project).

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by the Faculties of Education, Extension, Augustana, and Saint Jean Research Ethics Board (EEASJ REB) at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Chair of the EEASJ REB at 780– 492–3751.

1. In programming for vulnerable students who require supports and services that extend beyond the school, how <u>LIKELY</u> is it that:

	Very unlikely (1)	Unlikely (2)	Neutral (3)	Likely (4)	Very likely (5)
a) Families are engaged as partners in developing plans, strategies and supports for their children					
b) Strategies are developed using a team-based approach (i.e., at least one partner)					
c) Schools and partners work collaboratively to plan and implement individualized supports and services					
d) Strategies are culturally responsive					
e) Strategies are individualized for each student					
f) Strategies are built upon strengths of students					
g) The family's natural supports are incorporated into planning and delivery of services					
h) Services and supports required for individual students are accessible within the community					
i) The integrated team supporting students demonstrates perseverance in finding solutions to challenges that arise					
j) Goals are tied to measurable indicators of success					

Please provide examples or promising practices of: a) family involvement, d) culturally responsive, f) strengths-based strategies and/or any of the other potential elements/principles.

2. In programming for vulnerable students who require supports and services that extend beyond the school, how <u>IMPORTANT </u>is it that:

	Very unimportant (1)	Unimportant (2)	Neutral (3)	Important (4)	Very important (5)
a) **Families are engaged as partners in developing plans, strategies, and supports for their children**					
b) **Strategies are developed using a team-based approach (i.e., at least one partner)**					
c) **Schools and partners work collaboratively to plan and implement individualized supports and services**					
d) **Strategies are culturally responsive**					
e) **Strategies are individualized for each student**					
f) **Strategies are built upon strengths of students**					
g) **The family's natural supports are incorporated into planning and delivery of services**					
h) **Services and supports required for individual students are accessible within the community**					
i) **The integrated team supporting students demonstrates perseverance in finding solutions to challenges that arise**					
j) **Goals are tied to measurable indicators of success**					

Additional comments:

3. In considering the following potential elements/principles of integrated services, please indicate your jurisdiction's/school's <u>CURRENT CAPACITY</u> (i.e., ability to consistently provide) to ensure that:

	Very Low (1)	Low (2)	Medium (3)	High (4)	Very High (5)
a) Families are engaged as partners in developing plans, strategies, and supports for their children					
b) Strategies are developed using a team-based approach (i.e., at least one partner)					
c) Schools and partners work collaboratively to plan and implement individualized supports and services					
d) Strategies are culturally responsive					
e) Strategies are individualized for each student					
f) Strategies are built upon strengths of students					
g) The family's natural supports are incorporated into planning and delivery of services					
h) Services and supports required for individual students are accessible within the community					
i) The integrated team supporting students demonstrates perseverance in finding solutions to challenges that arise					
j) Goals are tied to measurable indicators of success					

Additional comments:

4. Please rank the 3 most important elements/principles of integrated supports and services

Most important	**Please Select One** • Families are engaged as partners in developing plans, strategies and supports for their children • Strategies are developed using a team-based approach (i.e., at least one partner) • Schools and partners work collaboratively to plan and implement individualized supports and services • Strategies are culturally responsive • Strategies are individualized for each student • Strategies are built upon strengths of students • The family's natural supports are incorporated into planning and delivery of services • Services and supports required for individual students are accessible within the community • The integrated team supporting students demonstrates perseverance in finding solutions to challenges that arise • Goals are tied to measurable indicators of success
Second most important	**Please Select One** • Families are engaged as partners in developing plans, strategies and supports for their children • Strategies are developed using a team-based approach (i.e., at least one partner) • Schools and partners work collaboratively to plan and implement individualized supports and services • Strategies are culturally responsive • Strategies are individualized for each student • Strategies are built upon strengths of students • The family's natural supports are incorporated into planning and delivery of services • Services and supports required for individual students are accessible within the community • The integrated team supporting students demonstrates perseverance in finding solutions to challenges that arise • Goals are tied to measurable indicators of success
Third most important	**Please Select One** • Families are engaged as partners in developing plans, strategies, and supports for their children • Strategies are developed using a team-based approach (i.e., at least one partner) • Schools and partners work collaboratively to plan and implement individualized supports and services • Strategies are culturally responsive • Strategies are individualized for each student • Strategies are built upon strengths of students • The family's natural supports are incorporated into planning and delivery of services • Services and supports required for individual students are accessible within the community • The integrated team supporting students demonstrates perseverance in finding solutions to challenges that arise • Goals are tied to measurable indicators of success

1. Please indicate your role within your jurisdiction: (required question)
- Superintendent
- Superintendent's designate
- School principal
- School principal's designate.

If designate, please specify your role:

2. Please indicate your school jurisdiction: (required question)

3. Typically, how frequently do you provide integrated supports and services for the following sub-populations of students?

	Very infrequently (1)	Infrequently (2)	As equally frequent as infrequent (3)	Frequently (4)	Very frequently (5)
a) Students from First Nations, Métis or Inuit cultures					
b) Students with social, emotional and/or behavioural disabilities					
c) Students with other disabilities or medical conditions					
d) Students from families living in poverty					
e) Immigrant or refugee students					
f) Students in care (foster, group homes, etc.)					
g) Other (please specify):					
h) Other (please specify):					
i) Other (please specify):					

4. The 3 sub-populations of students most frequently requiring integrated supports and services are:

1	**Please Select One**
	• Students from First Nations, Métis or Inuit cultures
	• Students with social, emotional and/or behavioural disabilities
	• Students with other disabilities or medical conditions
	• Students from families living in poverty
	• Immigrant or refugee students
	• Students in care (foster, group homes, etc.)
2	**Please Select One**
	• Students from First Nations, Métis or Inuit cultures
	• Students with social, emotional and/or behavioural disabilities
	• Students with other disabilities or medical conditions
	• Students from families living in poverty
	• Immigrant or refugee students
	• Students in care (foster, group homes, etc.)
3	**Please Select One**
	• Students from First Nations, Métis or Inuit cultures
	• Students with social, emotional and/or behavioural disabilities
	• Students with other disabilities or medical conditions
	• Students from families living in poverty
	• Immigrant or refugee students
	• Students in care (foster, group homes, etc.)

	Very inequitable (1)	Inequitable (2)	Neutral (3)	Equitable (4)	Very equitable (5)
5. How equitable is access to integrated supports and services across schools in your jurisdiction?					

6. Do you have any other comments that you would like to make regarding the provision of integrated supports and services or anything else?